



Islamic

School Syllabus

MANUAL

LEVEL
5

2017

Book 2 (Year 2)



THEOLOGY

JURISPRUDENCE

SOCIAL-ISLAM

Teacher's Name: _____

Student's Name: _____



Third Edition – 2017
Book 2 of 2 (LEVEL 5)

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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:

- The complex atmosphere of the time of the Imamate of Imam Ḥasan (as)
- The motivation behind the actions of Imam Ḥasan and Mu'āwiyah during their conflicts
- Why the peace treaty was the best solution to solve the conflicts
- Appreciate Imam Ḥasan's forbearance throughout the difficulties which he faced

Lesson 1: Imam Ḥasan: The Forbearing Imam

Imam Ḥasan (as), as we have learnt previously, was our second Imam after Imam 'Ali (as). After the death of Imam 'Ali (as), the Muslim world was in turmoil especially after the battles that Imam 'Ali (as) fought against Mu'āwiyah. In this lesson we will discuss the most controversial incident that occurred in his life, which is his peace treaty with Mu'āwiyah.

In order to understand the situation of the society that Imam Ḥasan (as) lived in, we need to take a step back and understand the character of Mu'āwiyah and his attitude towards Imam 'Ali (as) and Islam.

MU'ĀWIYAH VS IMAM 'ALI (AS):

How did Mu'āwiyahⁱ come into power?

FUNDAMENTALS OF ISLAM

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The Caliphs before Imam 'Ali made Mu'āwiyah the governor of Syria

When 'Uthmān died and people pledged their allegiance to Imam 'Ali (as) in the year 34 A.H, Mu'āwiyah heard of this. He immediately began to conspire to overthrow Imam 'Ali's government meanwhile strengthening his forces in Syriaⁱⁱ.

- During the Caliphate of Imam 'Ali (as), Mu'āwiyah was constantly trying to expand the area under his control to include Iraq and the rest of the Muslim world. Imam 'Ali was fighting to stop this, and when he was martyred Imam Ḥasan (as) continued to do the same.
- In the year 40 A.H, Imam 'Ali (as) was murdered and so the people pledged allegiance to Imam Ḥasan (as) while in Kūfa (Iraq).

THE KŪFANS DURING THE TIME OF PLEDGING ALLEGIANCE

Before Imam 'Ali (as) passed away, he was in Kūfa, preparing an army to restart the battle against Mu'āwiyah. When the Imam was martyred, Imam Ḥasan became the leader of the Muslims and he tried to bring together an army to continue his father's struggle against Mu'āwiyah.

The people of Kufa eventually formed an army under the leadership of Imam Ḥasan. However, only few of them were sincere followers of the



Imam. The rest were fighting Mu'āwiyah with their own reasons and intentions. Some belonged to the group called Khawārij, who only agreed to join Imam Ḥasan if he fought against Mu'āwiyah. Others were professional warriors who would benefit from the war financially, and so on. Therefore, when things became difficult, most of these people dispersed from around Imam Ḥasan (as) and no longer supported him.

IMAM HASAN FACES MU'ĀWIYAH

When Mu'āwiyah learnt of the death of Imam 'Ali and the succession of Imam Ḥasan (as) as leader, he sent two spies to undermine affairs for Imam Ḥasan (as). When Imam Ḥasan (as) learnt of that, he ordered the spies to be caught and executed and they were.

Imam Ḥasan (as) wrote a powerful letter to Mu'āwiyah notifying him of his failed trick and exposing his (Mu'āwiyah) wicked plans for war. From this, correspondence began between the two regarding Imam Ḥasan's (as) right to authority. Mu'āwiyah began his silent war by sending men to spread rumours in Kūfa and cause corruption and bribe people with money and promises in order to follow Mu'āwiyah.

Imam Hasan wrote a letter to Mu'āwiyah advising him and threatening him with war if he continued to cause corruption.ⁱⁱⁱ Mu'āwiyah responded by threatening him with assassination.

WAR BEGINS

In order to pressure Mu'āwiyah to stop causing havoc, Imam Ḥasan (as) sent two messengers to Mu'āwiyah, however Mu'āwiyah sent them back saying: *"Go back. There is nothing between me and you but the sword."* Hence the attack with war initiated by Mu'āwiyah began.

In the year 41 A.H, Mu'āwiyah headed towards Iraq with his Syrian army^{iv}.

Imam Ḥasan (as) had to respond to this. It is important to note that if Imam Ḥasan (as) was the first to initiate war, certain groups of the Kūfans would have taken advantage of the opportunity to disobey the Imam and call him an aggressor.

Imam Hasan (as) sent Ḥijr ibn 'Adi to call the people together for war. The people were slow to answer him but finally came forward. The army consisted of a mixed band of people with different intentions including:

Kharijites, doubters, those who loved conflicts and were anxious for booty of war and tribal supporters who followed the leaders of their tribes without referring to Islam.

AN ATTEMPT AT ASSASSINATION

Mu'āwiyah's major strategy and tactic in war was not military, but psychological: based on cunning, bribery and deceit. He sent men to communicate with Imam Ḥasan's army and spread rumours about the Imam that he wanted to make peace with Mu'āwiyah and hand over the authority to him. This caused much disunity and disobedience in Imam Ḥasan's army and many members deserted him and accused him of disbelief. A group of the army rushed towards the Imam's tent and plundered everything including Imam Ḥasan's prayer mat from under the Imam and his cloak from his shoulder. His true Shī'ah surrounded him and defended him. During this attack of the disloyal members of his army, he was brutally stabbed in the thigh.

Meanwhile a group of tribal leaders wrote secretly to Mu'āwiyah offering to accept his authority. They urged him to come to them and promised to hand over Imam Ḥasan (as) when Mu'āwiyah got to their camp or to murder the Imam.

IMAM ḤASAN IS BETRAYED

Imam Ḥasan (as) had appointed 'Ubaydullāh ibn 'Abbās' (his cousin) as a commander over the major part of his army. Mu'āwiyah wrote to 'Ubaydullāh urging him to go to him and offered him a million dirhams. 'Ubaydullāh accepted this and secretly left Imam Ḥasan's army at night with his close associates to Mu'āwiyah's camp. Eight thousand of the members of Imam Ḥasan's army also followed.

This caused a detrimental drop in the number of Imam Ḥasan's army^{vi} and hence it became clear that the Imam's army would not be able to resist against sixty thousand fighters from the enemies.

THE ONLY SOLUTION – A PEACE TREATY

The remaining members of Imam Ḥasan's army were still disunited and not firm in faith. Due to the disobedience of Imam Ḥasan's army, Imam Ḥasan (as) could not opt for the battle against Mu'āwiyah's army as it posed a great risk to the lives of his few true followers. If the true

Shī'ah were all killed in the battle, Islam would also die with them as it would be perverted at the hands of Mu'āwiyah.

Imam Ḥasan (as) was well aware of all the tricks and motives of Mu'āwiyah and hence resorted to a wise plan that would destroy his opponents by accepting to make peace. This would also prevent bloodshed and unite most Muslims.

Mu'āwiyah wrote to Imam Ḥasan (as) inviting him to peace to which the Imam accepted.

Mu'āwiyah sent a blank piece of paper to Imam Ḥasan (as) in order to write the conditions he wished. Hence Imam Ḥasan (as) posed five major conditions for the peace treaty:

The authority would be handed over to Mu'āwiyah provided that he should act according to the Book of Allah and the practice (Sunna) of the Prophet.

Authority should be for Imam Ḥasan (as) after him. If an accident happened to him, authority should be for his brother Imam al-Ḥusayn (as). Mu'āwiyah had no right to entrust anybody to it.

Mu'āwiyah should abandon cursing Imam 'Ali (as) and should not mention Imam 'Ali except in a good manner.

The money in the public treasury had to be dealt with in a certain way.

The people should be safe wherever they are in the earth of Allah. The family of the Prophet and companions of Imam 'Ali (as) should be given security over their lives, properties, women and children wherever they are. They should not be exposed to any evil and should be given their rights.

Mu'āwiyah accepted these conditions, signed and stamped the letter that the treaty was written on and made all leaders of the Syrians bear witness to it. Mu'āwiyah wrote: *"Concerning that, Mu'āwiyah ibn Abu Sufyān is obliged to fulfil the covenant of Allah and His promise..."* This treaty occurred in the middle of the month of Jamādi al-Ūlā in the year 41 A.H.

MU'ĀWIYAH'S VIOLATION OF THE TREATY

The two parties (Imam Ḥasan (as) and Mu'āwiyah) met in Kūfa to publicly declare the peace treaty. Large groups of

people went with them. Mu'āwiyah ascended the pulpit before Imam Ḥasan (as) arrived at the gathering in order to speak first. His following speech indicates his treachery, deceit, desire for power and carelessness in the matter of religion. *"Kufans! I have not fought against you to make you pray and fast and pay zakāt and perform the pilgrimage"^{vii}... I have fought against you to have power over you ... Indeed I have been requested by al-Ḥasan to give him things and I have given things to him. All of them are now under my feet. And from now on I will not fulfil anything!"* He also defamed Imam 'Ali and Imam Ḥasan (as) in his speech.

Then Imam Ḥasan (as) approached the gathering and addressed the people to explain the situation and rebuke Mu'āwiyah. He said:

"Indeed unity is better than division. I take care of you more than you take care of yourselves. Therefore ... do not oppose my judgement. Indeed Mu'āwiyah has told you that I see him appropriate for the succession to authority and I do not see myself appropriate for it. So Mu'āwiyah has told you lies..."

He then praised his father Imam 'Ali (as) and described his outstanding merits then honoured his (Imam Ḥasan)'s noble lineage and compared it to Mu'āwiyah's cursed lineage because they opposed the Prophet and Ahlul Bayt.

Imam Ḥasan (as) adhered to the peace treaty (although Mu'āwiyah did not) and gave the authority of affairs to Mu'āwiyah. Imam Ḥasan (as) did not give the right to succession in religion to Mu'āwiyah as some people have wrongly accused the Imam of. Rather, he was forced to stop fighting him and make a peace treaty to protect the Muslims.

Mu'āwiyah violated each one of the points in the treaty. He gave the authority to his son Yazīd instead of to Imam Ḥasan (as) or Imam Ḥusyan (as), he did not act according to the practice of the Qur'an and Sunna, he continued to curse Imam 'Ali and would punish those who did not curse the Imam. He killed many of the close followers and companions of Imam 'Ali and Imam Ḥasan in which the greatest sin is killing Imam Ḥasan himself. He also did not use the money of the treasury correctly.

WERE THERE ANY BENEFITS IN THE PEACE TREATY?

By fulfilling the peace treaty with Mu'āwiyah, Imam Ḥasan was able to:

- draw the people's hearts towards Ahlul Bayt (especially after the meeting in Kūfa)
- spare the Muslims' blood and united most of them
- save Islam from the destruction that would be caused by a protracted war
- expose Mu'āwiyah's wicked character to the people^{viii}

IMAM ḤASAN IS MURDERED

After the treaty, Imam Ḥasan (as) left Kūfa to Medīna and resided there, restraining his anger. Mu'āwiyah had authority as 'caliph' for 10 years then decided to hand over the authority to his son Yazīd. This could not happen while Imam Ḥasan was still alive, so he secretly communicated with Imam Ḥasan's wife Ju'dah and bribed her to poison the Imam, which she did. Imam Ḥasan was murdered in the month of Ṣafar, in the year 50 A.H.

IMAM ḤASAN'S FORBEARING CHARACTER!

ⁱ Mu'awiyah is the son of Abu Sufyan and Hind (the lady who ate the liver of Hamzah (ra)). His lineage goes back to Umayyah and Abd al-Shams who was the brother of Hashim (the Prophet's ancestor). The children of Abd al-Shams have always fought against the children of Hashim and always despised them. Mu'awiyah's hatred for Islam was shown on a number of occasions. His main goal was to ruin Islam and hence his enmity and wars against Ahlul Bayt. He once said to his companion al-Mughira ibn Shu'ba when asked by the latter to make to show justice and spread good and take care of his cousins banu Hashim: "The brother of Taym (Abu Bakr) ruled, showed justice and did what he had done. However when he perished his reputation perished, except his name. Then the brother of 'Adi ('Umar) ruled and did his best for ten years. By Allah when he perished his fame perished except his name, then our brother 'Uthman ruled, while no one was like him in lineage. He did what he had done but he was killed. By Allah when he perished his reputation perished, and what had been done towards him has been mentioned. However the brother of Hashim (ie the Prophet) is mentioned five times a day: I testify that Mohammad is the Messenger of Allah. May your mother lose you, every practice remains after this will bury us thoroughly."

ⁱⁱ Mu'awiyah brainwashed the people of Syria making them believe that he was the right Caliph. He kept them away from the news of what was happening in other Muslim countries and hence without the influence or knowledge of anything else, Mu'awiyah was their only source and he was able to manipulate their minds to believe all he said. The Syrians followed him blindly.

ⁱⁱⁱ A part of Imam's letter to him: "... avoid going too far in falsehood and pledge allegiance to me as the people have done. You know that I am worthier of this authority than you with Allah... Fear Allah, abandon oppression and spare the blood of the Muslims. Enter peace and obedience. Do not dispute with the people of authority over their authority, and with those who are worthier of it than you... If you insist on your error, I will advance against you with the Muslims and punish you till Allah judges between you and me..."

As a note, if students argue that they (both Imam Hasan and Mu'awiyah) could have both been leaders of different areas, it is impossible as both had opposing doctrines and ambitions. Furthermore, the people are bound to follow the leader they have so if he is corrupt, away from Islam and after

The ordeals Imam Ḥasan (as) had to deal with throughout his life, especially the period of his Imamat, prove the great personality of the Imam. He endured the corrupt minds of his army disobeying him, falsely accusing him, stabbing him and attempting to kill him and deserting him. In addition he dealt with the various parties of the Muslims and Kufans in a dignified manner without retaliation. Furthermore, dealing with Mu'āwiyah's complex cunning personality and his lies and deceit cannot occur without patiently persevering. In all his actions and all incidents that occurred, Imam Ḥasan (as) the Imam maintained his forbearance and continued to put the ^{ix}interests of Islam and Muslims first.

Homework

1. In a few paragraphs, explain why the peace treaty between Imam Ḥasan (as) and Mu'āwiyah had to occur.
2. Use different incidents mentioned in the lesson and relate them to Imam Ḥasan's forbearance. Also think of the consequences that may have resulted if Imam Ḥasan (as) acted otherwise.

worldly gains (ie Mu'awiyah) then the people will also be thus, and if they are for Islam and the sake of Allah (swt) (ie Imam Hasan (as)) then the people will follow.

^{iv} Mu'awiyah's followers did not pledge allegiance to Imam al-Hasan because Mu'awiyah educated and brought them up according to his ideas.

^v He was a religious man and fought alongside Imam Ali (as) in his battles such as Siffeen. He was eager to fight Mu'awiyah as Mu'awiyah was the cause of his two sons being killed. However 'UbaydAllah new the weakness of the division of the army that he commanded and became very pessimistic. Hence due to Mu'awiyah's deceit and bribery, 'UbaydAllah slipped from the straight path and chose this worldly life over the next by accepting the bribe and deserting Imam Hasan (as).

^{vi} In Sulhul Hasan's army was initially 12000 men strong under the command of 'UbaydAllah in a place called Maskan. There was another 8000 men in the second division of the army that resided a distance away in al-Mada-in. However after the desertion they became 4000 only in Maskan and hence altogether unable to resist Mu'awiyah's army of sixty thousand.

^{vii} i.e. he had no Islamic aspirations. He only wanted power.

^{viii} After Mu'awiyah violated the peace treaty by announcing it publicly, his actions also followed. He mistreated the people and brutally killed a large number of people especially those who followed Ahlul Bayt. His true nature was gradually exposed to the people and the people grew enmity towards him.

^{ix} References

Sulh al-Hasan (The peace treaty of al-Hasan), by Shaykh Rādi Āl-Yāsīn

Kitāb al-Irshād (The book of guidance into the lives of the twelve Imams), by Shaykh al-Mufid

Nahjul Balagha (Peak of Eloquence) – with commentary and notes



IMAM HUSAIN

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)

In previous years, we have discussed the reasons for Imam Ḥusayn's revolution and the importance of this great sacrifice for the sake of God. In this lesson, we will discuss the aftermath of 'Āshurā' in detail, and some of the important things that happened after Imam Ḥusayn (as) and his companions gave their life for the sake of Islam in Karbala.

THE UPRISINGS

After hearing of the atrocities of Karbala, and after hearing the speeches of Sayyeda Zaynab and seeing the Ahlul Bayt in captivity, the people began to see the corrupt nature of the Umayyad regime, and started to oppose it.

People's courage to oppose tyrant leaders and sacrifice their lives for the sake of the truth increased. Each

FUNDAMENTALS OF ISLAM

LEVEL 5

uprising against the Umayyad leadership held the banner of "Ya li-thārāt al-Ḥusayn" (i.e. we are avenging the innocent blood of Imam Ḥusayn).

THE BATTLE OF ḤARRA

When the people of Medina¹ heard of the news of Imam Ḥusayn and his companions they sent people to Syria to eye-witness the tyranny and blasphemy of Yazīd. Once this was confirmed, they mobilised an army against the governor of Medina who was 'Uthmān ibn Muḥammad ibn Abu-Sufyān (Yazid's cousin) and sent him into exile. When Yazīd heard of this, he sent five thousand men under the command of his most vicious officer Muslim ibn 'Aqabah to suppress the revolt. They met the people of Medina in a place called Ḥarra (just outside Medina) and a battle took place between both parties where many of the people of Medina were killed. This happened in the year 63 A.H. Furthermore, Yazīd gave permission to his troops to enjoy their freedom in Medina for 3 days, where the troops plundered all they could find, raped the ladies and girls, polluted the Prophet's mosque, and killed many companions of the Prophet.

MOVEMENT OF THE TAWWĀBĪN

This was an uprising against the Umayyads by the Tawwābīn (the Repentant) in the year 65 A.H. These were the Kufans who regretted their betrayal of Imam Ḥusayn (as) after inviting him to Kufa.ⁱⁱ They believed the only way to cleanse themselves of the sin of leaving the Imam was to give their life in avenging the blood of the Imam (as). The Repentant, who were estimated to be about four thousand men, gathered and fought the army of 'Ubaydullāh ibn Ziyād in an area out of Kufa

called 'Aynul Ward. The Repentant Army fought courageously but tragically most of them were killed by the thirty thousand troops of ibn Ziyād.

THE REVOLUTION OF AL-MUKHTĀR

Mukhtār al-Thaqafi was a devoted companion of Imam 'Ali (as) who was jailed in the year 60 A.H. when Muslim ibn 'Aqīl visited Kufa (remember 'Āshurā' occurred in 61 AH). He was released from jail in the year 66 A.H, after which he immediately began to take revenge from the criminals of Karbala. The criminals were not hard to find as they had all been publicly boasting about the crimes they committed in Karbala ever since the tragedy until the year 66 A.H. Mukhtār and his men seized the well-known criminals such as Shimr ibn Dhil-Jawshan, Ḥarmala, 'Umar ibn Sa'd and 'Ubaydullāh ibn Ziyād and executed them one by one.ⁱⁱⁱ They also killed many of the other men who attacked the Ahlul Bayt in Karbala. The revolution of Mukhtār was the successful movement in comparison to all other uprisings (although the other



uprisings contributed and were important in order to expose the evils of the Umayyads and awaken and encourage the Muslims).

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE REVOLUTIONS

The achievements of the revolution of Karbala are multidimensional and everlasting. Imam Ḥusayn (as) knew that militarily or physically he would not be 'victorious'. However, he still fought the enemies in Karbala. He showed the people that there are two paths in life, one is right and the other is wrong. We need to always be aware and choose the right path in order to be successful, even though we have to sacrifice along the way. Hence Imam al-Ṣādiq (as) states that Imam Ḥusayn:

“gave the blood of his heart to rescue the servants of Allah from the ocean of ignorance and the perplexity of going astray”.

The sacrifice of Imam Ḥusayn (as) and his companions in Karbala caused a shock-wave that hit the conscience of the Muslims and sparked their faith and courage to revolt against tyrannical rulers and to enjoin good and forbid evil. By removing such leaders that lead their people to corruption, loss of faith, and greed for worldly matters, justice will prevail in the society.

THE TRAGEDY OF THE DISTORTIONS OF KARBALA

As we can see, there are many lessons that we can derive from Imam Ḥusayn (as) and Karbala. The sacrifices that were offered for the sake of Allah gave courage to the Muslims. On the other hand, because it was a tragic event, relating the story of Karbala became a reason to arouse people's emotions. Those who were eloquent in writing began to fabricate dramas with little truth, based only very loosely on the story of Karbala. They would make alterations and distortions to the story in order to provoke people's emotions.^{iv} This was tragic within itself as it changed the purpose of Imam Ḥusayn's martyrdom into one that would merely make people cry. These distortions occurred mostly between the 6th and 13th Century A.H.

ANOTHER REVOLUTION FOR THE TRUTH!

In the 13th Century a scholar in India, Haj Mirza Ḥusayn Nūri, came across books that were filled with these distortions about Karbala and began a revolution against the scholars who endorsed and recited such fabricated stories. He put forth two criteria for the reciters of the majalis of Karbala:

- 1) the majlis is recited with sincerity for the sake of Allah only
- 2) what is recited must be only the truth without any of the fabrications or distortions (whether it makes people cry or not).

One of Allamah Nūri's students, Sheikh Abbās al-Qummi (who is the compiler of Mafātīh al-Jinān) later compiled a book about Karbala, known as an-Nafas al-Mahmūm. This book is dependable because the author was careful in selecting the narrations and avoided most of the fabricated stories.

This was the beginning of enforcing people to seek the pure untainted truth and to practice according to the true lessons that Imam Ḥusayn (as) established by his sacrifices. In turn it is our duty to seek the truth in the

ⁱ This was under the command of 'Abdullah ibn Handhala who was a pious man who lived in Madina. Upon hearing the news of Karbala, he wanted to see with his own eyes what Yazīd was like, so in the year 63 A.H. he travelled to Syria with a group of people. When they returned to Madina they reported: *"By Allah I was in Damascus and saw the lifestyle of Yazid and I was scared that stones would fall on us from the heavens (i.e. a punishment). Because he sits the position of the Prophet and says he's the successor of the Prophet while he sleeps with his mothers and daughters and sisters and drinks wine (intoxicates himself) and pays no heed to prayers."* From this they began their revolt.

history of Karbala in order to derive the true lessons from it and practice Islam correctly.

Review Questions

1. Write a short response on some modern movements or revolutions which have been inspired by the values of Karbala.

ⁱⁱ They were under the command of noble figures such as Solaymān ibn Sorād and Rofā'a ibn Shaddād

ⁱⁱⁱ The revolution of Mukhtar against the murderers and criminals of Karbala, while not directly endorsed by the Imams, did lead to their satisfaction that the criminals of Karbala were punished and killed.

^{iv} An example of this is the wedding of al-Qasim ibn al-Hasan with Imam Husayn's daughter which till today is still being recited. Others are those which portray weakness in the family of the Prophet (such as Sayyedah Zaynab) and Imam Husayn (as).

KARBALĀ'

کربلاء

FUNDAMENTALS OF ISLAM

LEVEL 5

Lesson 1

SEEDS OF DISCORD IN THE MUSLIM COMMUNITY

The tragedy of Karbala was not an overnight occurrence, it is incredible to think that just a mere 50 years since the demise of the Greatest pure Manifestation of the mercy and creation of Allah (SWT), The Holy Prophet (saw), the Muslims were so deviated that they had the audacity to massacre the beloved family of the Prophet!

It is clear that the seeds of this vile criminal act far preceded the actual events in Karbala. Indeed, as we have studied previously, the roots of this tragedy not only lie in the events in the last years of the Prophets' life but mainly those just after his demise (the tragedy of Thursday and Saqīfah). It was during the caliphate of 'Umar and particularly, 'Uthman, that Mu'āwiyah was given unprecedented powers in the area of Damascus. He consolidated this power over two decades and entrenched himself, his henchmen and his corrupt family members in positions of power and authority. He rebelled against Imam 'Ali (as) in the battle of Şīffīn and as we learnt signed a peace treaty with Imam Ḥasan (as).

In his time in power, he was slowly but surely attempting to erode the very fabric of Islam. He and his family hated the Prophet, a hatred rooted in greed, corruption, and the need to take revenge for what the Prophet (saw) and Imam 'Ali (as) did to their ancestors (the Pagans of Mecca). He attempted to focus people's attention away from the spiritual realm to the material worldly realm but the single worst atrocity that he, his ancestors and others like him committed was to begin distorting the words of

Objectives >>>

Students should understand:

- The political and social situation of the Imam, Muslims and Islam prior to Karbala
- Understand the motives if Imams Uprising and be able to refute common objections
- Be reminded that Karbala and 'Āshurā' should always be commemorated for it keeps Islam alive.
- Learn further details of the events of the day of 'Āshurā'
- Should review the importance of sticking to the truth and dispelling myths when engaging in remembrance of Karbala
- The important role of Sayyedah Zaynab (as)
- The significance of 'Āshurā' in Islamic history

the Holy Prophet (saw). In essence, they muddled the clear waters of Islam with doubt and corruption.¹

APPOINTMENT OF YAZID

Yazid was brought up in a family whose atmosphere was electrified with emotions of its dead ancestors who fought against Islam and who were killed mostly during Islam's first major battle. Among the Umayyads who were killed in it were: 'Utbah, father-in-law of Yazid's father Mu'awiyah, 'Utbah's son al-Walid ibn al-Mughirah (father of the famous military leader Khalid ibn al-Walid), and Shaybah, 'Utbah's brother. Al-Walid ibn al-Mughirah is cursed in the Holy Qur'an in (74:11-30 (Surah al-Muddathir). 'Utbah is father of Hind, mother of Yazid, who tried to chew the liver of Hamzah, Prophet Muhammad (saw)'s dear uncle and valiant defender of Islam.

Yet Yazid himself had some unique deficiencies in addition to what we recorded above. He was known as a playboy; he is on record as the first person ever to compose pornographic poetry. He described each and every part of his aunt's body for sensual excitement, doing so without being reprimanded by his father or mother or anyone else. Historians record his being seen drunk in public, his committing adultery, and his leading a very corrupt life.

Mu'awiyah was not ruling as an individual but was representing a way of thinking which differed in nature from everything Islam stands for. However, he was not satisfied to leave the ruling stage without making sure that it remained within his family. His pragmatic and materialistic mind drove him to prepare for the crowning of his son, Yazid, as his successor.

Mu'awiyah had made many pledges not to install Yazid when he saw the conditions at the time not conducive to such a plan because Muslims were still politically conscious and desired to see the restoration of the Islamic laws and values. Mu'awiyah, hence, had a difficult job at hand before leaving this world.

He, in fact, tried his best to buy the allegiance for his son from his army's commanders, tribal chiefs and chieftains, and entire tribes as well as men of distinction and influence, spending huge sums of money in the process. But his efforts did not succeed with everyone.

One of his failed attempts was when he wrote Imam al-Husayn (as) soliciting his endorsement for his appointment of Yazid as the heir apparent to the throne. Imam al-Husayn's answer was a scathing criticism of all what Mu'awiyah and Yazid had committed. Mu'awiyah, therefore, forewarned his son Yazid to beware of Imam al-Husayn (as).

Yazid eventually succeeded his father Mu'awiyah as the ruler. Yazid now spared no means to secure the submission for his unholy practices, oppression and aggression, from everyone. He knew very well that in reality, he had no legitimate right whatsoever to make claims or to issue demands. On the contrary, he was guilty of having committed many illegal and sacrilegious deeds for which he should have been killed, had there anyone powerful enough to implement the Islamic code of justice.

Once in charge, Yazid took his father's advice regarding Imam al-Husayn (as) seriously. He wrote the then governor of Medina, al-Walid ibn 'Utbah, ordering him to secure the oath of allegiance to him as the new ruler from everyone in general and from Imam al-Husayn (as), Abdullah ibn 'Umar (son of second caliph 'Umar ibn al-Khattab), and 'Abdullah ibn al-Zubayr, in particular, being the most prominent personalities. Yazid, with unmistakable language ordered al-Walid to secure such an oath for him by force if necessary, and that if Imam al-Husayn (as) refused, he should behead him and send his severed head to him in Damascus.

But al-Walid's efforts were fruitless. Imam al-Husayn's reply was exact and direct:

"Governor, I belong to the Ahlul Bayt (family) of the Prophet. Allah (SWT) has consigned to and charged us with the Imamate (spiritual and political leadership of the Muslims). Angels pay us visits. Yazid is a wicked sinner, a depraved reprobate, a wanton drunkard, a man who sheds blood unjustly, and a man who openly defies Allah's commandments. A man like me will never yield his allegiance to a person like him."

MOTIVES OF THE IMAM'S UPRISING

These motives were numerous. Some of them stemmed from the grievances of the general public, while others were ideological in nature and noble in objective. They may be summed up as follows:

STOP THE DISTORTION

The most urgent need was to stop the attempts to distort the Islamic concepts and code of conduct, particularly the falsification of Ḥadith as discussed above. This was of the utmost significance; it preoccupied the minds of responsible Muslims at the time. Such fabrication was quite rampant, epidemic in nature, festered by the funds available for those who rushed to please the Umayyads with their pens, those who did not hesitate to sell their religion for a trifling.

Such fabrication was poisonous in effect, and it affected the lives of all Muslims, and it still does. It was giving the Umayyads a free hand to do whatever they desired of unfair and unethical policies in dealing with their subjects. The mask of religion which they used to hide their un-Islamic conduct was quite dangerous. In the long run, such danger would eventually change the pristine concepts introduced by Islam and substitute them with anything but Islam. Stripping such a mask and exposing the true picture of the Umayyads was the most urgent task of a revolutionary like Imam al-Ḥusayn (as).

SOCIAL JUSTICE

The State's structure was built on un-Islamic premises, giving preference to people from certain races and families. That was the general social picture of the Islamic world under the Umayyad rule. Anyone who dared to express an opinion which did not agree with that of the Umayyads would be imprisoned or killed.

Furthermore, the poor and down-trodden were ignored and left to vie for themselves. Wealth gained from Zakāt and government taxes was used to build palaces and pay for the extravagant habits of the ruling class.

EXPOSE CORRUPTION

The Umayyads considered the Islamic world as their own real estate property. Large gifts were doled out from the state treasury (called in Islam bayt al-māl) to governors, government officials, tribal chiefs, army commanders, and officers who surpassed others in their cruelty and oppression. Large sums of money were spent on activities which Islam prohibits: racing, gambling, wines, singers and so on...

The majority of Muslims were left on the brink of starvation while the ruling people enjoyed the social and material privileges. It very much is like what one sees happening nowadays in many Muslim countries.

WAKE THE PEOPLE

The Muslims had apparently become accustomed to the un-Islamic rule of the Umayyads as time passed by. Their resistance gradually slackened, and some people began adjusting to the new realities. The revolutionary spirit of Islam began to disappear little by little from the Muslims' lives and thoughts. A new stimulant to their souls was necessary in order to bring life back to their misled souls and to restore the Islamic conduct and way of life to the society.

KEEPING KARBALĀ' ALIVE- HEEDING THE IMAM'S CALL

Imam al-Ḥusayn (as) on the plains of Karbala spoke to the people saying "who is there to help us?" This was not a message for the kuffār and his enemies, it was a message for us. As we have seen above, the motives of Imam are still relevant till today! It is imperative that the message of Imam be kept alive so we can counter the forces of evil trying to distort or destroy Islam. We have to ensure we do not resemble Yazīd in any shape or form! We should not distort the words of Qur'an or Ḥadith to suit our needs, we should be politically and socially aware and fight against corruption and stand for social justice. This will come after we have been woken up by the harsh tragedy that befell our Imam (as).

THE IMAM'S PURE MOTIVES

Unfortunately some groups have questions the Imam's motives.

Some claims that Imam Ḥusayn rose only to gain power. These people argue that the Imam should have remained quiet like 'Abdullah ibn 'Umar and not risen to challenge Yazīd. The reason for this objection is that they do not understand that the Imam challenged Yazīd's power not because he wanted power in itself, but because he wanted to establish God's rule and justice.

Others argue that the Imam (as) should not have taken his family with him when he knew that his journey would likely end in tragedy. This group fails to understand the impact that the presence of the women and children had on the longevity of the legacy of Karbala.

We shall briefly discuss some of these objections and will keep the remainder as reading (with references).

The Imam (as) clearly and eloquently explained his motives, and his words answered the objections raised above as well as other objections:

“And surely the aim of my uprising is not inspired by vain exultation and it is also not for the quest of kingdom, neither it is to cause dissension and corruption nor it is to wrong anybody. The purpose of my uprising is the reformation of my grandfather's nation. I intend to enjoin good and forbid evil. I want to emulate my grandfather, the Holy Prophet (saw) and my father Ali ibn abi Ṭalib (A). Whosoever accepts me by accepting the truth, then Allah is higher than the truth. And whosoever rejects me then I will bear patiently until Allah judges between me and them and He is the best Judge.”

Class Activity Homework - Research

Using the book- The Uprising of Ashura and Responses to Doubts <http://www.al-islam.org/uprising-ashura-and-responses-doubts-ali-asghar-ridwani> answer the following questions:

- 1- Some say Yazīd did not know what ibn Ziyād was doing in Kufa and Karbala, what proof can you show that he did indeed know?
- 2- Some Wahhabis accuse the Shi'a of blasphemy because we lament over the tragedy of Karbala, how can you disprove this claim?
- 3- One of the accusations often raised against the Shi'a in recent times is that they themselves were the killers of Imam al-Ḥusayn (as). Does this contradict the fact that we mourn the martyrdom of the Imam (as)? What other important points need to be considered here?
- 4- Why did Imam Ḥusayn (as) bring his family to Karbala?
- 5- Did Allah (SWT) leave Imam Ḥusayn un-aided in Karbala? Why did God not give him a miraculous victory?

Lesson 2- The Day of 'Āshurā'

Review

We begin this lesson by discussing the research questions from the previous lesson.

THE DAY OF 'ĀSHURĀ'

In this lesson, we shall further discuss the events that transpired on the fateful day on the 10th of Muḥarram 61AH, the day of Ashura.

We have discussed previously, the sermons Imam Ḥusayn (as) gave on the day not only to his companions, but especially to the enemies of Islam, reminding them of their duties, reminding them who he was and reminding them of the grave sin they were about to commit. They did not heed his call.

Imam Ḥusayn (as) recited the morning Prayers on the 10th of Muḥarram with his companions. After finishing the prayers he stood up and delivered a short sermon. He praised and glorified Allah and said:

“Verily Allah, the Mighty, the Sublime, has intended that you be martyred, as will I, thus you should forbear.”

Then Imam prepared his companions for battle and set up his army's positions. There were thirty two horsemen and forty foot-soldiers along with him.

Imam Ḥusayn (as) designated Zuhayr bin al-Qayn in charge of the right wing and Ḥabib bin Maḍahir in charge of the left wing, and handed over the standard of the army to his brother 'Abbas (as). They positioned themselves in front of the tents, with their backs towards



them. Then the Imam commanded that the firewood, which was kept behind the tents, be put in the moat dug at night behind the tents and set it on fire, lest the enemies might attack from behind.

It was a little later in the day that Ibn Sa'd put an arrow in his bow and let it fly. He said: “Be witnesses that I was the first [person] to shoot.” This was the extent of his arrogance and hate.

MARTYDOM OF 'ALI AL-AKBAR (AS)

'Ali al-Akbar bin al-Ḥusayn bin 'Ali (as) was the first to be killed on that day from among the family of the Imam. His mother was Layla. He began attacking the people while he recited the following:

"I am 'Ali, son of Ḥusayn bin 'Ali; by the Lord of the House, we are closest to the Prophet. By Allah! A man born illegitimately shall not rule over us"

He attacked them several times and killed a large number of them. Then Murrah bin Munqidh bin al-Nu'man al-'Abdi saw him. He said: "May the felonies of the Arabs come on me, if he gets past me doing the same as he has been doing [and] I do not deprive his mother of him."

'Ali bin al-Ḥusayn (as) continued to attack the people with his sword. Murrah bin Munqidh wounded him with a spear. 'Ali al-Akbar fell on to his horse and got tangled in the straps, and the horse rushed towards the enemy out of fright. The enemy cut the body of 'Ali al-Akbar into pieces as his horse passed through them until he finally fell to the earth and called out to his father.

al-Ḥusayn (as) came to [his body] saying:

"May Allah kill [the] people who killed you, my son! How foolhardy they are against the Merciful and in violating the sacredness of the family of the Prophet! There will [only] be dust on the world after you."

The Imam was finding it difficult to leave the side of his son's body, until Zaynab (as) came to join him there. Out of fear for Zaynab the Imam got up and the body of 'Ali was taken back to the tents to be laid with the rest of the martyrs.

MARTYDOM OF QĀSIM (AS)

Qāsim was the son of Imam al-Ḥasan (as) and so was Imam Ḥusayn's nephew. When Imam Ḥusayn (as) saw that Qāsim prepared to step into the battlefield, he embraced him and they wept until both of them became unconscious. Then Qāsim asked permission to go, but Imam refused. He continuously kissed the hands and feet of Imam Ḥusayn (as) until he finally gave in.

Qāsim left for the battlefield while tears were flowing from his eyes and he was saying:

"If you do not know me I am the son of Ḥasan, the grandson of the Prophet, the chosen one, the confidante, this is Ḥusayn similar to the one captivated by the mortgager, in the midst of such a (horrible) people, may Allah deprive them of rainwater".

He fought fiercely despite being so young and killed a significant number of the enemy.

As he was fighting, the strap of his sandal came off, and he stopped to fix it. 'Umar bin Sa'ad bin Nufayl al-Azdi said, "By Allah! I shall attack him". He attacked him and before he could turn his face towards him, he dealt a blow upon his head with his sword. The child fell down on his face upon the ground and called out:

"O Uncle"

Imam Ḥusayn (as) leapt into the battlefield, attacking the killer of Qāsim and severing his arm, before the man was trampled by the horses of his own army. The Imam then sat by the body of Qāsim, saying:

"It is so difficult for your uncle that you call him, but he does not respond, or that he responds, but he cannot help you."

Qāsim soon passed away, and the Imam (as) carried him back to the tent and lay him down next to his son 'Ali al-Akbar.

MARTYDOM OF 'ABBAS (AS)

'Abbas, the younger brother of Imam Ḥusayn (as), ventured to bring water to the wailing thirsty children. He individually attacked the soldiers guarding the bank of the Euphrates and stopping the Imam's family from accessing it. 'Abbas was al-Ḥusayn's standard-bearer.

'Abbas parted through the army and reached the water. He filled the water-skins and headed back to the camp without even drinking water first, for he did not want to drink while his Imam and brother was still thirsty.

On his way back to the camp, he was again cutting through the army, when a wretched man hit behind a palm tree and severed the right arm of 'Abbas. 'Abbas held the water skins in his left arm, but soon this was also severed. Then the arrows began to rain down upon him, bursting the water skin. The water spilt on the floor and 'Abbas was dejected at this. Finally, he fell from his horse after the many wounds, and called out to his brother, who heard him despite being far away and rushed to him.



When Imam al-Ḥusayn (as) came to the side of his brother and saw his state, he said:

"now I have no more plots, now my back is broken."

The Imam (as) buried his brother there, a little distance away from the battlefield. This is why now we have a separate shrine from 'Abbas a few hundred metres from the shrine of Imam al-Ḥusayn (as).

RESULTS OF THE REVOLUTION

The murder of Imam Ḥusayn (as) the grandson of the Prophet (saw) was a great shock to the whole Muslim world. This is not to mention the way he was murdered or the treatment given to his family who had the highest esteem and respect among all Muslims. Consequently, all Muslims dissociated themselves from the Umayyad's deeds and policies.

Thus, this revolution had done the task of unveiling the Umayyad's un-Islamic character to the general public and left no doubt in any person's heart about the true nature of the Umayyads.

Therefore, the concepts which the Umayyads were propagating in order to distort the ideals of Islam found no listening ear any longer, diverting the Umayyad's mischief of changing Islamic concepts and ideals.

Imam al-Ḥusayn's revolution set a lively example as to the duty of Muslims in such conditions. It had deeply penetrated peoples' hearts and produced great pains within them for not doing their Islamic duty. This feeling among people transformed into repentance and then to an open revolt against the Umayyad regime. Thus, the revolution provided the stimulant to move their spirit and set it in a dynamic movement.

A series of revolutions took place, all motivated by taking revenge for the murder of the Ahlul Bayt, and the removal of the Umayyads from power, at least within certain areas. Among these was the uprising of the

'Repenters' (Tawwabīn), and the more successful revolution and takeover of power in Kufa by Mukhtār al-Thaqafi. Mukhtar was successful in executing all the major criminals of Karbala. There was also the uprising of Zayd ibn 'Ali, as well as others.

Eventually, the Umayyad regime was destroyed by these revolutions. Even the takeover of power by the Abbasids, whose intentions were impure, was under the banner of taking revenge for Imam Ḥusayn (as), even though they only used this as an excuse to mobilise people.

The secret key of this blessed revolution lies in the firm faith in God, and the willingness to sacrifice everything for His sake. These ideals were demonstrated by Imam Ḥusayn (as) when the Muslims were in need of such an example most.

Imam Ḥusayn wanted to change the life of Muslims to be in conformity with Islamic laws and ideals, and to give them justice.

MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT KARBALĀ'

Every year, the Shi'a commemorate the message of Imam Ḥusayn (as) in mosques and centres all over the world. The real purpose of these gatherings is to remember the values that the Imam (as) demonstrated in Karbala, so that we can apply these values in our lives today.

Imam al-Reḍā (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)."ⁱⁱ

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.

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:ⁱⁱⁱ

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

POST ASHURA- THE ROLE OF SAYYIDA ZAINAB (AS)

The revolution of Imam Ḥusayn (as) would not have been alive nor would have been as successful as it was had it not been for the bravery of this heroine of Karbala. Sayyeda Zaynab, (as) the sister of Imam Ḥusayn (as) witnessed all the shocking scenes in Karbala, the loss of her family, her children and her brother. She was tasked with being the leader whilst Imam al-Sajjād (as) was ill.

He patiently looked after the traumatised women and children; nursed the Imam (as) back to health, and stood up to 'Ubaydullah and Yazid with her eloquent and powerful speeches in Kufa and Damascus.

These powerful speeches contain many lessons and values from which we can learn. They served to tell people what had actually happened in Karbala, as well as

triggering them to repent, and motivating them to bring about change in their communities.

(<http://www.al-islam.org/probe-history-ashura-dr-ibrahim-ayati/chapter-32-sermon-lady-zaynab-court-yazid>)

Homework - Research

- 1. What divine laws did Sayyeda Zaynab (as) refer to when showing Yazid that he should not be proud of his current state?**
- 2. Write the verse that Sayyeda Zaynab (as) used to tell Yazīd not to be content with the actions he perpetrated?**
- 3. Give 3 arguments Sayyeda Zaynab poses to Yazīd proving that the Ahlul Bayt will be the eventual victors, in this world and the Hereafter?**

ⁱ Please refer to this book <http://www.al-islam.org/misbah-uz-zulam-roots-karbala-tragedy-sayyid-imdad-imam> to get a clearer understanding of the roots of the tragedy.

ⁱⁱ http://www.al-islam.org/azadari_40hadith/

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

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

السلام عليك يا زين العابدين و سيد الساجدين

IMAM AL-SAJJĀD (as)

امام السجاد (ع)

FUNDAMENTALS OF ISLAM

LEVEL 5

Imam al-Sajjād (as)

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Briefly discuss the historical environment in which the Imam lived after Karbala and the reasons for the Imam's grief
- Discuss the importance of building a strong relationship with Allah by discussing and analysing excerpts from the Imam's du'as

Imam al-Sajjād (as) was the son of Imam Ḥusayn (as) and his wife, Shahzanaan, the daughter of the past king of Iran. Imam al-Sajjād (as) was the only son of Imam Ḥusayn (as) to survive the battle of Karbala. The Holy Imam lived for about thirty-four years after his father. He was poisoned in 95AH after thirty-five years of Imamate. In this lesson we will briefly outline some of the many aspects of the Holy Imam's life.

HIS WORSHIP AND KNOWLEDGE

Imam al-Sajjād's (as) holy name provides a synonym for the perfect worshipper. Like his grandfather Imam 'Alī (as), he prayed 1,000 rak'āt every day and night. His constant prostration in worship earned him the titles of al-Sajjād (The one who constantly prostrates), Zainul'Abidīn (The adornment of the worshippers), and Ḍul Thaaafenāt, referring to the calluses which every year formed on, and fell off his skin in the spots touching the ground in prostration.

The knowledge and piety of this Holy Imam was matchless. His knowledge of Allah (SWT) was so perfect, that whenever he sat for ablution for prayers, the complexion of his face would change and when he stood at prayer his body was seen trembling. When asked why this was, he replied, "Don't you know before whom I stand in prayer, and with whom I hold discourse?" The Prophet (saw) said;

"On the day of Judgement a caller will call, "Where is the adornment of the worshippers (Zainul-'Ābidīn)?" and it is as if I am looking at my son Ali ibn al-Ḥusayn emerging from between the rows"¹

HIS CHARITY

Like his grand-father Imam 'Ali (as), Imam al-Sajjād (as) used to carry bags of flour and bread for the poor and needy families in Medina on his own back at night and in this way maintained

hundreds of poor families in the city. His son, the fifth Imam (as) says:

“Verily he used to provide for one hundred households from among the poor of Madina. He liked for the orphans, the needy, the disabled, the poor and the destitute to be present at his food spread. He served them with his own hands. If anyone among them had a family, he used to take the food to their household. He never ate any food but that he first gave charity from it”ⁱⁱ



DURING & AFTER KARBALA

During Karbala, the holy Imam was 22 or 23 years of age and by the wisdom of Allah (SWT) he was extremely ill and thus unable to physically fight in the battlefield. In this way his holy life was saved and Imamatus (divine leadership) continued.

After the gruesome day of 'Ashura', the brutal forces of Yazīd's army took the ladies and children as captives, carrying them seated on the bare back of the camels. The Holy Imam, although sick, was put in heavy chains with iron rings around his neck and his ankles, and was made to walk barefooted on the thorny plains from Karbala to Kufah and to Damascus. When the Imam's caravan finally arrived at the court of the

tyrant, Yazīd, in Damascus, the Imam despite his physical exhaustion and emotional pain was able to deliver an eloquent sermon reminding the people who he was and of all his virtues. The effect of the speech was so powerful that everybody in the court began to weep and blame Yazīd. Yazīd was afraid that if Imam continued his speech, there would be a revolution and revolt.

Below is an excerpt from the sermon:

"Whoever recognizes me knows me, and whoever does not recognize, let me tell him who I am and to what family I belong..... I am the son of Mecca and Mina; I am the son of Zamzam and al-Şafa; I am the son of the one who carried Zakāt in the ends of the mantle; I am the son of the best man who ever put on a loincloth and clothes..... I am the son of the man whose body lies alone on the ground in Karbala, surrounded by angels and the jinns for whom all the wild animals even cry"ⁱⁱⁱ

IMAM'S STRATEGIC METHOD OF PREACHING

When the Imam was returned to Madina for the second time, he retired from an active public life in order to avoid any suspicion from his enemies. He strategically was in contact only with the elite among the Shi'ites such as Abu Ḥamzah al-Thumālī, Abu Khālīd al-Kabulī and the like. On one hand he trained these elite in the sciences of Islam and asked them to spread it, and on the other he recited several supplications which contained comprehensive Islamic teachings in theology, ethics and spirituality. In this way Shi'ism spread considerably and showed its effects during the Imamatus of the Fifth Imam.

Among the works of the fourth Imam is a book called al-Şahifah al-Sajjādiyyah. It consists of fifty-seven supplications. The spiritual richness contained in these supplications demonstrates the lofty status of the Imam and his close proximity with Allah (SWT). We, followers of the Ahlul Bayt possess a treasure in these supplications. An excerpt from one of these supplications follows:

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

Oh God, place us among those whose habit is rejoicing in You and yearning for You, whose time is spent in sighing and moaning!”^{iv}

THE IMAM'S GRIEF

Several accounts are related concerning Zayn al-Abidin's grief over the tragedy of Karbala. It is said that for twenty years whenever food was placed before him, he would weep. One day a servant said to him, 'O son of Allah's Messenger! Is it not time for your sorrow to come to an end?' He replied:

"Woe upon you! Jacob the prophet had twelve sons, and Allah made one of them disappear. His eyes turned white from constant weeping, his head turned grey out of sorrow, and his back became bent in gloom, though his son was alive in this world. But I watched while my father, my brother, my uncle, and seventeen members of my family were slaughtered all around me. How should my sorrow come to an end?"

The Imam (as) also showed his grief so that the Muslims would never forget the values demonstrated by Imam Ḥusayn and his companions in Karbala, and remain motivated to establish true Islam.

RESPECTING THE MOURNERS

One of Imam's companions invited the Imam (as) to his house on the occasion of his daughter's wedding. The Imam (as) politely requested to be excused from attending as since his father's martyrdom he never attended wedding ceremonies. The companion of the Imam was very saddened by this and told the Imam that he would do anything that would make the Imam attend. The Imam requested to have a short majlis for his father (as) and the companion happily obliged.

On the day of the occasion, the companion of the Imam was restlessly awaiting the presence of his dear Imam. He kept looking around for the Imam but he could not find him. He thought to himself: 'It is impossible for my Imam to promise me

something and not fulfil it'. So he went out of the house to look for the Imam. To his surprise and utter embarrassment, he saw the holy Imam on his knees arranging the shoes of all the visitors. The companion could not see this and burst out into tears rushing to stop the Imam from doing so. "Oh Son of the Messenger of Allah, *you (of all the people)* are arranging the shoes?!!"

The Imam replied "You do not understand the high and lofty status of those who attend the majlis of my father!"

Review Questions

1. The title of the Imam, Zainul 'Ābidīn, means?

- a. The peak of eloquence
- b. The adornment of the worshipper
- c. The one who prostrates

2. The Imam was ill during Karbala so that:

- a. His life would be saved and the Imam after Imam Ḥusayn could continue
- b. He could protect the women and children after Karbala
- c. He could bury the martyrs of Karbala

3. The Imam of the Imam lasted 35 years, and in this time he:

- a. Strategically spread the message of Islam
- b. Trained special companions with Islamic sciences
- c. Recited supplications which were rich in Islamic principles
- d. All of the above

ⁱ Bihar Al Anwar Vol.46 pg3,No.1

ⁱⁱ Al Manaqib Li Ibn Shahr Ashub Vol 4, Pg 154

ⁱⁱⁱ For the full sermon, please visit

<http://english.almaaref.org/essaydetails.php?eid=2082&cid=245>

^{iv} Munajat Muhibbeen (Whispered prayers of the Lovers)



IMAM AL-BĀQIR ^[AS]

إمام الباقر (ع)

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Students should get a brief overview of the historical context in which the Imam (as) lived
- Students should gain an insight into the importance of seeking Islamic knowledge
- Students should gain an insight into some of the principles of seeking knowledge according to the teachings of Islam

Imam al-Bāqir (as)

In previous years, you have learnt some basic facts about the life of Imam al-Bāqir (as), as well as the importance he gave to acquiring and passing on knowledge. In this lesson we will continue that theme by discussing the importance of gaining Islamic knowledge, and how Islamic and ‘secular’ knowledge interact.

THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF THE IMAM (AS)

Imam Muḥammad al-Bāqir (as) lived in a unique time in Islamic history. In the generations before his Imamate, the Muslims were ruled by the oppressive Umayyad regime, which did not allow the Imams to teach Islam as it was supposed to be taught and basically gave them no freedom. However, the time of Imam Bāqir’s (as) imamat coincided with the weakening of the Umayyad rule and its eventual destruction. Because the Umayyad family was busy fighting for power, the Imam (as) had more freedom than many of the other Imams.

FUNDAMENTALS OF ISLAM

LEVEL 5

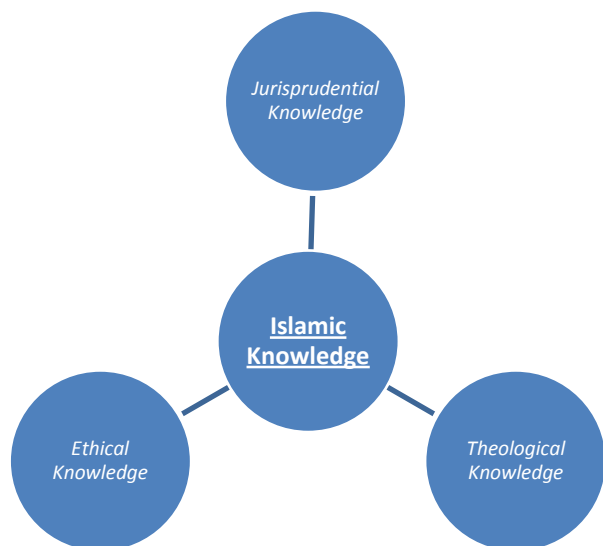
He used this freedom to pass on the true teachings of Islam. According to some narrations, he had over 8000 students in various fields. He passed on a great amount of valuable knowledge, and it is perhaps for this reason that his grandfather the Prophet (saw) gave him the title of ‘al-Bāqir’, meaning ‘the one who splits knowledge’. Imam al-Bāqir (as) put a lot of emphasis on the importance of gaining knowledge, to the extent that he said:

“If I come across any Shī‘i youth who is not gaining knowledge of his religion, I would strike him painfully.”ⁱ

THE IMPORTANCE OF ISLAMIC STUDIES

In previous years, you have learnt about the importance of seeking knowledge and pursuing a career that would benefit society. This year, we will be specifically discussing the importance of gaining Islamic knowledge, and some of the reasons why gaining a solid foundation in Islamic knowledge is so important. Perhaps the first reason is that whichever science we learn, we will always have the capacity to use it for good or evil. Therefore, learning a science in itself is not so virtuous. It is putting that science to good use that is truly virtuous. In order to know how to put our knowledge to good use, it is essential that we have a solid foundation of Islamic knowledge. It is this Islamic knowledge which will help us gain the real benefits and rewards of the other sciences we have learnt. Imam al-Bāqir (as) reminds us of this fact when he says:

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



THEOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE

Knowing about the fundamentals of our faith gives meaning to all our actions and purpose to our life. This is perhaps why the Prophet (saw) says:

“A little knowledge is better than a lot of worship.”ⁱⁱⁱ

JURISPRUDENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

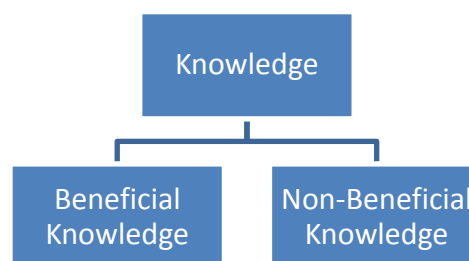
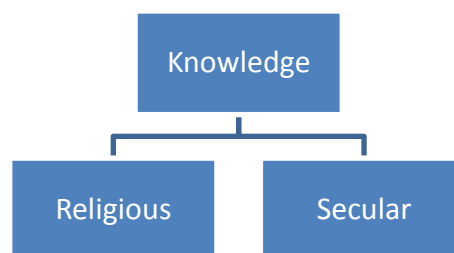
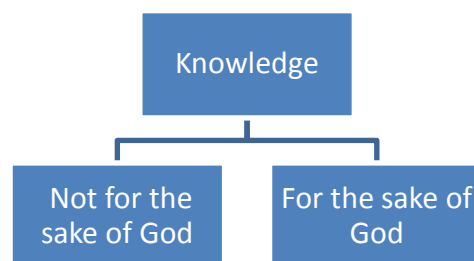
The laws of jurisprudence are there to regulate our life and help us reach our perfection in the fastest way possible. Knowledge of these rules is so essential that Imam al-Ṣadiq (as) tells us:

“Hasten towards gaining knowledge, for by the one in whose hands is my soul, one narration about halaal and haraam which you may take from a truthful person is better for you than the entire world and all the gold and silver it contains.”^{iv}

ETHICAL KNOWLEDGE

Although knowledge of how we should treat one another in society is inherent to all of us, sometimes we need to be alerted to this or reminded of it. Therefore, learning about the ethical teachings of Islam is essential, because it is the way in which we can improve our personalities and be beneficial to our societies.

TYPES OF KNOWLEDGE: AN ISLAMIC CATEGORISATION



Read the following two narrations then see which of the above three categorisations is correct

“He who gains knowledge for the sake of Allah, acts upon it for the sake of Allah and teaches it for the sake of Allah is called great in the kingdom of the heavens...”^v

One day, the Prophet (saw) walked into the mosque and saw a group of people gathered around a man whom they were calling a scholar. The Prophet asked about the man’s field of expertise. They said that the man was an expert in Arab ancestry, history and poetry. The Prophet (saw) said:

“this knowledge neither harms the one who does not know it, nor benefits the one who knows it.”^{vi}

PUTTING KNOWLEDGE INTO PRACTICE

Of all the sciences we may learn, it is perhaps the Islamic sciences which we should work hardest to put into practice. According to Islamic teachings, knowledge without practice is considered a ‘betrayal’, a reason for entering the Hell-fire and a ‘curse’.

We should try to keep a check on ourselves, and examine whether we are putting the knowledge we gain into practice. This self-examination should occur frequently during our journey of learning.

STRIVING TO ATTAIN KNOWLEDGE

Seeking knowledge is often not easy and requires long nights, sacrifices and a lot of self-discipline. In fact, Imam ‘Ali (as) says that:

“acquiring knowledge is not possible while the body (person) is tranquil.”^{vii}

The Prophet (saw) encourages us to tackle these difficulties, even encouraging us to travel as far as China in order to seek knowledge.

AVICENNA: A WELL-ROUNDED SCHOLAR

Avicenna (or Ibn Sina) was a scholar born in Persia, who managed to excel in many fields of both religious and natural sciences. He was a doctor, a polymath (an expert in various areas of maths), a physicist, a chemist and an astronomer. At the same time, he was an expert in philosophy and theology, and his textbooks in these fields are studied till today. The amazing thing about Avicenna was that he was a pioneer in each of the fields he took up. He was a famous and brilliant physician and he revolutionised the sciences of philosophy and theology. He was a great example of how one can bring together religious and ‘secular’ knowledge. The following story shows us perhaps why he was so successful.



When Avicenna was young, he was already known for his amazing intellect. He had memorised the Qur’an by age 10, and was already studying mathematics, medicine and jurisprudence. He then began to study philosophy, and he found this more difficult. Each time he was faced with something he did not understand he would perform ablution, go to the mosque and pray until he found the solution.

There was one book in particular which he could not understand. It was called the ‘Metaphysics of Aristotle’. He was so determined to understand this book that it is said he read it forty times over. He would dream about this book, and he had memorised all its words. However, he still could not understand it. One day, he was walking past a bookstall when he found a book for the value of three dirhams, which was supposed to be an explanation of the ‘Metaphysics of Aristotle’. This book was the commentary of al-Farabi. He bought the book and once he read it, he understood everything in the ‘Metaphysics of Aristotle’. This made Avicenna very happy and he hurried back to the mosque to offer thanks to Allah, the Great, by praying and giving charity to the poor.

This story shows firstly that Avicenna saw his scientific pursuits as part of his worship and journey towards Allah, the Exalted. It also shows his amazing persistence when he faced ^{viii}difficulties on the path of attaining knowledge.

Class Activity

- Your homework for this week is to take time to make a 5-year plan for your Islamic studies in the near future. When making your plan, consider the following:
- What books would you like to read or which lecture series would you like to listen to?
- Which fields or specific topics within Islamic study are you most interested in?
- Have you considered formal study programs such as the e-hawza or courses that can be done by correspondence over the internet?
- Do you have hopes to be a teacher of Islamic studies in the future?

Practice Questions

1. What was the name of the oppressive dynasty which ruled at the time of Imam Bāqir’s childhood?
2. List three benefits of gaining Islamic knowledge.

ⁱ (*Miskhātul Anwār*, no.685)

ⁱⁱ (*Mizānul Hikmah*, no. 4471)

ⁱⁱⁱ (*Mizānul Hikmah*, 4464)

^{iv} (*Miskhātul Anwār*, no 682)

^v (*Imam al-Ṣadiq, Mizānul Hikmah*, no. 4505)

^{vi} (*Miskhātul Anwār*, no. 708)

^{vii} (*Ghurarul Hikmah*, p. 348)

^{viii} **Bibliography**

1. *Miskhātul Anwār*, Section 3, Chapter
2. *Mizānul Hikmah*, Section 288
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IMAM AL-ŞĀDIQ^[A.S]

امام الصادق (ع)

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Review basic biographical facts about the Imam (as)
- Review the historical and political circumstances of the life of the Imam (as)
- Discuss the importance the Imam placed on knowledge in this time
- Further develop the understanding of humility as an attribute of the Imam

FUNDAMENTALS OF ISLAM

LEVEL 5

Imam al-Şādiq (as)

Imam Ja'far bin Muḥammad al-Şadiq (as) was born and brought up under the care of his father, Imam Muḥammad al-Bāqir (as). He is our sixth Imam. Before his martyrdom, our fifth Imam passed the Imamate to Imam al Şādiq (as). He became the authority of jurisprudents, scholars and preachers.

Thousands of scholars from various fields learnt from him and were under his mentorship. He made the mosque of Medina a university that spread Islamic ideology. Scholars and preachers gave their testimonies in acknowledgement of his great standing and abundant knowledge.

POLITICS AT THE TIME OF IMAM AL-ŞĀDIQ (AS)

The period of his Imamate coincided with one of the most revolutionary and eventful era of Islamic history which saw the downfall of the Umayyad Caliphate and the rise of the Abbasid Caliphate. The internal wars and political upheavals were bringing about speedy changes in government. Thus the Holy Imam (as) witnessed the reigns of various caliphs from both Umayyad and Abbasid families. It was due to the political strife between these two groups that the Holy Imam was left alone undisturbed to carry out his devotional duties and peacefully carry on his mission to propagate Islam and spread the teachings of the Holy Prophet (saw).

In the last days of the Umayyad rule, their Empire was teetering on the edge of collapse, and a most chaotic and demoralised state of affairs prevailed throughout the Islamic lands. The Abbasids exploited such an opportunity and availing themselves of this political instability, assumed the title of "Avengers of Ahlul Bayt (as)". They pretended to have stood for the cause of taking revenge on the Umayyad dynasty for shedding the innocent blood of Imam Ḥusayn (as).

In actual fact, this was just a false claim, while they were plotting only to gain power for themselves for the sake of having power and nothing else. The common people were thus deceived into supporting them and when these Abbasids did succeed in snatching power from the Umayyads, they turned against the Ahlul Bayt (as).

Once they had settled into power, they began a reign of oppression against the Ahlul Bayt, killing a large number of innocent people from among them. In the end, the Abbasid dynasty was responsible for the murder of more Imams of the Ahlul Bayt (as) than even the Umayyads.

THE RELIGIOUS CONDITION AT THE TIME OF IMAM (AS)

The downfall of the Umayyads and the rise of the Abbasids constituted the two principal plots in the drama of Islamic history. This was a most chaotic and revolutionary period when the religious morals of Islam had gone down and the teachings of the Holy Prophet (saw) were being neglected, and a state of anarchy was rampant.

It was also at this time where the political battles between the Umayyad and Abbasid caliphates created an opportunity of freedom for the people to seek knowledge and ask questions regarding a wide range of topics from science to religion including importance concepts like the existence of God, His Unity and other fundamental aspects of faith. This allowed also people from other religions to visit Medina and discuss such issues with the Muslims.

It was amidst such an environment that the virtuous personage of the Imam (as) stood like a beacon of light. The world inclined towards his virtuous and admirable personality. On account of his great learning he was always triumphant in his many debates with the leaders of other groups like Atheists, Christians, Jews, etc.

EDUCATIONAL REVOLUTION AND THE IMPORTANCE OF KNOWLEDGE

During this period, the Imam had a golden opportunity to emphasise the importance of knowledge. His genius and exemplary level of knowledge and faith with the help of Allah (SWT) allowed him to start an educational revolution which led to a very powerful and yet subtle movement in favour of Islam.

The versatile genius of Imam al Ṣādiq (as) in all branches of knowledge was acclaimed throughout the Islamic world, and attracted students from far-off places towards him till the number of his students and disciples had reached four thousand. The scholars and experts in Divine Law have quoted many traditions (hadith) from Imam al Ṣādiq (as). His disciples compiled hundreds of books on various branches of science and arts including jurisprudence, Ḥadith, astronomy and chemistry.

An example of the students of the Imam was Jabir ibn Ḥayyan, a famous scholar of mathematics, astronomy and chemistry. He was one of the Holy Imam's disciples who benefited from the Holy Imam's knowledge and guidance and was able to write 400 books on different subjects.

THE WISDOM OF IMAM AL-ṢĀDIQ (AS)

Tawḥīd of Mufaḍḍal: a Reflection of the Imam's Knowledge

Mufaddal ibn 'Umar al-Kufi was a student of Imam al-Ṣādiq (a) who was instructed by the Imam for four days and compiled the Imam's teachings in the form of the above-named treatise.

One day when Mufaḍḍal was sitting in the mosque, some famous atheist by the name of Ibn Abi 'Aujā' came into the mosque with a comrade and began discussing with him concepts of religion and talking aloud began questioning the existence of God, and then claimed that there was no God.

Upon hearing this, Mufaḍḍal was outraged and said to him, "O disbeliever! Do you disbelieve in the faith of Allah (SWT) by totally denying the existence of Him, who created you in such perfection, transforming you from one state to another, till you arrived at your present form? Had you just considered about your own self and

had your fine understanding helped you truthfully, you would have recognised in your own soul such obvious proofs of the existence of the Almighty Allah, the signs of His All comprehending sustenance and the evidence of His boundless workmanship."

The atheist said: "If you are of the company of Ja'far ibn Muḥammad (as), it does not behove you to talk in the strain that you do, for his is not this mode of address, nor does he argue with us in such rudeness. He has heard more of our words than you have done, but he has never used any impropriety, nor has he ever retorted aggressively.

He is very forbearing, dignified, reasonable and of mature intellect. He is never harsh nor touchy. He listens to our talk very attentively. He invites our arguments, so much so that when we have exhausted our armoury and we think to have silenced him, he, with a brief resume, deadens all our reasoning and dumfounds us, so that we are left without a plank to answer the arguments of the revered personage. If you are of his company, then talk to us in the same strain."

Mufaḍḍal went to, Imam Ja'far al-Ṣādiq (as) in a sad state and sought advice. He was upset by what had happened at the mosque.

The Imam (as) told him to come back the next day when he gave him a detailed explanation about some biological facts which would leave no doubt for the existence of God.

These instructions of the Imam were compiled into a book, which is available in English and can also be accessed online at: <http://www.al-islam.org/tradition-of-mufaddal-pearls-of-wisdom-from-imam-jafar-as-sadiq>

Ḥadith about Creation

One day a notable person by the name of Abu Shakir asked the Imam about the creation of the universe. The Imam (as) said:

"The easiest evidence for that is what I will show you (now)," answered the Imam (as). Then he called for an egg and put it in the palm of his hand. "This is a compact protective container; inside it is the thin (substance of an) egg which is surrounded by what could be compared with fluid silver and melted gold. Do you doubt that?"

"There can be no doubt about that," replied Abu Shakir.

"Then it splits open showing a form like (for example) a peacock," continued the Imam (as). "Has anything entered into it other than what you knew (to be there already)?"

"No," he replied.

"This is the evidence for the creation of the world," concluded the Imam.

THE HUMILITY OF IMAM AL-ṢĀDIQ (AS)

Tawaḍu' (modesty and humility) is the opposite of arrogance and pride.

Imam as-Ṣādiq (as) lived as the most humble of people. Like the Holy Prophet (saw), he stopped at the places where children were gathered, greeted them, and played with them. If someone held him by the hand and wanted to lead him somewhere, he never objected. He helped his family members with the housework. When people were working, he worked with them. He mended his shoes and clothes and did all other domestic work. He sat at the table with his servants. He always welcomed the poor warmly, looked after widows and orphans, visited the ill, followed funeral processions, and answered the call of needy in his community.

Even though Imam al-Ṣādiq (as) was a highly respected person in the community and had a very high status with Allah (SWT), this status never made him proud. He never thought or acted like 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.

In today's world, people are proud of certain qualities they may have. Among these are:

- Good looks
- Money or wealth
- A good job, profession or position
- Knowledge and education
- Colour or race
- Nationality

We have to remember that many of these things are not even under our control and those that are, are only so

because Allah (SWT) has granted us the ability to attain those blessings and has given us permission to hold them in trust. There is no room to attribute any of the blessings we enjoy as being from our own selves and allow ourselves to be proud.

Instead, we should remain modest and humble, and never think that we are better than others, or act in such a way. This is one of the main lessons that we can learn from the life of Imam al-Ṣādiq (as).

Review Questions

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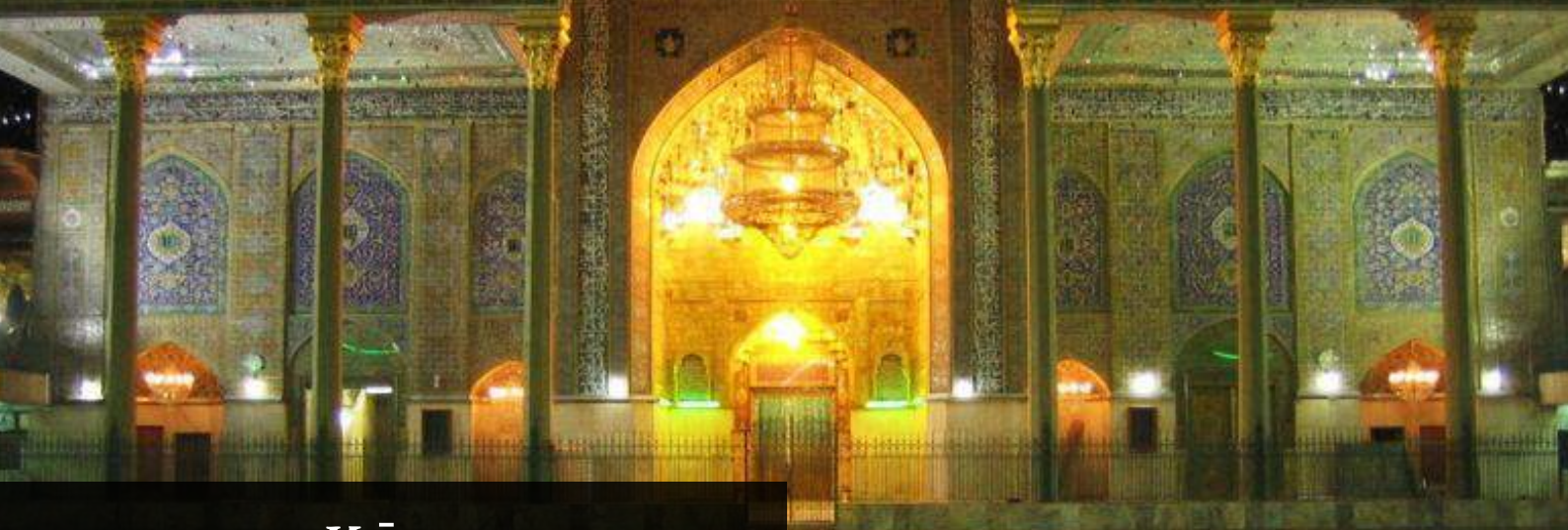
Q1. Which two governments were fighting each other at the time of Imam al-Ṣādiq (as)?

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

Q2. Who was the famous companion who has been known as the father of mathematics and Algebra in particular. He studied under Imam al-Sadiq (as)?

- Abu Ḥanifa
- Jabir ibn Ḥayyan
- Mansour al Dawāniqi

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IMAM AL-KĀDĪM ^[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 5

Imam al-Kāḍim (as)

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



We have learnt about the life of Imam al-Kāḍim (as) in previous years. We learnt that he earned this title because of his amazing ability to control his anger. Another honour given to him by Allah (SWT) is that he is: *bābul ḥawāij* (the door to the needs). This special power of intercession was given to the Imam by Allah (SWT) because of the great hardship he suffered during his life.

THE POLITICAL CONDITION

Imam al-Kāḍim (as) was born during the struggle between the Umayyad and Abbasid families, who were both oppressors and tyrants, and he spent of his life under the tyrannical rule of the Abbasids. Both these parties claimed to hold the position of Islamic Leadership, whilst they both knew that this position rightfully belonged to the Ahlul Bayt (as). Due to this reason, the Imams always faced oppression for the tyrants feared they would gather support and try to overthrow them. The love of power and the world made these regimes treat the Imams unjustly, especially so in the life of Imam al-Kāḍim (as).

Imam al-Kāḍim (as) was the Imam for a period of 35 years, making his Imamate the longest after the Imamate of our present Imam (atfs). During his time as the imam, he spent 10 years under al-Manṣūūr, 10 years under al-Mahdi, one year and some months under al-Hādi and about 12 years under the rule of Harān al-Rashid, who finally assassinated the Imam by poisoning him.

The Abbasid caliphs were extremely paranoid and always on alert on any attempts to overthrow them; and the Imam was fully aware of this danger. After all, they knew that the Imam was the most righteous and knowledgeable of the time, and they saw this as a threat to their dynasty.

Despite this, the Imam continued to teach the Muslim community and to disseminate true Islamic knowledge.

False Imprisonment

One of the hardships that Imam al-Kāḍim (as) faced was false imprisonment under the Abbasid regime, where he was imprisoned several times simply because the Abbasid rulers felt threatened by him and were scared he was plotting to overthrow them.

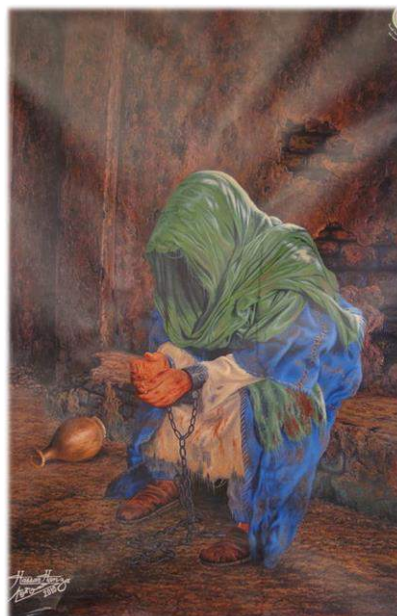
Thawbani narrates: Imam al-Kāḍim (as) for about ten years, performed a single prostration from sunrise until noon every day. “Hārūn would sometimes climb onto a roof that overlooked the prison cell wherein he has imprisoned the Imam. He would see the Imam (as) in prostration. He asked his companion, ‘what is that cloth I see on that spot every day?’ His companion replied ‘O Commander of the Faithful, that is not a cloth but it is Mūsā ibn Ja’far (as). He performs a prostration every day from sunrise until noon.’ Hārūn said, ‘He is indeed one of the holy men from the Bani Hāshim.’ I asked, ‘Then

why have you confined him to captivity?’ He said, ‘Alas! That is how it must be.’ⁱ

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 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 Ḥajj pilgrimage. So Ṣafwān was forced to sell his camels.

THE IMAM IN VARIOUS PRISONS



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.

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.

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 Musā was such that he was given the title of 'al-Kādim'. 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.

- d) **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.ⁱⁱ

QUR'ĀNIC VERSES & NARRATIONS ON ANGER

"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 'Ali advises 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

1. Choose a particular topic- it may be related to ethics, jurisprudence or theology. Try to gather at least two narrations on this topic from Imam al-Kāḍim (as). Write a short 400 word essay on the topic using these narrations as the basis for your research. Discuss this with your teacher and fellow students in your next class. Make sure to cross-check these narrations with other narrations from the Ahlul Bayt (as) on the same topic. A good resource to use is a book titled: 'Tuhaful Uqool'.

ⁱ (Uyun Akhbar al-Rida (as), v1, p.95)

ⁱⁱ **References:**

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IMAM AL-Redā [A.S]

امام الرضا (ع)

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Briefly review the historical and political environment of the Imam (as)
- Discuss the legacy of the Imam (as)
- Focus on a few famous narrations as an example of the above
- Discuss the trait of the Imam (as)

FUNDAMENTALS OF ISLAM

LEVEL 5

Imam al-Redā (as)

The eighth divinely chosen leader from the Household of the Holy Prophet is Imam 'Ali ibn Mūsā al-Redā (as). Many lessons can be learnt by thoroughly examining his life, which was characterized by immense difficulties and oppression.



THE LIFE OF IMAM AL-REDĀ (AS)

When his father, Imam al-Kāḍim (as) was poisoned in prison in 183 A.H, Imam al-Redā (as) took over the great responsibility of Imamāt at the age of 35. He carried out his duties in Medina peacefully and played a vital role in spreading the correct teachings of the Holy Prophet (saw) and the correct interpretation of the Holy Qur'an.

Hārūn, the Abbasid Caliph who had made life very difficult for the followers of the Imams (as) 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 were increasing in number despite torture and oppression, and changed his approach, taking advantage of the position of Imam al-Redā (as) to strengthen his own position. He cunningly declared himself Shi'ah and ordered that the descendants of Imam 'Ali (as) should not be harmed.

He then offered Imam al-Reḍā (as) the position of being the heir of the king. The Imam, aware of the al-Ma'mūn's evil intentions, refused initially, but was forced to accept after his life was threatened.

Imam al-Reḍā (as) 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. He took advantage of the opportunity to spread the teachings of Islam further. He taught the people valuable lessons from the sacrifice of Imam Ḥusayn (as) in Karbala and publicly debated leaders of other ideologies, dispelling their doubts and guiding them to the right path.

FAMOUS WORKS

A number of books and writings have been attributed to Imam al-Reḍā (as). A famous work is *al-Risalah al-Dhahabiyyah fil Ṭibb* - The Golden Medical Dissertation. This dissertation is one of the most precious pieces of Islamic legacy dealing with the science of medicine, involving unprecedented details in anatomy, biology, physiology, pathology and the science of health care. al-Ma'mūn had a discussion about various sciences with the top scholars of the time. When the discussion moved on to medicine, he asked Imam al-Reḍā (as) to share what he knows. The Imam replied that he will make a compilation of his knowledge on this subject, and later sent it to al-Ma'mūn in the form of a letter. al-Ma'mūn was so impressed by the exact medical details in the letter that he ordered for it to be written in gold.

Another book that is often attributed to Imam Redha (as) is 'al-Fiqh al-Raḍawī', which contains many jurisprudential instructions. However, there are doubts as to whether it was personally written by our blessed Imam or not.

A famous book which contains the narrations of Imam al-Reḍā (as) is called 'Uyūn Akhbār al-Reḍā (as). It was compiled in the 10th Century by one of the greatest Shi'ah scholars, Sheikh al-Ṣadūq. Most of the narrations in this compilation are dependable.



The book also contains the full transcripts of the famous debates which Imam al-Reḍā (as) had in which he defeated the leaders of various beliefs.

NARRATIONSⁱ

HADITH OF THE GOLDEN CHAIN

Imam al-Reḍā (as) narrated through the golden chain of infallible narrators: from his father from his grandfather...from the Commander of the Faithful, from the Prophet (saw) that the angel Gabriel heard that Allah (SWT) said: " 'There is no God but Allah' (la ilāha illa Allah) is my fortress and whoever enters my fortress shall be safe from my punishment". Imam al-Reḍā (as) then commented himself, saying "There are a few conditions [to this] and I am one of its conditions". ⁱⁱ

DEBATE WITH A CHRISTIAN

During a debate with a Christian leader, Imam al-Reḍā (as) told him: "By Allah, we believe in 'Īsā who believed in Muḥammad, may Allah bless him and his family. We have nothing against 'Īsā except his weakness and the paucity of his fasting and prayer."

When the Christian leader heard the last words of the Imam's statement, he shouted: "By Allah, you have corrupted your knowledge! Your affair has become weak! I thought that you were the most learned of the Muslims!" The Imam faced him calmly, asking: "Why?" "Because of your statement that 'Īsā was weak with little fasting and praying, (while) 'Īsā never broke fasting by day and never slept by night. He always fasted by day and prayed by night." The Imam got ready to disprove the Christian belief that Jesus is God. He asked the Catholic: "To whom then did Jesus fast and pray?"

The Catholic did not answer, not knowing what to say.ⁱⁱⁱ

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN GOD'S WILL AND PEOPLE'S WILL^{iv}

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-REDĀ (AS)

Al-Reḍā (as) means being pleased with Allah (SWT). In our lives, we face a mixture of calamities and good fortunes. Allah (SWT) wills for us our fair share of trials, testifying that we are never given any burden which we cannot cope with.

A major challenge for us all is to remain pleased and satisfied with what Allah (SWT) has given us no matter what happens.

In times of good fortunes, being pleased with Allah (SWT) and thanking him for blessings causes Him to increase our blessings. In times of trials and hardships the benefit of remaining pleased with what Allah (SWT) is that we know that everything that is happening to us is due to the Will of Allah (SWT), meaning that there is great wisdom behind it and that He knows what is best for us. It will therefore prevent us from becoming disheartened and help us get through afflictions.

Imam al-Reḍā (as) displayed this quality throughout his life, especially towards the end of his life. When al-Ma'mūn was trying to assassinate the Imam, the Imam faced with the utmost calm and composure, giving himself up to the will of God.

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.

Review Questions

Q1. 'The Golden Medical Dissertation' was written by:

- A Greek Doctor
- Imam al-Reḍā (as)
- 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. Al-Reḍā means:

- Being pleased with Allah (SWT)
- Trusting in Allah (SWT)
- Believing in Allah (SWT)

ⁱ An introduction to tenth infallible Hazrat Imam Ali Reza (AS) - <http://www.ezsoftech.com/stories/infallible10.asp>

ⁱⁱ Oyoum Akhbar Al-Ridha, al-Alami publication, p. 134

ⁱⁱⁱ The life of Imām 'Ali Bin Mūsā al-Ridā by: Bāqir Sharif al-Qarashi

^{iv} Imam al-Rida - Historical and Biographical Research - <http://www.al-islam.org/al-rida/>



IMAM AL JAWAD ^[ASI]

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

FUNDAMENTALS OF ISLAM

LEVEL 5

Muhammad ibn 'Alī, the 9th Imam, sometimes called Abu Ja'far was known as al-Jawād (The Generous) and al-Taqī (the Pious). After his father Imam Ali Reḍā's (as) demise, the Abbasid Caliph, al-Ma'mun, summoned Imam al-Jawād (as) (who was then residing in Medina) to Khurasan in Iran. He later forced the Imam (as) to marry his al-Ma'mun's daughter. Later on, Imam al-Jawād (as) was allowed to return to Medina, devoting his life to teaching. After al-Ma'mun's death, however, he was summoned to Baghdad again, and according to most accounts was poisoned by his wife, the daughter of al-Ma'mun, by the evil plots of new caliph al-Mu'tasim. Dying at the age of 25, Imam Jawad (as) had the shortest life out of all of the Imams (as).

THE IMAM'S EARLY MATURITY

Imam Jawad (as) was only 9 years old when he lost his father, Imam al-Reḍā (as). It is Allah's (SWT) decree that this world shall never be left without a divine leader. Thus, Imam al-Jawād (as) (as) took his position of Divine leadership at the age of 9 years. The Shi'a at the time could not help asking whether a child at that age could take on such a responsibility. Imam al-Reḍā (as) in response to them used to illustrate the story of Jesus who was even younger when he had become the prophet of his time.

A companion of the Imam (as) says that he was 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 following narration beautifully describes a scene from the life of the Imam (as):

Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī 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 ‘Alī 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”.

In previous years we discussed the stories of the first encounter that Imam al-Jawād (as) had with Ma’mun and also the story of Imam’s contest with the most knowledgeable authority then, namely Yahya ibn Aakhtam. Both these stories exemplified the divinely granted abilities of the Imam while he was still young.ⁱ

POLITICAL SITUATION

Throughout the lives of the Ahlul Bayt, they had always met with strong opposition from the tyrannical rulers of their time. The period of Imam al-Jawād (as) was no different. The Abbasid ruler at the time was al-Ma’mun, who was succeeded by his brother al-Mu’tasim. Al-Ma’mun, unlike his successor had a softer approach towards them Imam. This was not because he loved the Imam but instead so that he could use the popularity of the Imam for his own selfish and political interests. al-Ma’mun, despite his cunning, was aware that the family of the Prophet had a special type of knowledge which should be appreciated and be known to other people as long as power remained in his hands and his authority remained supreme.

He began a policy of reconciliation with the Abbasid elders and also with those who had inclinations towards the Ahlul Bayt of the Prophet in order to attract more popularity himself. There was freedom of speech and expression which resulted in open discussions on main issues which were previously considered taboo. Al-Ma’mun encouraged the intellectuals to engage in open discussions about the concept of power and authority.

On the other hand, al-Mu’tasim was extremely jealous of Imam al-Jawād (as) due to his popularity amongst the community. When he took power, he immediately summoned Imam al-Jawād (as) to Baghdad. Here he plotted to kill the Imam and eventually was able to influence the wife of Imam to poison him.

CHARACTER AND VIRTUES

The members of the Ahlul bayt (as) were the perfect manifestations of the Divine attributes of Allah (SWT). Imam Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī was famously known as al-Jawād (the Generous) – one of the divine attributes- because of his open-handedness towards people. Let us remind ourselves of one example of the Imam’s generosity which we came across in previous years:

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...”

GENEROSITY

Generosity is a very lofty characteristic that everyone should aspire and work hard to develop. It involves giving all forms of whatever one possesses in terms of wealth, time and knowledge to those who are in need of it. The opposite of being generous is to be stingy.

DIMENSIONS OF GENEROSITY

Generosity can be practiced in almost every area of our lives. Here, we focus on material generosity- that is: giving from our possessions and time or expertise for the goodness or benefit of others.

Examples include:

- Giving money or food to someone in need. Our generosity is greater if we give despite being in need ourselves
- Inviting guests to our home for a meal and a pleasant gathering. This can increase love among the believers
- Giving a good loan to a friend who needs money to start a business or who is going through hard times. A good loan means we do not ask them for anything in return (e.g. interest) or hold our favour over them to make them feel bad
- Donating to charitable causes. These causes may include:
 - Orphanages
 - Organisations that help the poor and needy
 - Mosques and Islamic centres
 - Islamic schools and other organisations promoting the Truth of Islam

- Giving up our time and effort to help any of the above causes

Class Discussion

Discuss among your class, and come up with a list of good causes which may be deserving of our generosity.

COMPLETING OUR GENEROSITY

There are certain things that make our generosity complete. These include:

- Giving even during the time of difficulty,
- Giving without expecting any reward in return,
- Belittling the act
- Giving secretly

Imam Ali (as) said: “The best form of generosity is that expressed in spite of hardship”ⁱⁱ

The Imams of the Ahlul Bayt were habituated to going outside in the later parts of the night with a sack full of bread, meat and money. They used to carry it on the back of their necks and take it to those in need. Only after they passed away did people know that it was the Imam of the time who was being so generous and charitable toward them. Imam al-Jawād (as) was the crystallisation of this lofty virtue.

MERITS OF BEING GENEROUS

- One of the best merits of being generous is it totally purges the soul of the destructive characteristic of stinginess. Stinginess can only be removed by habituating the self to giving away wealth or whatever one is attached to. A person will be purified in proportion of how much wealth he gives away and in proportion to his happiness at spending it for the sake of Allah (SWT).
- The other merit of generosity is it causes people to love the one who is generous and they begin to enjoy his company:

“Man’s open-handedness endears him (causes him to be loved) to his opponents, and his stinginess, makes him hated even by his children”ⁱⁱⁱ

- Being generous is the best form of gratitude for the blessings of Allah (SWT). How vile is a person who looks upon a poor person – seeing how tough his circumstances are and how the poor person is even needier than himself – and does not allow himself to exercise thankfulness to Allah (SWT) for making him needless of begging.

MODERATION IN GENEROSITY

It is also very important that we do not go to either extreme. So while we should not be stingy, we should also not spend everything we have on others and be left with nothing ourselves. The Holy Qur'an instructs the Prophet (saw) on this:

“And let not your hand be tied (like a miser) to your neck, nor stretch it forth to its utmost reach, so that you become blameworthy and in severe poverty”^{iv}

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 وَحُجَّتُهُ عَلَى
عِبَادِهِ السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا أَمِيرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَشْهَدُ أَنَّكَ
جَاهَدْتَ فِي اللَّهِ حَقَّ جِهَادِهِ وَعَمِلْتَ بِكِتَابِهِ
وَاتَّبَعْتَ سُنْنَ 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. Imam al-Jawad (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

Q2. Explain in your own words a proof from the Holy Qur'an about why a representative of God can be a child.

Q3. How did Imam al-Jawād (as) (and his grandfather) come to be buried in Baghdad, Iraq, when the Ahlul Bayt (as) are originally from Medina?

ⁱ Refer to Level 4 lesson on Imam Jawad for the details of the stories.

ⁱⁱ Ghurarul Hikam no.3850

ⁱⁱⁱ Al Nawadir Al Rawandi Pg 130, no 183

^{iv} Holy Qur'an (17:29)



IMAM AL-HĀDĪ [A.S]

امام الهادي (ع)

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Discuss the historical and political environment of the time of Imam al-Hādi
- Understand the attribute of 'the Guide'
- Discuss the role of Imams as guides from the Qur'an and Hadith
- Discuss the ways in which the Imams guide us

Imam al-Hādi (as)

Imam 'Ali al-Hādi (as), our 10th Imam, lived at the time of the decline of the Abbasid Caliphate. The caliphate at that time was increasingly becoming paranoid and were forced to move their capital from Medina to Samarrā', a garrison town, just north of Baghdad today. The Abbasid reign was becoming precarious due to infighting within the ruling elite, and for a few years, this meant that Imam al-Hādi (as) in Medina could preach and spread the true Islam freely. It was not until the Al-Mutawakkil came into power that things changed.

FUNDAMENTALS OF ISLAM

LEVEL 5

THE IMAM MOVES TO SAMARRĀ'

As we have discussed in level 4, Imam was forced to move to Samarrā', as al-Mutawakkil felt threatened by Imam's popularity within the scholars of the time. al-Mutawakkil was incredibly corrupt and openly flaunted the laws of Allah (SWT) to the extent that he imprisoned the Imam (as) and later held him under house arrest. Even In this time of hardship, the Imam always took the opportunity to guide the people to the right path. An incident that demonstrates this is illustrated below.

Ya'qūbi writes in his history of the time that once the raiding party of soldiers found the Imam on his prayer mat and took him away to the caliph in the same state. al-Mutawakkil was engaged in his nightly drinking and frolics and asked the Imam to join him. The Imam declined replying: "a liquor such as that was never yet combined with my flesh and blood".

The half-drunk caliph asked the Imam to read some poetry. The Imam said that he did not indulge in such habits. But when the caliph insisted, the Imam recited the following lines:

"Protected by valiant warriors they passed the night on the summit of their mountains, but these mountains did not protect them. After all their power and pomp they had to descend from their lofty fortresses to the custody of the tombs. O' what a dreadful change. Their graves had hardly received them when a voice heard exclaiming, "Where are the thrones and the crowns and the robes of State?"

Where are now the faces of the delicate, which were shaded by veils and protected by curtains. To this the tomb replied: the worms are now revelling upon these faces. Long were these men eating and drinking, but now they are eaten by the worms in their turn.”

Many wept listening to these words uttered by the Imam. The Caliph left the Imam alone for a while, but still kept him under house arrest. In the end al-Mutawakkil died in the hands of his protectors, the Turkish guards, and his son al-Muntaṣir became the next caliph.

Mutawakkil died in 250 AH and al-Muntaṣir assumed the caliphate. He ruled for only six months. After him al-Musta’in took power, but soon he was also beheaded and succeeded by al-Mu’tazz. This tremendous amount of infighting within the Abbasids eventually led them to the path of complete destruction.

True to the characteristics of the Ahlul Bayt, al-Hādī (as) used to guide people even by his mere behaviour and attitude. For instance, when al-Mutawakkil summoned him from Medina to his capital and put him into prison, he appointed a stonehearted person named Zarraqi as the warden who had no mercy for anyone. But he (Zarraqi) was also astounded by the Imam’s excellent manners and his worship at all times.

Gradually he became the Imam's devotee and supporter. When al-Mutawakkil was informed about the condition of his spiritual inclinations he called him one day and said, *“I appointed you so that you behave with your prisoner in the utmost vicious and ill-behaved manner.”* He said, *“O Chief! This person seems to be higher than angels in spiritual accomplishments. Since he is in my charge, I have never seen him eat during the day or sleep at night. How do you expect me to deal harshly with one who is mostly busy in the worship of Allah, who fasts everyday, who does not demand anything, who never has a bad word for anyone, whose favourite activity is remembrance of Allah? How can I oppress him and destroy my Hereafter? O Chief! He laments so intensely due to the fear of Allah that his beard gets wet with his tears. He recites the Qur’an in such a melodious way that if one who hears it had a heart of stone, it would melt like wax. I think that you have put an angel under my charge. I have seen many worshippers but I haven't seen anyone like him.”*

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

As we have discussed previously, our Imams were the most pure representations of the Attributes of Allah (SWT) on this earth. Although the Imam (as) was the most knowledgeable, pious, etc. it is his characteristic of being a guide for the community at a very difficult time (intellectually) that earned him his title.

The word “Hādī” (The Guide) is derived from the Arabic word “Hada” (guided). Allah (SWT) attributes this action to Himself in many parts of the Qur’an, including the following:

“And Allah guides to the Home of Peace and guides whom He wills to the Straight Path.” (10: 25)

The straight path is a kind of way and God has given man the ability to make his own choices; and whosoever desires guidance; God guides him to a way that leads to the abode of peace for which man has been created. For that he has been given the ability to make his own choices. If he chooses the abode of peace (paradise) God guides him to the way that leads him to it. The Imam got this title because:

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*.

DO WE NEED A GUIDE?

It is one of the distinguishing characteristics of the Shi'ah that they do not take any person to guide them or lead them. If we were to navigate through a forest we have never been to before, we could make our own way through but the likely chance of getting through to the other side would be slim. If we followed a foolish guide or one who is as clueless as ourselves, blindly, we would not have a better fate. But if we followed an expert guide, the chances of meeting success would be greatly improved. Just the same way, we have to navigate through this material world, full of temptations and dangers to reach our final destination, we are obliged to choose a guide who knows the dangers, has not been a victim to those dangers and knows the paths!

OUR IMAMS ARE OUR GUIDES

Our Imams (as) were the guides of the community after the Prophet. They ensured that the Prophet's message was clarified and not distorted. As human beings, it is in our nature to either follow or lead. If we choose to lead, the responsibilities, characteristics and requirements are very different (which we will discuss in later classes) but if we choose to follow, we have to make valid decisions on whom to follow.

Allah (SWT) in His infinite wisdom, gifted human kind with guides of the highest calibre. Those who had specific characteristicsⁱ and behavioursⁱⁱ to be a perfect guide for us to follow in *all* aspects of our life. Following our own whim and desire can certainly lead us to disaster, indeed, Allah (SWT) in the Holy Qur'an says:

"Who strays more than one who follows his lust without guidance from Allah (SWT)?" (28:50)

In the context of this verse we come across a tradition which says:

"Whoever adopts his religion according to his own inclination and opinion and does not follow a true Imam, according to this āyah this is a misguided person"ⁱⁱⁱ.

Another tradition says:

"One, who worships much, but does not follow a true Imam, is certainly a misguided person, and Allah does not accept his worship".^{iv}

It is a fact that mankind is faced with one type of problem or another every day, and if the Islamic society does not seek the help of Allah's (SWT) commandments, the revelations and the true Imam, people will lose their peace of mind and each one of them will follow his own course and the Islamic society will be in a state of chaos and confusion.

HOW CAN WE KNOW OUR IMAMS?

Imam al-Hādi (as) eloquently introduced us to our Imams through one of the most powerful and most authentic of visitations: *al Ziyārah al-Jāmi'ah al-Kabirah*. (The Great Comprehensive Visitation). This was introduced by the Imam (as) to one of his companions (Musa al-Nakhai) at his request to teach him a comprehensive way of paying homage to any of the infallible Imams when visiting their shrines or from far away. It is an excellent lesson on Imamat from the Imam himself.

Whoever offers this visitation with love and cognizance of the divinely appointed Imams is purified from diseases of soul and body and all worries. A visitor, who obeys the Imam, refrains from all sins, then his good deeds which lack in perfection are accepted by Allah (SWT).^v

The first part of this visitation is a detailed description of the characteristics of the Imams (as), where the Imam says for instance:

"...the treasures of knowledge, the ultimate in forbearance, the foundation of generosity, the leaders of all nations, You administer and distribute the bounties, You are the elements of virtues, the pillars of goodness, you direct and guide mankind, you protect and support lands..."

This is followed by an exposition of their status with Allah (SWT), for instance:

"... (You – Oh Imams are) the followers people of the remembrance the Holy Qur'an, those who are in authority, that good which Allah has left with people, His choicest and His group. The store of His Knowledge. His argument, His path, His light, His proof ..."

Then, having understood their status, we bear witness to this status.

HOW DO WE SEEK GUIDANCE?

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 intelligence...."^{vi}

There are two fundamental parts of our life we need guidance in:

- 1- The Laws of Allah (e.g. how to fast, pray rules of transactions etc.)
- 2- Aspects of worldly life (such as buying a car which car to buy, what to study etc.)

In the first case, we all follow a Mujtahid as we have discussed, but often when it comes to the second scenario it becomes more difficult. What is our obligation then? The second aspect can also lead us to hell or heaven or could make our life difficult or easy!

We can follow a simple formula to ensure the best outcomes for other aspects of life.

- 1- **Check whether the decision is jurisprudentially correct or not-** Seek counsel from a sheikh for instance. E.g., if we want to choose a certain career, will this career force us to do something ḥarām.
- 2- **Seek guidance from one who**
 - a. Is knowledgeable in that field.
 - b. Is honest and sincere e.g. A good honest mechanic.

"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." Imam al-Ṣādiq (as)

- 3- **Seek guidance from you intellect** - Weigh out rationally and logically the best course of action for your personal circumstance (how much can I afford, what are the pros and cons of having this car etc.)
 - a. This can be done by making a little table and putting the pros and cons on either side
- 4- **Seek Guidance from God** -If despite all these steps one is confused then an istikhāra may be helpful. We have discussed this in other lessons.
- 5- **Do not regret/blame-** Once we make any decision, if it turns out to be bad but we had followed the processes above, then we must consider it to be a test from the Almighty (SWT), not to regret, ask 'what if' questions or blame one who gave us advise.

Class Exercise

Do this exercise as a class to help you make a decision

You wish to make a decision as to which course you should do at university, discuss:

- 1- **What jurisprudential issues are likely to be important**
- 2- **Whose guidance would you seek**
- 3- **What would the pros and cons be (personal)**

Questions/Homework

- 1- **From *al Ziyārah al-Jāmi'ah al-Kabirah*, outline 3 characteristics of any Imam**
- 2- **What other titles does Imam al-Hādi have?**

ⁱ **i) Imam Must be Infallible:** Infallibility does not mean that one does not commit any sin but it means that one should not even conceive of committing a sin.

(ii) **Large-heartedness:** Strong soul and large-heartedness are the means of rulership. Narrow-mindedness, irritable temperament and hastiness are not good for running the administration of a society or a State or for leading and guiding the people to progress and prosperity.

(iii) **Justice:** When all the people expect justice, Imam should be the emblem of justice. Let us go back to the life of Imam Ali for a while, and have a glimpse of his justice. We have already mentioned many interesting incidents in our discussions on social justice. However, we will simply mention one or two examples of the words and deeds of the Holy Imam:

iv) **Imam Should Subdue His Passions:** Imam Ali says: "What a bad thing it would be if my passions overcome me and distract me from the path of truthfulness and justice!" (Biharul Anwar, vol. XXV, p. 164)

v) **Imam Should be Brave:** Imam Ali says: "No battle has ever frightened me nor has it influenced me". (Peak of Eloquence)

vi) **The question of death and martyrdom should be quite apparent to the Imam.** Imam Ali says: "By Allah! I have such fondness for death as an infant has for its mother's breast".⁴⁴⁸

vii) **Imam Should be Perfect Par Excellence:** Imam Ali in his letter to Mu'awiya writes, "O Mu'awiya! Were you ever entrusted with the noble status of administering justice to, and ruling over mankind? Have you the necessary knowledge for that work? Do you really know the canons of equity and justice as laid down by Islam. May Allah protect and withhold me from behaving towards mankind the way you have behaved and from tyranny, exploitation, and murders that you commit". (Letter 10, Peak of Eloquence)

ⁱⁱ **i) Acts According to the Holy Qur'an:**

(ii) **Imams have to be kind:**

(iii) **Devotion:** One of the attributes of the Imam is his piety, and his indifference towards worldly things

(iv) **Imam Never Doubts:** Imam Ali says: "Since Truth dawned upon me I never entertained any doubt". (Letter 183, Peak of Eloquence, ISP 1984)

(v) **The Imam Remains Unaffected by Aspersions:** The Imam remains unaffected by aspersions or abuses. Imam Ali says, "I belong to that group on which aspersions and bad remarks have no effect at all". (Peak of Eloquence)

(vi) **Imam Should Take the Lead:** Anyone who considers himself to be the Imam of the people should before teaching the people and leading them should take the lead himself by educating his soul and before training others by speech should train himself by his deeds. (Peak of Eloquence)

(vii) **Imam should be Frank and Above Formalities:** Almighty Allah says to Prophet Muhammad: Tell then: 'I do not seek any reward for my preaching you for I am not a pre tender. It (the Qur'an) is nothing but a reminder to you from the Lord of the Universe. You will certainly know its truthfulness after a certain time. (Surah Sad, 38:86-88)

(viii) **The Imam is Tolerant But Not Sycophant:** A Divine leader should for the sake of educating the people be tolerant but should not placate them by overlooking their crimes because tolerance is for correcting the people's affairs and to ignore the importance of his own exalted position but placating will amount to ignoring the commands of religion and for safeguarding one's position or attaining some higher rank.

(ix) **Imam is Well-conversant with the Philosophical Approach of History.**

Imam Ali says to his son, Imam Hasan: "My dear son! Though the span of my life is not as large as that of some other people, who have passed away before me, yet I took great care to study their lives assiduously; I went through their activities I contemplated over their deliberations and; I studied their remains, relics and ruins; I pondered over their lives so deeply that I felt as if I have lived and worked with them from early ages of history down to our times, and I know what did them good and what brought harm to them". (Letter 31, Peak of Eloquence, ISP, 1984)

(x) **Imam Does Not Take Undue Advantage of His Position:**

(xi) **Attending the Complaints:** Imam Ali used to arrange the complaints in written order and the person against whom the complaint was lodged was summoned to the court of law and was questioned about the complaint and his financial assets were put to scrutiny.

(xii) **Patience and Conviction:** One of the attributes of the Imam is his patience and conviction. The chief characteristics of Imam include his observation, conviction and faith.

(xiii) **Free from Prejudices:** The Imam should be free from all prejudices and attachments of worldly nature, as for instance consideration of tribal, racial and parochial affiliations and all such matters as leave a bad influence on man.

(xiv) **Sincerity of Purpose and Indifference to Worldly Gains:**

ⁱⁱⁱ (al-Mizan, vol. XVI, p. 56)

^{iv} (al-Kafi, vol. I.

^v For a more comprehensive study, teachers/student/parents are advised to listen to Sheikh Bahamanpour lectures on this Ziarat

<http://tafseer.islamix.com/base/avtree.php?action=page¶m=root/Sheikh%20Bahamanpour/Ziyarat-ul%20Jamia>

^{vi} [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

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 Imamatus was six years
- Being a resident of 'Askar, a suburb of the city of Samarrā', he was given the title of al-'Askari

IMAM AL -'ASKARI (AS)

Imam al-'Askari lived during the time of the rule of the Abbasid family. During the life of the Imam, there was a lot of turmoil in the Muslim world because of the oppressive nature of the Abbasids.

FUNDAMENTALS OF ISLAM

LEVEL 5

These tyrant kings had brought Turkish advisors and mercenaries to help them in their unjust ways. These Turkish mercenaries were so cruel to the Muslim civilians that this led to a number of uprisings. These uprisings forced the Abbasid leadership to relocate from Baghdad to Samarrā'. As the government moved, it sought to keep any potential opposition to it close by, and thus it summoned Imam al-Hādi (as) and Imam al-'Askari (as) there.

There was also a 'slave rebellion' during this time which according to some historians lasted 14 years. The African slaves, who were badly mistreated by this government, staged an uprising. While the Imam (as) did not oppose this revolution, he did not support it either. The Muslim community in general lived in a state of oppression and poverty.

Even within the Abbasid family there was a lot of conflict, and leaders changed quickly. During the life of the Imam (as), al-Mu'tazz ruled for four years, and after him al-Muhtadi for two, before al-Mu'tamid took power for about 25 years.

THE IMAMAT

During this tumultuous period, Imam al-'Askari's Imamatus lasted about 7 years, from the years 254-260 AH. He took the role of Imamatus after the martyrdom of his father when he was 20 years old, and died at the age of 26.

The Imam was not able to communicate with his companions openly. Communication had to be secret. One companion narrates that one day he and other companions were waiting in the city of Samarrā' to see the Imam as he was going on his way to the king's palace.

Suddenly a message came from the Imam through a secret messenger: "no one should greet me, no one should point to me, and no one should give any sign towards me, for otherwise your lives would not be safe."

Another issue the Imam had to contend with was the presence of his brother, who was known as Ja'far al-Kadhdhāb (Ja'far the Liar). Despite being the son of Imam al-Hādī, this man was a shameless liar who on many occasions claimed to be the Imam. However, he was such a pathetic person that even the tyrant rulers of the time did not put any trust in him and threw him out.

On one occasion, Ja'far approached the king al-Mu'tamid and asked him to appoint him as the Imam in place of his brother. Amazingly, al-Mu'tamid said to him: "Know that the status of your brother (Imam al-'Askari) was not from us, but from God. We tried to reduce his status, but God only wished to raise his status further....if you have such a status among the Shi'ah, then you do not need us, and if you do not have such a status, and you do not have the qualities your brother has, we will not be able to help you gain such a status."

IMPRISONMENT

As with many other Imams, Imam al-'Askari was imprisoned by the 'Abbasid tyrants.

As with other Imams, Imam al-'Askari also had a great effect on his jailors. A minister of the Abbasids put his two most ruthless jailors in charge of the Imam (as). However, the effect of the Imam (as) on them was amazing: "they have become amazing in their worship and virtuousness. They lower their cheeks to him." He called upon them and blamed them for their softness, to which they replied: "what can we say about a man who stays up the whole night and fasts the whole day. He is not occupied by anything other than worship. When we look at him, our joints shake, and something uncontrollable.

THE DECLARATION OF IMAM AL-MAHDI

One of the main tasks of Imam al-'Askari was to declare the Imamate of his son, Imam al-Mahdi after him. He did this on a number of occasions. It was always done in private, among the most trusted and selected Shi'ah of the Ahlul Bayt (as). One such statement is below:

"This is your Imam after me and my Caliph over you. Obey him and do not separate after me because then you

will perish when it comes to your religion. Surely, you will not see him after this day until he is much older, so accept what Uthman (his deputy) says and follow his command and accept his opinion because he is the Caliph of your Imam and the rule is with him."

HIS FINAL ILLNESS AND MARTYRDOM

Imam al-'Askari was poisoned and became ill, an illness that led to his death. Just before his death, he called his son, al-Mahdi, and asked him to give him some water. He then told him he would be the next Imam, and that he was a master among his Ahlul Bayt (as). After this, Imam al-'Askari passed away. Imam al-Mahdi led his funeral prayers and took up the leadership after him.

When (Imam) al-Hasan (al-Askari) saw him (his son) he wept and said: "O the One who is the Master of his Ahlul Bayt, give me water, so for I am going to my Lord" (Ghaybatul Tusi, p. 165)

WORDS OF ADVICE

"How detestable it is for a believer that he has a desire which belittles him."

"There is no affliction except that there is with Allah a blessing that encompasses it."

"No honourable person leaves truth except that he will be humiliated, and no base person takes up truth unless he will become honourable."

"You are living in a determined time which is becoming shorter. Your days are numbered, and death comes all of a sudden. He who plants good will harvest that which people will envy him for, and he who plants evil will harvest regret. Everyone will reap what they sow. A slow person will not overtake because of his luck, nor will an anxious person get what was not prescribed for him.

Whoever is given good, it is God who gave that goodness, and whoever is protected from evil, it is God who protected that person."

THE IMPORTANCE OF FEARING GOD

One of the main characteristics of Imam al-'Askari was his fear of God. 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 that their lives will be blessed, both worldly and spiritually.
- 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-Sādiq (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 and true believers, we see that they are all servants who respectfully fear Allah and who strenuously 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.

Review Questions

1. Do some research into the history of the Abbasid dynasty? What were the features of their rule
2. How have our Imams approached situations where there are uprisings against unjust rulers? What has been the approach of the Imams when these uprisings have been misguided or not well planned?

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-Mahdi
- Discuss in detail the main Qur'anic āyāt related to Imam al-al-Mahdi
- Discuss in detail the narrations related to Imam 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 more important to be occupied with preparing for the reappearance than worrying about the signs of the reappearance

FUNDAMENTALS OF ISLAM

LEVEL 5

Lesson 1: al-Mahdi: the Universal Saviour

Imam al-Mahdi (atfs) was born in the year 255AH. This was during the time of the rule 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-Qā'im (the One who Rises)
- al-Ḥujjah (the Proof)
- al-Muntaḍar (the Awaited one)
- al-Muntaḍir (the Waiting one)
- Ṣaḥībul 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.

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 THE AL-MAHDI (AS)

THE NARRATION OF THE TWELVE CALIPHS

al-Bukhārī narrated in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* through his chain to Jābir ibn Sumārāh 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-Bukhārī,
- 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.

SIGNS OF THE REAPPEARANCE

In this lesson, we will discuss some issues related to the signs that come prior to the reappearance of the Imam (as).

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 three primary books that were written in the early era of Islam and are important Shi’ah references:

- al-Ghaybah, by al-Na’mānī
- Kamal al-Din, by Sheikh al-Ṣāduq and
- al-Ghaybah, by Sheikh al-Ṭūsī

Most of the narrations written in these three books speak about the signs of the reappearance, but are of weak narration, which means many of them cannot be used because of their unauthenticity, or that most of them are questionable as far as their authenticity is concerned.

In opposite to this are some authentic Ḥadīth that are reliable with regards to the reappearance, in particular, with relation to the definitive signs of the reappearance. There are five of these definitive signs that are based on Ḥadīth that are authenticated and are accepted by a large amount of scholars:

- The revolt of Sufyānī
- The appearance of al-Yamānī
- 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.

THE REAPPEARANCE IN THE HOLY QUR'AN

It is also important to look at some of the Qur'anic āyat that discuss events after the reappearance of Imam al-Mahdi (atfs):

a- Islam's Victory and Prominence over other Religions

"They intend to put out the Light of Allah with their mouths. But Allah will complete His Light even though the disbelievers hate (it). He it is Who has sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of truth (Islamic Monotheism) to make it victorious over all (other) religions even though the polytheists hate (it)." (61:8-9)

يُرِيدُونَ لِيُطْفِئُوا نُورَ اللَّهِ بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَاللَّهُ مُتِمُّ نُورِهِ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ
الْكَافِرُونَ {8} هُوَ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ رَسُولَهُ بِالْهُدَىٰ وَدِينِ الْحَقِّ
لِيُظْهِرَهُ عَلَى الدِّينِ كُلِّهِ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْمُشْرِكُونَ {9}

b- The Virtuous Believers Take Control of the World

"And indeed We have written in al-Zabūr, after the Remembrance, that My righteous slaves shall inherit the land" (21:105)

وَلَقَدْ كَتَبْنَا فِي الزَّبُورِ مِنْ بَعْدِ الذِّكْرِ أَنَّ الْأَرْضَ يَرِثُهَا
عِبَادِيَ الصَّالِحُونَ

c- The Establishment of a Truly Monotheistic Society

"Those who, if We give them power in the land, they establish prayer, give in charity, enjoin good and forbid evil. And with Allah rests the end of (all) matters" (22:41)

الَّذِينَ إِنْ مَكَّنَّاهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ أَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَوُا الزَّكَاةَ وَأَمَرُوا
بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَنَهَوْا عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ ۚ وَلِلَّهِ عَاقِبَةُ الْأُمُورِ

d- Realising the Purpose of Humanity

"And I created not the Jinn and humans except they should worship Me (Alone)" (51:56)

e- Ending Deviation in Apparently Muslim Communities

"O you who believe! Whoever from among you turns back from his religion (Islam), Allah will bring a people whom He will love and they will love Him; humble towards the believers, stern towards the disbelievers, fighting in the Way of Allah, and never afraid of the blame of the blamers. That is the Grace of Allah which He bestows on whom He wills. And Allah is All-Sufficient for His creatures' needs, All-Knower." (5:54)

CAN ONE GIVE A SPECIFIC DATE FOR THE REAPPEARANCE OF IMAM AL-MAHDI?

Unfortunately, some people get carried away when interpreting some narrations related to the signs of the reappearance. Due to their lack of understanding and analysis of these narrations, they often give very specific dates for the reappearance of Imam al-Mahdi (as).

This practice has been clearly condemned by the Ahlul Bayt (as), who have instructed us not to give specific dates for the reappearance at all, as this is subject to God's Absolute Authority and only He knows the specifics of it.

WILL THERE BE IMAMS AFTER AL-MAHDI?

QUESTION:

Can you please comment on the validity (or invalidity) of the following Ḥadith:

Imam al-Ṣādiq (as) said: "from among us, after the Qā'im (Imam al-Mahdi), we shall have twelve Mahdis from the descendants of Husayn (as)"ⁱ

Some Shias are using this Ḥadith and other similar ones to claim that there is a man living today who is the son of Imam Mahdi (ajtf) and that he is one of the '12 Mahdis' mentioned in narrations such as the one above. Please clarify if this can be true.

ANSWER:

There are a few narrations like that in our books of Ḥadith. Please consider the following points about them:

1. These narrations are weak in their Esnad (Chain of transmitters), there are unknown narrators among them, and in some of them part of the Sanad (chain of transmitters) is missing.

2. They are contrary to many other authentic and famous narrations that state: 'The Imams from the pure Progeny of the Prophet (P) are twelve, and they are all Mahdi' (i.e. in the literal sense: 'guided'). For example see: Behar, vol. 36, p. 385.

3. Irrespective of the above points, these narrations are talking about the time after the appearance of Imam Mahdi (atfs), thus no one can relate them to any individual or group during our occultation time.

4. Sheikh al-Mufid; one of the most eminent early Shi'ah scholars comments on such narrations as follows:ⁱⁱ

"And there will be no state for anyone after the state of the Qa'im (Imam al-Mahdi), although there are some narrations about his son ruling if God willed so, but there is no certain narration about it, instead most of the narrations say that the Mahdi of (the Islamic) Ummah will not pass away till 40 days prior to the Day of Judgment, whence there will be the relief (or great commotion) and the signs of the resurrection of the dead (from their graves) and the hour of judgment and recompense."ⁱⁱⁱ

Lesson 2: al-Mahdi in the Qur'an and Hadith

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 review 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). We have discussed this in previous years, but will be reviewing this topic due to its great importance.

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 بِإِمامِهِمْ ۖ فَمَنْ أُوتِيَ كِتَابَهُ يَبِيعْهُ
فَأُولَئِكَ يَفْرَعُونَ كِتَابَهُمْ وَلَا يُظْلَمُونَ فَتِيلًا
وَمَنْ كَانَ فِي هَذِهِ أَعْمَى فَهُوَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ أَعْمَى 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:

Possible Meaning of Imam as Used in the Qur'an	Does it fit the context of this ayah?
1.The Preserved Tablet	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-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-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 see how you act in relation to them after me”^{iv}

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 (pbuh) 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'sūm), 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”.^v

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 we believe in.

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

SUMMARY

The contents of this lesson can be summarised into the following logical argument.

The easy way in short to prove the existence of Imam Mahdi (atfs) to Muslims from other schools of thought is the following:

Premise 1: All Muslims agree that the Holy Quran is very explicit and clear that time will come that a universal just and Islamic state will be established when those whom been oppressed will lead the world. (The Holy Qur'an: 21:105)

Premise 2: It is narrated by Shi'a and Sunni narrators that:

- a. The day of judgment will not come until a man from the offspring of the Prophet rises to spread peace and justice in the world. (Mosnad Ahmad 3:36 , H. 10920)
- b. Whoever dies not knowing the Imam of his time has died the death of Ignorance (Kofr). (Muslim 3:239, H 1851)
- c. Hadith al-Thaqalayn in which the Prophet (saw) says: "the Book of Allah and his Ahlul Bayt (as) will never be separated until they join him at the Pool of Kawthar" (Mostadrak al-Hakim 3:10)
- d. 12 Imams: The Prophet foretold that the Caliphs (Khulafa'- successors after him shall be 12 Imams, that are all from Qoraysh). (Muslim 3:220, H. 1821). This hadith can only apply to the 12 Imams of Ahlul Bayt (as). Also, there is no doubt that Imam al-'Askari (as) was martyred and died.

Conclusion: if Imam Mahdi is not born yet, then: there will be a separation between the Quran and Ahlul Bayt (as) (violating premise 2/c), the Imams won't be 12 (violation of premise 2/d.) and all contemporary Muslims die the death of Jahiliyah because there is no Imam of their time for them to know him (violation of premise 2/b).

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”^{vi}

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-Qā’im...”^{vii}

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 be 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.”^{viii}

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

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”^x

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”^{xi}

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”^{xii}

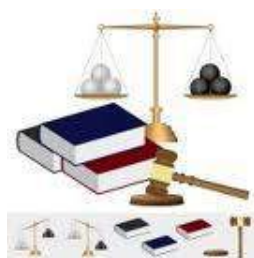
At the same time, the Imam (atfs) will be very kind and compassionate towards his community, such that they will turn him for all their needs.

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

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”^{xiv}



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.

Review Questions

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

- The Qur'an
- Common sense
- The original books of the Jews and Christians

Q2. What does al-Intiḍār mean?

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

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

- Patient and courageous
- Courageous and impatient
- Strong and merciless

ⁱ [Bihar Al Anwar (Oceans of Lights), chapter 53 page 148, and Ghaybat Al Tousi (Occultation by Al Tousi) page 4478]

ⁱⁱ Sheikh Mansour Leghaei, askthesheikh.com

ⁱⁱⁱ (Al-Irshad – 2:387)

^{iv} 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

^v 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

^{vi} (Biharul Anwar, 52:131)

^{vii} (Kamalul Din: 645)

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

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

^x (Ithbatul Hudat, 3:504)

^{xi} (Musnad Ahmad, 3:37)

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

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

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

السَّلَامُ عَلَى آدَمَ صَفْوَةِ اللَّهِ

PROPHETS AND MESSENGERS:

ADAM [A.S]

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Be introduced to Adam (as) as the first prophet and the first human being
- Know and compare the Biblical account of the creation of Eve and the Qur'anic one
- Know and compare the Biblical account of the mistake of Adam and Eve with the Qur'anic one
- Discuss the high status that a human can reach, with reference to God's command to the angels to prostrate to Adam
- Review the mistake of Adam and why it was not a sin, explaining the difference between obligatory and guiding commands
- Discuss the reaction of Satan and its basis in pride and the dangers of this

FUNDAMENTALS OF ISLAM

LEVEL 5

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 is the basis for the Christian belief 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. We shall briefly discuss the story of Adam from the Christian point of view as reported in the chapter of genesis in the Bible and compare and contrast this with the story from the Qur'an. We shall also learn about the misconceptions that have crept into Islam about this story.

THE CREATION OF ĀDAM (AS) AND EVE IN THE BIBLE

The biblical version of the story of Adam (as) has informed a significant portion of the core beliefs of the Christians especially the belief in the 'Original sin'. The summary below showed the biblical belief in the storyⁱ.

- 1- Adam was created and put in a garden on earth
- 2- He was forbidden from the 'Tree of Knowledge'
- 3- He asked for a helper and God made Eve from his rib
- 4- The Serpent (Satan) tempted Eve and she ate from the tree.
- 5- She gave it to Adam and he ate it too.

- 6- God punished them by expulsion from the garden, the earth is cursed, they would have to struggle on earth and they would be mortal
- 7- Ever was punished by having pregnancy pains, period pains and by having to be dominated by her husband
- 8- Adam was punished by having to live by the 'sweat of his brow'

Christians use the story as a foundation for their belief in the 'Original Sin'. This refers to the belief that all humans are born sinful, and that Jesus' supposed crucifixion is the only this sin can be cleansed.

The obvious problem with this belief is that it indicates that human beings are born sinful through no fault of their own. This of course contradicts the Justice of God.

The Biblical version of the story is also demeaning towards women, both as casting them as inferior to men (created from man), and as temptresses who lead man to sin. Both these beliefs are of course rejected in Islam.

Class Activity

Discuss each of the points above based on the lesson you learnt in level 4 on the story of ADAM from the Islamic perspective. Make notes on the differences of the story as narrated by Allah (SWT) in the Qur'an vs the one discussed above in the bibleⁱⁱ.

STATUS OF PROPHET ADAM IN ISLAM

Unlike the Sunni beliefs of Prophethood, the Shia believe in the sinless nature of the prophets. We believe that although Adam (as) was the first physical manifestation of a Human being created by Allah (SWT), the Soul of our Prophet (and Aimmah) were created prior to this. We also believe that the prophets were all created and chosen by Allah (SWT) to be the best manifestations of the perfection that is possible for human beings. As for Prophet Adam, he was one of these great Prophets and was in fact taught the realities of the universe (in form of the 'names').

We have discussed previously that upon analysis of the story of Prophet Adam, we learn that he did not commit a punishable offenseⁱⁱⁱ. Rather he chose the lesser of two options.

Memorisation Activity

وَعَلَّمَ آدَمَ الْأَسْمَاءَ كُلَّهَا

"And He taught Adam the Names, all of them." (2:31)

More importantly, unlike the biblical version, this story demonstrates to us just how high a status human beings are capable of reaching such that it befits the angels to prostrate before a human! Allah (SWT) says in the Holy Qur'an:

"And surely we have honoured the children of Adam, and carried them on the land and at the sea, and provided them with good things, and we have made them to excel by an appropriate excellence over many of those we created." (17:70)

The above applies only to human who humbly submit to the commands of Allah (SWT). In the same light, human beings, by rejecting the Truth and following their own base desires in ignorance and arrogance are considered lower than animals.

"And We have certainly created for Hell many of the jinn and mankind. They have hearts with which they do not understand, they have eyes with which they do not see, and they have ears with which they do not hear. Those are like livestock; rather, they are more astray. It is they who are the heedless" (7:179)

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 pride of Iblīs. Pride, known as 'kibr' in Arabic, is one of the most devastating diseases of the soul and can be of 4 basic types^{iv}:

- 1- kibr towards God;
- 2- kibr towards His prophets, messengers, and awliya'
- 3- kibr in regard to the Divine Commandments
- 4- kibr towards the creatures of God

As for the kibr towards God, it is the most abominable, the most destructive, and the highest degree of pride. It is present in stubborn disbelievers, those who contest God's authority, and those who make claims to divinity. Sometimes its traces are seen among some men of faith as well. This kind of kibr signifies the extreme of ignorance

and the absence of knowledge about one's limits and the majesty of the Necessary Being.

As for the *kibr* towards the prophets and *awliya'* of God, it was an attitude, which was more prevalent during their own days. During the early days of Islam, the instances of such pride towards the *awliya'* of God were very frequent, examples of which are still manifested in the behaviour of some people who try to defame our beloved Prophet.

As to the *kibr* towards the commands of God, it is seen among some sinners, such as those who abstain from performing *Hajj* as they do not consider the dress of *ihram* appropriate for themselves; abstain from prayer because they consider the state of prostration as not in accordance with their position and status.

Similarly there are those who would not accept a word of truth if it comes from anybody belonging to the same status as themselves, or lower. Sometimes it happens that one hears something from his colleagues or friends, and vehemently rejects it and derides the speaker, but he readily agrees with it when it is uttered by someone superior to him in religious or worldly status. It is even possible that he would accept it with the same seriousness with which he had rejected it earlier.

As to the *kibr* towards the creatures of God, *kibr* towards men of divine knowledge and scholars is the worst form of it, and its evil effects are graver and its harms more serious than of any other type of *kibr*. Of this category of *kibr* is the pride, which avoids the company of poor people and seeks out prominence in gatherings and meetings, and displays itself on the road and in one's car. Yet this evil is prevalent and inflicts all the classes of society; from the elite to the class of 'ulama and scholars of *ḥadith*; from the rich to the poor and deprived classes; no one can elude it, except for those whom God Almighty saves.

Sometimes it is so difficult to discern between humbleness and humility aimed at popularizing oneself, and between pride, that one should seek refuge in God Almighty, that He may guide us on the right path. If one is eager to reform oneself and tries to reach one's goal, the Holy God guides him with His infinite mercy on the right path and eases one's journey on this path.

Imam al-Ṣādiq (as) is reported to have said:

"There is no person who does not have a harness on his head, and an angel who attends to it. Whenever he is proud, the angel says, 'Be humble, lest God should disgrace you'. Thus, he is the greatest of human beings in his own eyes, whereas in other people's eyes he is the smallest of creatures. When he is humble and modest, God removes the harness from his head and the angel says to him, 'Elevate yourself, as God Almighty is elevating you'. Thus, he is the smallest of persons in his own eyes, while the most elevated and exalted in the eyes of others."

THE HARMS OF PRIDE

It is simply enough to read what the Imams have told us about the harms of being arrogancy to know we have to avoid it at all costs!

Imam al-Ṣādiq (as) said:

"Verily the proud [on the Judgment Day] will be created in the form of ants and people will trample them down under their feet until God is finished with the reckoning."

"Refrain from pride and self-glorification, since pride is God Almighty's mantle, and one who contests with God regarding His cloak, God will shatter him and disgrace him on the Day of Resurrection."

"Verily there is a valley in hell for the proud called *Ṣaqar*. Once it complained to the Almighty about the intensity of its heat, and requested Him to relieve it for some time so that it may take a breath. As soon as it breathed, its breath filled the entire hell with fire."

Memorisation Activity

لَنْ يَدْخُلَ الْجَنَّةَ مَنْ فِي قَلْبِهِ مِثْقَالُ حَبَّةٍ مِنْ خَرْدَلٍ مِنْ كِبَرٍ.

The Holy Prophet said:

"Never can the person who possesses a speck of pride inside his heart enter Paradise"

AN EXAMPLE FROM THE PROPHET TO DESTROY PRIDE

The Prophet (saw), whose knowledge was derived from the Divine Revelation, and whose soul was so great that it could preponderate over the spirits of millions upon millions of human beings, who rejected all the practices and customs of the pagan Arabs, who shattered under his feet all the false creeds, abrogated all the scriptures, and the circle of prophet hood achieved its completion in his noble existence; who was the ruler of the world and the hereafter, and who was the master of all the worlds, with the permission of God Almighty; yet his humility towards the creatures of God was more than of any other human being.

He hated to see his Companions stand up in his respect. Whenever he entered a gathering, he used to sit in the lowest place. He used to dine on the floor and used to sit on the floor and used to say, "I am a slave of God; I dine like a slave and sit in the manner proper for a slave." It has been reported from Imam al-Sadiq (as) that the Prophet (saw) preferred to ride a donkey without a saddle, preferred to dine in a lowly place with the slaves, and offered alms to beggars with his two hands.

It is written about him (saw) that he used to share with the members of his household the duties of housework. He himself used to milk the sheep, stitch his own clothes and shoes, grind the flour and knead the dough, and carry

his belongings himself. He liked the company of the poor and the destitute and used to dine with them.

Review Questions:

Q1. Outline briefly the consequences of the beliefs of the Christians as a result of their version of the story of Adam.

Q2- Critically analyse to what extent the Christian beliefs have permeated Islamic thinking in the west

Q3. Give three examples of a type of pride that can destroy ones beliefs

ⁱ Teachers are advised to get students to read the chapters of genesis 2 on this story from a version of the bible (King James version)

ⁱⁱ "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 Iblis, 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 dhalimin الظالمين."

"But the Satan made them slip (زَلَّاهُمَا) 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."

ⁱⁱⁱ Allah (SWT) created Eve (not from the rib of Adam) 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:

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. Salaat)

b. Guiding command (Al-'amr al-'irshadi): Where Allah (SWT) decrees a command but the action to be done is not Wajib, 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 Adam (as) got regarding the tree.

^{iv} <http://www.al-islam.org/forty-hadith-an-exposition-second-edition-imam-homeini/fourth-hadith-pride-kibr>

السَّلَامُ عَلَى نُوحٍ نَبِيِّ اللَّهِ

PROPHET NŪH^(AS)

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 IstiqÁmah)
- Discuss goal-setting, overcoming challenges and having determination

Prophet Nūh (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.

FUNDAMENTALS OF ISLAM

LEVEL 5

Prophet Noah is also one of the five principal law making (ulūl '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 to 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) has 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 and egged on Prophet Noah 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 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) to not 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

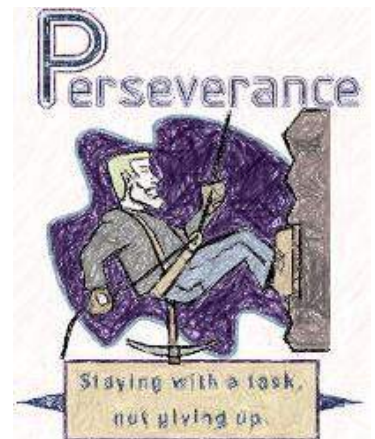
It is important to note the difference between perseverance and effort. There are some people who do make efforts in the beginning, yet they break down when confronted with difficulties. The important thing, therefore, is that we do not just start a task and then give up easily. Instead, we should keep 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.

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

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



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. As 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: 'the 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

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ⁱⁱ (Nahjul Balagha, Sermon 119)

السَّلَامُ عَلَى إِبْرَاهِيمَ خَلِيلِ اللَّهِ

PROPHET ABRAHAM

(IBRĀHĪM) [A.S]

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Review the status of Prophet Abraham by discussing how he is described in the Holy Qur'an
- Research the qualities of Prophets and trustees of God explained in the Holy Qur'an

FUNDAMENTALS OF ISLAM

LEVEL 5

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 in history. He is known as the 'Father of Monotheism', a title that emphasises the amazing role he played in inviting people to the worship of Allah (SWT). In this regard, the Qur'an so eloquently describes him in the following way:

"Lo! Abraham was a nation obedient to Allah, by nature upright, and he was not of the idolaters" (16:120)

إِنَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ كَانَ أُمَّةً قَانِتًا لِلَّهِ حَنِيفًا وَلَمْ يَكُ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ

This great prophet 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!

In this lesson, we will focus on several of the titles given to Prophet Abraham (as). The purpose of this study is so that we can see what qualities are required for a person to have such a great guiding influence on the world, both in his time and for millennia to follow.

SUBMISSION

إِذْ قَالَ لَهُ رَبُّهُ أَسْلِمْ قَالَ أَسْلَمْتُ لِرَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

“When his Lord said to him, Submit!, he said: I submit myself to the Lord of the worlds.” (2:131)

Here, the submission of Prophet Abraham (as) is praised. Submission of one thing to another is when the former does not disobey or repel the latter.

The base for all of Prophet Abraham’s great qualities is his absolute and complete submission to Allah (SWT). This is demonstrated throughout his life: his solitary opposition to his people and their idol-worship, his migration from his home country to a strange land, his settling of his family in a barren and sparsely populated land and finally his willingness to sacrifice his son.

TRUTHFULNESS

وَأَذْكُرْ فِي الْكِتَابِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ إِنَّهُ كَانَ صِدِّيقًا نَبِيًّا

“And mention in the Book Abraham; surely he was a truthful man, a prophet.”

Prophet Ibrāhīm (as) is truthful in many respects, the most important of which is that he stood for the True belief in the Allah, the One Lord. He not only believed in this Truth, but he did whatever was possible to teach, spread and act according to this Truth. The importance of this quality is emphasised by the fact that it is mentioned before he is even introduced as a prophet in this āyah.

BRAVERY

We have discussed the bravery of Prophet Abraham (as) in previous years. One great manifestation of his bravery is the destruction of the idols that his people worshipped, without fear of the consequences of this for his personal safety:

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

WISE PREACHING

Prophet Abraham (as) used many different approaches with his people. At times, he was direct, telling them in simple words that they were worshipping idols who could not harm or benefit them. At other times, he would take action to show them the falsity of their views in a practical way, such as when he urges them to ask the main idol if it had destroyed the other idols. At yet other times, he would use a more subtle approach, by seemingly agreeing with a group of people before logically disproving their false beliefs.

“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...” (6:76)

STRENGTH AND INSIGHT

وَأَذْكُرْ عِبَادَنَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ أُولِيَ الْأَيْدِي وَالْأَبْصَارِ

“And remember Our servants Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, men of power and insight.” (38:45)

This āyah indicates that Prophet Abraham (as) possessed strength and ability when it came to obeying Allah (SWT). This is explained in other parts of the Qur’an as being engaged in virtuous action, prayer, charity and worship.

Insight refers to the ability to distinguish between truth and falsehood. In the case of Prophet Abraham (as), this also meant being ma’sūm, as in another part of the Qur’an Allah (SWT) says:

“and We revealed to them the doing of good” (21:73)

This indicates that all the actions of Prophet Abraham (as) and other Prophets were guided by revelation or inspiration from Allah (SWT).

While we are not able to receive revelation, we can purify our souls through virtuous deeds so that we may receive a lower form of guidance from Allah (SWT) that leads us to further virtuous action and helps us achieve wisdom and insight.

FORBEARANCE AND COMPASSION

إِنَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ لَحَلِيمٌ أَوَّاهٌ مُنِيبٌ

Most surely Abraham was forbearing, compassionate, oft-returning (to Allah) (11:75) (76)

The context of the above āyah is amazing. The angels visit Abraham (as) and inform of the good news that he is going to be granted a child. After this, they inform him that their next mission is to visit the community of Prophet Lot and bring down God's punishment upon them. When Prophet Abraham (as) hears this, he begins to plead with the angels to delay the punishment upon this community. He also expresses his concern that Prophet Lot is still among that community.

Allah (SWT) praises Prophet Abraham (as) greatly for this action. He describes him in three ways:

- Forbearing: meaning he was not quick to punish people or ask for them to be punished. Rather, he remained patient and wanted to give people respite
- Compassionate: the misguidance of people would affect him severely, such that he would be in pain and distress out of concern for people
- Oft-returning: he would turn to Allah (SWT) when distressed by these things

This āyah shows that forbearance and compassion are among the traits of a leader. A leader is patient and caring for his community, and does not quickly give up on them.

DISASSOCIATION FROM DISBELIEVERS

Prophet Abraham's (as) compassion and forbearance should not be misunderstood. While he did not pray for disbelievers to be punished and cared about their guidance, at the same time, he willingly cut his relations with stubborn disbelievers in an attempt to show them the falsity of their beliefs and forbid them from evil.

He is praised for this action more than once in the Qur'an, and we are specifically commanded to take him as a role model when it comes to this issue.

قَدْ كَانَتْ لَكُمْ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ فِي إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَالَّذِينَ مَعَهُ إِذْ قَالُوا

لِقَوْمِهِمْ إِنَّا بُرَاءُ مِنْكُمْ وَمِمَّا تَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ كَفَرْنَا

بِكُمْ وَبَدَا بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمْ الْعَدَاوَةُ وَالْبَغْضَاءُ أَبَدًا حَتَّى تُؤْمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَحْدَهُ

"Indeed, there is for you a good example in Abraham and those with him when they said to their people: Surely we are clear of you and of what you serve besides Allah; we declare ourselves to be clear of you, and enmity and hatred have appeared between us and you forever until you believe in Allah alone..." (60:4)

This āyah perfectly captures the approach of Prophet Abraham (as): once his people showed themselves to be stubborn to the truth and continued with false beliefs and evil actions, he cut relations with him and even showed enmity to them. However, despite this, he left the door open to them to repent and return saying 'until you believe in Allah...' This shows that he never lost hope in people and always hoped they would be guided.

CARE FOR COMING GENERATIONS

One of the points repeatedly emphasised in relation to Prophet Abraham (as) in the Qur'an is his care for future generations. He often prays for his offspring:

وَإِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ رَبِّ اجْعَلْ هَذَا الْبَلَدَ آمِنًا وَاجْنُبْنِي وَبَنِيَّ أَنْ نَعْبُدَ الْأَصْنَامَ

"And when Ibrahim said: My Lord! Make this city secure, and save me and my sons from worshipping idols" (14:35)

He requests Allah (SWT) to make his offspring leaders like himself:

وَإِذِ ابْتَلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ رَبُّهُ بِكَلِمَاتٍ فَأَتَمَّهُنَّ قَالَ إِنِّي جَاعِلُكَ لِلنَّاسِ إِمَامًا ۖ قَالَ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِي قَالَ لَا يَنَالُ عَهْدِي الظَّالِمِينَ

"And when his Lord tried Ibrahim with certain words, he fulfilled them. He said: Surely I will make you an Imam of men. Ibrahim said: And of my offspring? My covenant does not include the unjust, said He." (2:124)

Most importantly, he advised his offspring to remain on the path of Truth and worship of Allah, the One Lord:

وَوَصَّىٰ بِهَا إِبْرَاهِيمُ بَنِيهِ وَيَعْقُوبُ يَا بَنِيَّ إِنَّ اللَّهَ اصْطَفَىٰ
لَكُمْ الدِّينَ فَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنْتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ

“And the same did Abraham enjoin on his sons and (so did) Jacob. O my sons! Surely Allah has chosen for you (this) faith, therefore die not unless you are Muslims.”
(2:132)

This is a more specific aspect of the compassionate guidance of Prophet Abraham (as). He was concerned about not only his current generation, but the generations to come after him. Besides his general concern, he was also specifically concerned about his own offspring, due to his greater responsibility towards them.

There are great lessons here for us too. We should have a long-term approach and vision when it comes to the guidance of a community, considering not only the current generation but those to come. We also learn that we should focus on our own children and grandchildren, because if all parents focused on the guidance of their children, this would lead to a society which has a pious and virtuous future generation.

THE STATUS OF PROPHET ABRAHAM (AS)

The qualities that this great prophet displayed meant that he made some great achievements. He is described in the following āyat as:

- Reaching certainty
- Seeing the unseen world of malakūt
- Achieving the status of Imamāt
- Being a nation unto himself

وَكَذَٰلِكَ نُرِي إِبْرَاهِيمَ مَلَكُوتَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَلِيَكُونَ
مِنَ الْمُؤَقِّنِينَ

“And thus did We show Abraham the kingdom of the heavens and the earth and that he might be of those who are certain.” (6:75)

وَإِذِ ابْتَلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ رَبُّهُ بِكَلِمَاتٍ فَأَتَمَّهُنَّ قَالَ إِنِّي جَاعِلُكَ
لِلنَّاسِ إِمَامًا ۖ قَالَ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِي قَالَ لَا يَنَالُ عَهْدِي
الظَّالِمِينَ

“And when his Lord tried Ibrahim with certain words, he fulfilled them. He said: Surely I will make you an Imam of men. Ibrahim said: And of my offspring? My covenant does not include the unjust, said He.” (2:124)

إِنَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ كَانَ أُمَّةً قَانِتًا لِلَّهِ حَنِيفًا وَلَمْ يَكُ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ

“Lo! Abraham was a nation obedient to Allah, by nature upright, and he was not of the idolaters” (16:120)

There are many lessons for us in the life of Prophet Abraham (as). In this lesson, we have considered some of the lessons related to the qualities that led to him having such a great influence and legacy. If we hope to be leaders, and to have a legacy that beyond our own lifetime, then we should respond to the command of the Holy Qur’an to take Prophet Abraham (as) as a role model.

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

In the last lesson, we discussed some of the great qualities of Prophet Abraham (as), qualities that made gave him an amazing legacy which lasts till today.

In this lesson, we will briefly review a specific quality of Prophet Abraham (as), that of trust in Allah (SWT):

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.ⁱ 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.

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. Jibrāil, 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!”

Jibrāil responded “then ask your lord!!”

Prophet Abraham turned and told Jibrāil:

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

Prophet Abraham was indirectly telling Jibrāil 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”

Research Assignment

In relation to lesson 1 of this unit, undertake some research to see what qualities the Holy Qur’an praises when speaking about the Prophets in general. Are some, most or all of these qualities shared? Can we attain these qualities? Which do you think are the three most important qualities? Use a Qur’an search engine and search the names of a number of Prophets (e.g. Abraham, Moses, Jesus, Muhammad (saw)) to help you find material for your response. Bring your response to class next week for discussion.

ⁱ 40 Hadith- Imam Khomaini

نبي الله يوسف (ع)

PROPHET YŪSUF [A.S]

FUNDAMENTALS OF ISLAM

LEVEL 5

Lesson 1: Prophet Yūsuf (as)

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Discuss the story of Prophet Joseph (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 that Prophet Joseph was found in the well and taken as a slave
- Know about Prophet Joseph's life in the Egyptian king's house, and his time in prison
- Discuss Prophet Joseph's 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

INTRODUCTION

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 Ḥadith attributed to Imam 'Ali (as) which discourages women from reading the story of Prophet Yusuf because it would lead to bad temptations. We should be aware of such false Ḥadith 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, 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.

A fascinating theological discussion

In the exegesis of ayah no 12 of Surat Yusuf, 'Allāmah Tabatabā'i draws our attention to the subtleties of the grammatical structure which in turn proves another concept from another ayah in the Holy Quran.

In Arabic grammar, if a noun or action is intellect-less (ghayr-ʿāqil or non-human being), then the plural form of it or a verb attributed to it is treated as feminine.

In keeping with the above, when Allah (SWT) describes the prostration of the eleven stars, the sun and the moon to Prophet Yusuf (as), the verb used is interestingly not in

the feminine form (*sājidāt*)- in keeping with the actions of a non-intellect being- instead it is masculine (*sājidīn*).

In order to explain this, the author posits that everything thing created by Allah (SWT) has a degree of intelligence by which they glorify Allah (SWT). He uses the following ayah to support his view:

"....and everything in the heavens and the earth glorifies and praises Him, but you (human beings) cannot understand and notice this glorification"

THE PLOT AGAINST JOSEPH (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 Yūsuf out from house, they created a lie. They pretended to take Yūsuf 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 Yūsuf here is interesting. He did not forbid them to take Prophet Yūsuf 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).

As we've learnt previously, jealousy got the better of the brothers of Yūsuf and they all conspired against him. They threw him into the depths of the well with the hope that they would never see him again. Allah (SWT) however had very different plans for His prophet.

In the subsequent sections we will discuss jealousy – its types, source and cures from the hadith of our Imams.

JEALOUSY

There are two types of jealousy; a negative form (*al-ḥasad*) hence strongly condemned, and permissible form called *al-ghibtah*

al-ḥasad means to be unhappy when a blessing is bestowed on someone and to be happy when that blessing is taken away. The Holy Qur'an in describing the characteristics of jealous people says:

“If some good should befall you (O Prophet), it upsets them, but if some ill should befall you (O Prophet), they rejoice at it”ⁱⁱ

On the other hand when someone does not want that blessing to be taken away and does not feel grieved with its continuation for that person, but instead wishes the same for himself, this is called *al-ghibta*.

The Prophet (saw) said in regards to these two types of jealousy:

“A believer only feels *al-ghibta* and is never jealous, whilst a hypocrite is jealous and does not merely stop at feeling *al-ghibta*”ⁱⁱⁱ

The sources of jealousy (al-ḥasad)

Jealousy can be caused by a combination of factors which primarily stem from the meanness in the soul, which in turn finds its roots in the love and attachment to this world. Some of these factors are:

- **Pride/arrogance/self-admiration** – When a person thinks that he is better than others, he will become jealous when others receive some blessing. The brothers of Prophet Yūsuf (as) thought that they were better than him.
- **Astonishment** – If the blessing that someone receives is so great and lofty, a mean person gets astounded and cannot fathom how anyone

can gain so much in this world, and thus this astonishment becomes a source of his/her jealousy. Satan could not understand why Prophet Adam was given such a lofty status where all angels were commanded to prostrate to him.

- **Competition**—Naturally if someone is competing with another person for something, his nature begins to dislike him. After that, he wants to belittle him so as to feel superior. In contrast, if two people living in different towns have no such connection, there will be no jealousy between them. This is why we see that a scholar is jealous of another scholar, not a layperson, while laypeople are jealous of each other rather than scholars.
- **Supremacy** – a person's jealousy may also be fuelled by a love of supremacy, which is based on the desire for exclusivity in everything, wanting no one to share it.

The evils of jealousy

Jealousy is a fatal disease of the soul and has very evil consequences both in this world and the next. The worldly consequence is that a jealous person is always anxious, sad and grieved. He is pained at every affliction averted from others and this further adds to his misery until it eventually destroys him. Imam 'Ali (as) says:

“How capable Jealous is! And how just it is that it starts off with its perpetrator and ends up killing him”^{iv}

In addition, whatever blessings he would have received in this world and in the hereafter for all the good actions he performed would now equate to nothing since he has 'burnt' away all his actions:

Holy Prophet (saw) said: **“Jealousy consumes good deeds like fire consumes dry wood”^v**

Cures for jealousy:

The only way to cure jealousy is through knowledge of its evil nature – to recognise that jealousy is harmful to you – both to your faith and your worldly life – and not to the victim. After realisation of this a jealous person now

needs to change his previously evil deeds into righteous actions:

- Every time he feels impelled to say something evil, he must do the opposite - If his jealousy urges him to slander someone, he must force his tongue to praise him instead
- If his jealousy urges him to act arrogantly towards someone, he must force himself to act humbly and apologise instead
- If his jealous urges him to deny that person something, he must force himself to give more

The more a jealous person does this, the more the victim will realise this. The victim's heart will incline towards him and he will love him. As the victim shows love to the jealous person, the jealous person will return that love and out of all this a new understanding will be born that will shatter the building blocks of jealousy.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1) What is the difference between *all-ḥasad* and *Al-Ghibtah*?

2) How can one purge himself off the evils of Jealousy?

3) Identify an area in your life where you usually get jealous and discuss what you can do to improve your situation.

Lesson 2: Life After the Well

Young Joseph (as) remained in the deep well for an unknown period of time. Was there anyone around who could save him?

Joseph 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, Prophet Joseph emerged. The men hid Joseph 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." (12:19-20)

JOSEPH DEFEATS DESIRES

Joseph 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 Joseph 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 Joseph 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 Joseph and herself.

Remember that Joseph 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. Joseph said:

"What about my Lord who is All-Watching?"

She ran towards him, but Joseph ran away from her. Joseph called onto Allah (SWT) in desperation:

“I seek protection in Allah” (12:23)

Prophet Joseph (peace be upon him) 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, Joseph ‘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 Joseph. If we pay close attention to the wordings of the Qur’an, we will notice that because of Joseph’s pure and sincere plea for help, Allah (SWT) caused the evil desires and indecency to turn away from him instead of Joseph being removed from the evil. The latter is a higher degree of divine protection:

“...Thus it was, that We turned away from him evil and illegal sexual intercourse. Surely, he was one of Our sincere, guided slaves” (12:24)

Instead of Allah (SWT) saying that, “We turned Yūsuf away from evil”, He says: “We turned evil away from Yūsuf”. While both forms suggest divine protection, the latter gives a meaning of a greater level of protection. The implied meaning of this structure tells us that Prophet Yūsuf was so pure in his essence that evil on approaching such purity was repelled by it, instead of Prophet Yūsuf (as) moving away from the impurity.

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 Joseph.

Confident that he was innocent, Joseph responded to the accusation very calmly. He said:

"It was she that attempted to seduce me,"(12:26)

Nevertheless, because Joseph disobeyed the king’s wife, she would punish him. Joseph 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."(12:33)

SOME LESSONS FROM THE ABOVE:

Prophet Yūsuf (as) and his rejection of Zulaykha in spite of his ability to yield to her and in spite of her desire for him has earned him the praise of Allah (SWT) in the Holy Qur’an. Prophet Yūsuf (as) is the leader of all such people who have managed, through divine help, to fight Satan with regard to this powerful desire.

A person who gives in to his lustful desires will suffer both in this world and the next. Some of the negative consequences in this world are:

- A study carried out in 2005 to determine the effects of pre-marital relationship on teenagers’ emotional state showed that relationships usually regret later and are 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.
- Eventually youth resort to masturbation and this bad habit has very serious physical and psychological effects. The punishment for this sin in the hereafter is also very severe.

CONTROLLING SEXUAL DESIRES

So, how can we avoid such a negative end and react like Prophet Joseph in controlling our desires and resist any temptation from the opposite gender? Below are a few tips:

1. 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.'^{vi}

However if this is difficult, then we can avoid falling into sins by other ways prescribed to us by Islam. Remember, the more one obeys his desire, the stronger it becomes until it totally overpowers him. Therefore, follow these practical tips to avoid such a state.

2. Lower your gaze! The Holy Qur'an says:

“Tell the believing men to lower their gaze (from looking at forbidden things)” (The Holy Qur'an, 24:30)

The Prophet said: “The (evil) gaze is a poisoned arrow from Satan.....”^{vii}

An attack by this poisoned arrow destroys our spirituality and rids us completely of the sweetness in communicating with Allah (SWT).

3. Avoid being in a place or situation where a risk may present itself. This includes being alone with the opposite gender, either physically in a room or over the internet. Also avoid places such as beaches or public pools during busy times.

Remember the story of Prophet Muoses (as) when despite his strong faith, chose to walk ahead of the daughters of Prophet Shu'ayb (as), thus avoiding any potential risk of falling into sin.

4. Avoid having the opposite gender as a friend just for 'social' reasons. This includes friends on Facebook or any other social media sites. These are traps that Satan sets for us and although they seemingly appear harmless, they lead to greater sins.

5. Force yourself to engage in sporting activities or in other extra-curricular activities such as community service etc. Such activities exhaust our energies and prevent our thoughts from straying in the wrong way.

6. Be extremely selective in what you watch on TV/computer programs and read in magazines and newspapers. Most movies these days are packed with sexual themes and so it is better to avoid them totally.

7. Be very selective when choosing your friends. Pious and virtuous friends will have a positive impact on your personality and the opposite is also very true.

8. Always try to stay in a state of Wudū'— it acts as an invisible shield around us protecting us from all types of sins

9. Do not over eat. Consuming more food than we require leads to an increased production of testosterone which in turn increases sexual drive. The

best way to achieve this is to get up from the dining-table whilst we still being desirous of the food.

10. Take the daily prayers seriously as it keeps one away from evil and indecency.

“Verily, As-Salat (the prayer) prevents great sins...”
(29:45)

JOSEPH IS IMPRISONED

Allah (SWT) rescued Prophet Joseph from the mischief of the women by responding to his prayer. In prison, Prophet Joseph 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 Joseph's 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)

Joseph remained in prison for several years until he was eventually released by the king. The king had heard of Joseph's special dream-interpreting abilities and he desperately needed such a service^{viii}.

Prophet Joseph 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 Joseph as a minister in his government. Such was Joseph's 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 Joseph 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 Joseph who lived in neighbouring Kan'an desperately needed food. They had heard of the generosity of Prophet Joseph although they did not know who he was. When they visited Joseph, they did not recognise him, but he recognised his brothers.

Joseph treated them very kindly and made their stay very comfortable despite the fact that they had treated him unfairly. Eventually, Joseph introduced himself to them. While Joseph 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 Joseph 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, 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 Joseph
- c. Both a & b

Q2. According to the Holy Qur'an, which of these were the ingredients to Prophet Joseph's success?

- a. Piety and Patience
- b. Power and Wealth
- c. Physical beauty

ⁱ Holy Quran (17:44)

ⁱⁱ Holy Quran (3:120)

ⁱⁱⁱ Al Kafi – Vol 2 Pg 307

^{iv} Sharh Nahj Al Balagha Vol1 Pg 316

^v Al Kafi – Vol2 Pg 306

^{vi} Bihar al-Anwar, p. 221, no. 34

^{vii} Ibid p 97

^{viii} 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 5

Qur'anic Prophets: Lesson 1

In our syllabus so far, we have come across many prophets and discussed their stories.

We will dedicate this final lesson to Prophets who are mentioned in the Qur'an briefly, and whose stories we have not had an opportunity to discuss.

The Qur'an mentions these Prophets with only a few sentences related to them. The reason for this is that the Qur'an wants to teach us lessons and values from their lives, rather than telling us historical facts about them which may not benefit us.

The other important point to remember is that for most of these Prophets, we have a great number of narrations which tell strange and mythical stories. These narrations are weak and unauthentic, and often based on Biblical stories. In general, we do not see these narrations as valid, and we should not relate the stories we hear within them.

In this lesson, we will briefly look at the remaining Prophets mentioned in the Qur'an, and look at the traits for which each of them was praised.

PROPHET ISMĀ'ĪL

وَاذْكُرْ فِي الْكِتَابِ إِسْمَاعِيلَ ۚ إِنَّهُ كَانَ صَادِقَ الْوَعْدِ
وَكَانَ رَسُولًا نَبِيًّا وَكَانَ يَأْمُرُ أَهْلَهُ بِالصَّلَاةِ وَالزَّكَاةِ وَكَانَ
عِنْدَ رَبِّهِ مَرْضِيًّا

“And mention in the Book Ismā'il. Verily! He was true to what he promised, and he was a Messenger, (and) a Prophet. And he used to enjoin on his family and his people *As-Salat* (the prayers) and the *Zakat*, and his Lord was pleased with him.” (19:54-55)

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Discuss the Prophets who are mentioned briefly in the Holy Qur'an
- Discuss the lessons to be learnt from the lives of the Prophets
- Engage in an analytical research activity related to Prophets in the Qur'an

It is noteworthy that there is a difference of opinion here about who this āyah is referring to. It may be one of the following:

- Ismā'il, the son of Abraham (as), who is mentioned separately here due to his special statusⁱ
- Ismā'il ibn Hazqeel, one of the Israelite Prophetsⁱⁱ

Ismā'il (as) was given the title of being 'true to his promise' because once he uttered his word, he would keep it. The other quality he is praised for by Allah (SWT) is that he enjoined his family to do good.

PROPHET IDRIS

وَادْكُرْ فِي الْكِتَابِ إِدْرِيسَ إِنَّهُ كَانَ صِدِّيقًا نَبِيًّا
وَرَفَعْنَاهُ مَكَانًا عَلِيًّا

“And mention in the Book (the Qur'an) Idrīs. Verily! He was a man of truth, (and) a Prophet. And We raised him to a high station.” (19:56-57)

Prophet Idrīs is one of the more ancient prophets. According to the Old Testament, he is one of the forefathers of Prophet Noah (as). He was given this name because of how much he studied books (his name is derived from the root word 'dars', meaning 'to study') His name in the Testament is Akhnukh, and in English he is referred to as Enoch.

He is given the title of being raised to a high status. This is to indicate the level of spirituality and proximity to Allah that he reached.

He is also given the title of being Truthful. In fact, this attribute is mentioned before the attribute of being a prophet, highlighting its importance.

He is also mentioned in another passage in the Qur'an, where he is described as being patient and virtuous.

We have narrations that indicate the following about Prophet Idrīs (as):

- He was the first to write
- He studied many books and mastered many sciences, and this is where he got his name from
- His people did not accept his teachings. So he left with a group from Iraq to Egypt, where he taught many people and helped them establish cities and sciences.

- He was the first to understand astronomy

While these narrations are merely historical and may not have much weight, the fact that this great man is held in high regard among scientists and philosophers indicates that he was a great scholar who was among the first to lead people to the intellectual sciences.

There are also many narrations about Prophet Idrīs which tell stories which clash with the infallibility of angels and his own infallibility. These are Israelite narrations which should be rejected.ⁱⁱⁱ

PROPHET ILYĀS

وَإِنَّ إِلْيَاسَ لَمِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ (123) إِذْ قَالَ لِقَوْمِهِ أَلَا تَتَّقُونَ (129) ... (124) سَلَامٌ عَلَىٰ إِيَّاكَ يَا سَيِّدِ
(130) إِنَّا كَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِينَ (131) إِنَّهُ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا الْمُؤْمِنِينَ (132)

“123. And verily, Ilyās (Elias) was one of the Messengers.

124. When he said to his people: "Will you not fear Allah?

...

130. *Salamun* (peace) be upon Il yāsīn (Elias)!"

131. Verily, thus do We reward the good-doers

132. Verily, he was one of Our believing slaves.” (37:123-132)

Prophet Ilyās (as) is mentioned twice in the Holy Qur'an. We know the following about him from the Holy Qur'an:

- He was deputed to a community
- He enjoined them to piety and to worshipping Allah alone
- A group of his people were purified and believed in him, while most of them rejected
- He is given the honour of being greeted in the Holy Qur'an
- He is given the title of 'al-Muḥsin' –the doer of good- in the Qur'an

As with many other prophets, we have many strange and conflicting narrations about Ilyās (as). We cannot consider these narrations true or base any beliefs on them.

There are weak narrations that indicate that Ilyās remains alive till today and will not die until the Day of Judgment. We have no evidence in the Qur'an or authentic narrations to support this, and so it is not part of our belief in this prophet.

It seems likely that he was a Prophet sent to the Bani Israel, and at least for a part of his life he was deputed to Ba'albak in modern day Lebanon.^{iv}

“And remember Ismā'il, Al-Yasa' (Elisha), and Dhul-Kifl (Isaiah), all are among the best.” (38:48)

PROPHET AL-YASA'

- This is another holy Prophet mentioned in the Qur'an
- From the narrations, we understand that he was sent to the Bani Israel, to enjoin them to the worship of Allah alone
- We have narrations from the Imams indicating he performed great miracles similar to those of Prophet Isa' (as)^v

PROPHET DHUL KIFL

- Another holy prophet mentioned in the Qur'an
- He is praised for being virtuous and patient
- We have narrations indicating he was a messenger as well as a prophet, and that he was sent to the Bani Israel after Prophet Solomon (as)^{vi}

This was a summary of the Prophets mentioned briefly in the Qur'an.

The remainder of this unit consists of a research task, which students can begin today and complete before the next lesson. It is outlined in lesson 2.

Qur'anic Prophets: Lesson 2

Research Task

This lesson consists of a research task. Write a 700-1000 word essay, or deliver a presentation, based on the Qur'anic passages related to the Prophets. In this essay, focus on the attributes for which these holy prophets are most often praised in the Holy Qur'an. Also discuss why some prophets are praised individually, and others in groups. Another point to explore is why some attributes are uniquely mentioned in relation to some prophets, while others are mentioned in relation to many prophets. Finally, make note of āyāt which praise the attributes of the Seal of the Prophets Muḥammad (saw).

ⁱ Al-Amthal, Ayat Makarem Shirazi

ⁱⁱ Al-Mizan, Allamah Tabatabai

ⁱⁱⁱ Al-Mizan, Allamah Tabatabai

^{iv} Al-Mizan, Allamah Tabatabai

^v Al-Mizan, Allamah Tabatabai

^{vi} Al-Mizan, Allamah Tabatabai

السَّلَامُ عَلَى مُوسَى كَلِيمِ اللَّهِ

PROPHET Mūsā^[A.S.]

نبي الله موسى (ع)

FUNDAMENTALS OF ISLAM

LEVEL 5

Lesson 1: Mūsā Kalīmu Allah

THE MISSION OF MUSA (AS)

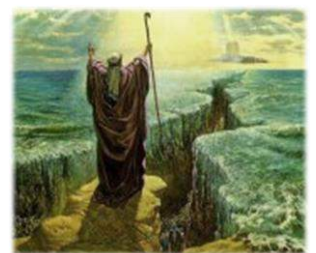
As we have learnt in previous years, Prophet Mūsā (as) was sent to Egypt with two missions:

1. To call the people to worship the One True God.
2. To stop the Pharaoh from oppressing the Children of Israel (Bani Israel) and using them as slaves.

This was met with the refusal of the Pharaoh and his followers, and after enduring many hardships in trying to guide them, Prophet Mūsā (as) was commanded by Allah (SWT) to take the Bani Israel and flee by night. The Pharaoh and his army pursued them till the edge of the sea where Prophet Mūsā's (as) community where they thought they are trapped. However, Prophet Mūsā (as) demonstrated his uncompromising trust in Allah (SWT), saying:

“He said: By no means; surely my Lord is with me: He will show me a way out...” (26:62)

It was only after he said this that Allah (SWT) commanded him to strike the sea with his staff, and Allah divided the sea, saving Prophet Mūsā (as) and the believers, and drowning Pharaoh and his army. 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

Objectives >>>

Students should:

Lesson 1

- Briefly review a summary of Prophet Mūsā's mission
- Discuss the title of Prophet Mūsā' (as): Kalīmu Allah
- Discuss in detail the incident of God speaking to Prophet Mūsā (as)
- Discuss the important role of Aaron (as) in Prophet Mūsā's (as) message
- Discuss the similarities in their relationship between that of Prophet Muḥammad and Imam 'Ali
- Discuss the wisdom behind Prophet Mūsā's (as) request for his mission to be shared with his brother
- Discuss the importance of brotherhood and having a partner on a spiritual journey
- Discuss the wisdom of God giving his message to 'families'
- Discuss the incident of Prophet Mūsā's (as) departure and the Israelites worship of the golden calf,
- Briefly review the struggles of Prophet Mūsā's (as) with his people after crossing the sea
- Discuss the Qur'an's teachings on Judaism and the Israelite people

submission to Allah. However, even after crossing the sea and freeing his people, the struggles of Prophet Mūsā (as) did not end.

MŪSĀ (AS) - KALĪMU ALLAH

وَكَلَّمَ اللَّهُ مُوسَى تَكْلِيمًا

“And to Moses Allah spoke a kind of speaking.” (4:164)

A special title of Prophet Musa (as) is ‘Kalīmu Allah’, which means “the one who was spoken to by Allah (SWT)”. This is because Allah (SWT) ‘spoke’ to him in a unique manner. Perhaps the best way to explain it is to say that Allah (SWT) did this by causing soundwaves to emanate from a burning tree. Allah (SWT) only speaks to human beings in three ways:

1. By revelation
2. From behind a veil
3. By sending a messenger to reveal what He Wills.

It is important to remember that Allah (SWT) certainly did not enter the tree somehow or take on any physical form. Allah (SWT) is beyond matter, and is too Exalted for such an event. Rather, He simply caused sound to emanate from a tree in a unique way.

Prophet Mūsā (as) and his family (as) had left Madyan at night and were on their way towards Egypt. Prophet Mūsā (as) then saw a fire in the distance, and told his family to stop and wait till he goes to the fire. When he reached near it, a voice came from the tree:

“... O Mūsā: Surely I am your Lord, therefore put off your shoes; surely you are in the sacred valley, Ṭuwa, And I have chosen you, so listen to what is revealed: Surely I am Allah, there is no god but I, therefore serve Me and keep up prayer for My remembrance: Surely the hour is coming– I am about to make it manifest– so that every soul may be rewarded as it strives: Therefore let not him who believes not in it and follows his low desires turn you away from it so that you should perish; And what is this in your right hand, O Mūsā! He said: This is my staff: I recline on it and I beat the leaves with it to make them fall upon my sheep, and I have other uses for it. He said: Cast it down, O Mūsā! So he cast it down; and lo! it was a serpent running. He said: Take hold of it and fear not; We will restore it to its former state: And press your hand to your side, it shall come out white without evil: another sign: That We may show you of

Our greater signs: Go to Pharaoh, surely he has exceeded all limits.” (20:11-24)

SPIRITUAL DIMENSIONS OF THIS CONVERSATION

- The command "to take off the shoes" is interpreted as a mark of humility for self and respect for Allah, or to renounce the thought of family, so as to be present before the Lord in utter devotedness and concentration of heart and mind.
- The conversation between Allah (SWT) and Prophet Mūsā (as) is like a conversation between two close friends who love one another. Some of these signs include:
 - Allah (SWT) uses the first person repeatedly
 - Allah (SWT) describes Himself to Prophet Mūsā (as) as ‘your Lord’ rather than ‘the Lord’. All this is to emphasise the close relationship
 - Allah (SWT) says: ‘I have chosen you’. In other parts of the Qur’an, Allah (SWT): ‘I have fashioned you for myself’
 - Allah (SWT) asks Prophet Mūsā (as) a question to which the answer is obvious (what is in your right hand?) Prophet Mūsā’s (as) answer in turn is quite long. Some of our scholars indicate that the purpose of the question and the long answer despite the obviousness is to prolong the conversation between the two intimate friends.

Review Questions

1. Undertake further research and explain the meaning of God ‘speaking’ to the Prophet in your own words.

Lesson 2:

The Brother of the Prophet

THE ROLE OF HĀRŪN (AS)

After being spoken to by Allah (SWT) and given the grand mission of going to the Pharaoh, Prophet Mūsā (as) made a special request to Allah (SWT):

25. (Moses) said: "O my Lord! Open for me my chest. And ease my task for me;" And make loose the knot from my tongue, That they understand my speech, And

appoint for me a minister from my family, Hārūn (Aaron), my brother; Increase my strength with him, And let him share my task. That we may glorify You much, "And remember You much, Verily! You are of us Ever a Well-Seer." Allah said: "You are granted your request, O Musa (Moses)!" (20:25-36)

Knowing that his task will not be easy, Prophet Mūsā (as) asked to have his brother, Aaron (as), as his minister, and asked that they may share the mission. The role of Prophet Aaron (as) was very important in that he was always at the aid of Prophet Mūsā (as). He supported his brother during the difficult encounters with the oppressive Pharaoh, and was the leader of the community when Prophet Mūsā (as) was summoned to the mountain for 40 days. Note the following points about the relationship of these two prophets and brothers:

- Prophet Mūsā (as) says that his strength will be increased through his brother Aaron (as)
- He states that his mission is shared with Aaron (as)
- Prophet Mūsā (as) states he and Aaron (as) will glorify Allah (SWT) together
- Allah (SWT) accepts the request of Prophet Mūsā (as)

A VERY SIMILAR BROTHERHOOD

Prophet Muḥammad (saw) said to Imam ‘Ali (as): “Your position to me is like the position of Aaron to Musa, except that there will be no prophet after me.”

Both Prophet Mūsā (as) and Prophet Muḥammad (saw) had difficult and hazardous tasks ahead of them, one being sent to the evil Pharaoh and one being sent to the ignorant and dangerous tribal chiefs of Mecca. However, both had great supports in carrying out their tasks. While Prophet Mūsā (as) had Aaron (as) as his support, the Prophet of Islam had Imam ‘Ali (as). It is important to note that whatever task or status mentioned for Aaron (as) in the Qur’an, would also apply to Imam ‘Ali (as), on account of the authentic and recurrently narrated Ḥadīth above.

Aaron (as) was the brother of Prophet Mūsā (as). Although Imam ‘Ali (as) was the cousin of the Holy Prophet (saw), announced ‘Ali (as) to be his brother on many occasions. One such occasion was after the migration to Medina where brotherhood was established and paired between each of the Muhajirīn and Anṣār,

with the only exception being the brotherhood declared between Prophet Muḥammad (saw) and Imam ‘Ali (as). In this way the Prophet (saw) made clear that none could ever be regarded as his brother other than ‘Ali (as).¹

As the people of Musa (as) violated their oath of loyalty to Aaron (as) and followed al-Sāmeri, the people of Prophet Muḥammad (saw) also turned their back upon ‘Ali (as) and pursued their own fancies. In this way the faith of both communities was tested, and they were found doing injustice to themselves.

WISDOM OF SHARING THE MISSION

“And my brother, Aaron, he is more eloquent of tongue than I, therefore send him with me as an aider, verifying me: surely I fear that they would reject me.”
(28:34)

During such a difficult task, having an older brother who he trusted completely would ‘strengthen his back’ and be of great help to him. Aaron (as) was older, very eloquent, and could support Prophet Mūsā (as) during the encounter with the Pharaoh. He could have led the community in the absence of Prophet Musa (as).

In the same way we should learn not to be proud of ourselves or think that ‘I’m a man and can do it all by myself’ when faced with challenging situations, seeking a trustable and worthy companion is the wisest and most intelligent thing to do. The Holy Prophet (saw) asked for such a companion as well, in the form of Imam ‘Ali (as).

ABANDONING THE SUCCESSOR

“And We appointed with Mūsā a time of thirty nights and completed them with ten (more), so the appointed time of his Lord was complete forty nights, and Mūsā said to his brother Hārūn: Take my place among my people, Do right and do not follow the way of the mischief-makers.” (7:142)

As we have learnt in previous years, Prophet Aaron (as) was the successor of Prophet Mūsā (as) and was given the task of leading the community while Prophet Musa (as) had gone to Mount Sinai. His meeting with Allah (SWT) was extended by 10 days, so when he was late in returning the community became agitated. A person by the name of al-Sāmīri 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.

Another interesting aspect of the story is that Prophet Musa (as) approaches his brother Prophet Aaron (as), asking him as to why he allowed such a disaster to happen.

“And certainly Aaron had said to them before: O my people! you are only tried by it [the cow], and surely your Lord is the Beneficent Allah, therefore follow me and obey my order. They said: We will by no means cease to keep to its worship until Musa returns to us.

(Musa) said: O Aaron! What prevented you, when you saw them going astray, So that you did not follow me? Did you then disobey my order? He said: O son of my mother! Seize me not by my beard nor by my head; surely I was afraid lest you should say: You have caused a division among the children of Israel and not respected my word.” (20:90-94)

The answer of Aaron (as) is that he feared that the Children of Israel would have divided into two groups of believers and disbelievers, with the strength and unity destroyed, and perhaps even fighting and bloodshed occurring. He therefore tried to respect the command (“do right”) of Prophet Mūsā (as) and keep the community united.

Another part of Aaron’s (as) response is given in Surah al-A’rāf:

“... He said: Son of my mother! Surely the people reckoned me weak and went near to killing me, therefore make not the enemies to rejoice over my misfortune & count me not among the unjust people.” (7:150)

An important lesson from this story is that when people do not follow the divinely appointed successor, they are led astray. A similar such situation occurred when the people abandoned Imam ‘Ali (as) after the demise of the Holy Prophet (saw), where Imam Ali (as) had to bear patience for the sake of the unity of Islam. These āyāt also shed light on why Imam ‘Ali took the patient stand he did after the demise of the Holy Prophet.

Review Questions

Q1. Discuss the role of Prophet Aaron (as) in the absence of Prophet Mūsā (as), and compare it with that of Imam ‘Ali (as).

Q2. Discuss the wisdom of the mission being shared between Prophet Mūsā (as) and Prophet Aaron (as).

Lesson 3: Struggles with the Israelites

MISCHIEF OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL

The community of Prophet Mūsā (as) brought much pain and grief to him on a variety of occasions:

- 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.ⁱⁱ
- 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 (and ungratefulness) of the blessings of Allah (SWT).ⁱⁱⁱ
- Refusing to fight to regain their land from idolaters: Upon reaching the promised land of Palestine, almost all of the community refused to fight to remove the occupiers (who were fierce warriors) despite the promise of victory from Allah (SWT), and even mocked Prophet Mūsā (as). As punishment for this, Allah (SWT) made them to wander the desert as a homeless tribe for forty years.^{iv}
- Worshipping the Calf: the people began to worship the cow made of gold by al-Sāmiri after Prophet Mūsā (as) was late in returning to them.^v
- 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.^{vi}

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 than another
- 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. Therefore, it is always the belief and good actions which are judged.

"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)

JUDAISM vs. ZIONISM

It is important to distinguish between Judaism and Zionism.

	Judaism	Zionism
Belief Type	A monotheistic religion	A secular ideology
Origin	~35 centuries ago	1897, in Switzerland
Ideas Regarding Statehood	Having own state is forbidden while awaiting the Messianic era.	A political party with the excuse of returning the Jews to their holy land.

ⁱ Video: The Brother of the Prophet | Hajj Hassanain Rajabali [3 minutes] <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8SZIZz6QpHs>

ⁱⁱ Holy Quran 7:138-139

ⁱⁱⁱ Holy Quran 2:61

Support	Not all Jewish support Zionism	Not all Zionists are Jewish
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Zionism is a racist ideology, where Moses Hess, one of its founders, describes the Jewish race as "superior and chosen". In 1975 the United Nations adopted a resolution which equated Zionism with racism, which was revoked later in 1991 under the right of veto of the United States. While Zionists are clear enemies of Islam and Muslims, we must remember that many Jews are not so.

OUR RESPONSIBILITIES AGAINST THE ZIONIST PROPAGANDA MACHINE

Most parts of global politics and mass media are under the control of Zionism and as Muslims we have certain responsibilities against their propaganda machine, which include:

- Using social media to spread true news (text, images and videos) and to expose lies.
- Talking with friends, classmates, colleagues, and university students and telling them the truth.
- Establishing and supporting independent Muslim media.
- Supporting and standing behind public figures (including journalists) that stand up to Zionism.
- Writing respectful letters to the editors when a newspaper publishes false propaganda (or comments on online media)
- Supporting the oppressed wherever they be, and attending rallies and demonstrations to raise awareness.
- Boycotting Zionist media outlets, public figures, and products.

Review Questions:

Q1. Describe the mischief of the Children of Israel against Prophet Musa (as).

Q2. Outline the differences between Judaism and Zionism.

^{iv} Holy Quran 5:20-26

^v Holy Quran 20:86-97

^{vi} Holy Quran 2:67-72

السَّلَامُ عَلَى دَاوُدَ نَبِيِّ اللَّهِ

PROPHET DAWUD ^{ASI}

نبي الله داود (ع)

FUNDAMENTALS OF ISLAM

LEVEL 5

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:

اصْبِرْ عَلَىٰ مَا يَقُولُونَ وَاذْكُرْ عَبْدَنَا دَاوُدَ ذَا الْأَيْدِ ۚ إِنَّهُ أَوَّابٌ {17} إِنَّا سَخَّرْنَا الْجِبَالَ مَعَهُ يُسَبِّحْنَ بِالْعَشِيِّ وَالْإِشْرَاقِ {18} وَالطَّيْرَ مَحْشُورَةً ۚ كُلٌّ لَهُ أَوَّابٌ {19} وَشَدَدْنَا مُلْكَهُ وَأَتَيْنَاهُ الْحِكْمَةَ وَفَصَّلَ الْخِطَابِ {20}

"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 wisdom, and sound judgement in speech and decision." (38:17-20)

In this lesson we will discuss the life of Prophet Dāwūd (as) with particular focus on his role as a just judge and leader.

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 Shurayḥ, 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)

LEADERSHIP LESSONS FROM THE LIFE OF PROPHET DĀWŪD

We can learn many lessons from the life of this great prophet for our modern world. Some of these include the following:

- The leaders of our world should be people who are God-conscious, no matter how much power they achieve. Prophet David’s power was so great, yet he remained so afraid and conscious of Allah (SWT). This God-wariness can be seen in our faithful legitimate leaders in one or two parts of our modern world. We mentioned one example of a movement with such a leader in previous years’ lessons on Prophet David (as).

However, most other leaders seem to have only one agenda, and that is to maintain or extend

their power. We see leaders lie, back down from their values, create environments of fear and pander to the majority all in order to stay in power.

Worse than this, their lies and deceptions can lead to vast destruction and loss of a great amount of lives. We see in the mid-second decade of the 21st century in which we live that the Middle East has seen upheaval like never before. Certain wealthier nations have acknowledged that they played a major role in creating this upheaval, with the excuse that they were trying to bring about democracy. The ensuing displacement of millions of people and loss of hundreds of thousands of lives is truly sickening.

- If leaders of nations and communities truly submit to God, their power will only increase. Prophet David was given power over even the mountains and birds. He was given wisdom, eloquence and discerning judgment. This is all because he was God-conscious. In another part of the Qur’an (Surat Nūḥ), God promises the community of that prophet (but of course this applies to all communities) that if they simply turned to Allah and asked forgiveness, he would send abundant blessings upon them from all sources.

Looking into these Qur’anic passages, we must understand that if we make national and international policies that are God-conscious, we will only thrive. If we back God-conscious leaders, and support policy which is God-conscious, then blessings will abound for us, although this will always involve a struggle.

We must not read these Qur’anic passages as stories or fairy-tales. Instead, we should read them as a guideline for our leaders, and our community, national and international policies. This is the only way that we will come to live in a better world.

Review Questions

Q1. From the story of Prophet David & Goliath, what is the most important lesson that can be derived?

- a. Trust in Allah (SWT) is the key to victory however difficult the circumstances may be.
- b. Proper planning and strategic moves are the key to defeating a powerful enemy
- c. The Israelites will always be victorious in any confrontation

Q2. Social justice can be achieved if:

- a. The individuals comprising the society live along the principles of justice
- b. People judge fairly, speak the truth and stand up against oppression is practiced
- c. 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]

نبي الله سُلَيْمَان (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 5

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 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)

Prophet Sulaymān (as) was granted these powers and gifts He did not ask for a mighty kingdom and authority because he wanted fame, power and glory; rather, his aim was to guide his people and to establish justice in the world. At no time does history show that Prophet Sulaymān (as) ever used his powers for his own ambitions or for personal gain. In fact, he placed his great power and means at the service of his people to guide them so that the banner of belief in One God. This is the supplication of Prophet Sulaymān (as) to his Lord:

“My Lord! grant me that I should be grateful for Your favour which You have bestowed on me and on my parents, and that I should do good such as You are pleased with, and include me, by Your mercy, in the ranks of Your righteous servants.” (27:19)

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 (Ḥujjah) 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), our Holy Prophet (S), and Imam Ali (as), we can also consider the following points which demonstrate the inseparability of state and religion in Islam:

1. The Rule belongs solely to Allah (SWT)

As Muslims, we all believe that Allah, the Exalted, is our Creator, Nurturer, and Guide. He is All-Knowing of what would benefit His creation and slaves in their worldly and religious affairs.

Therefore, mankind must submit to Allah, His divine legislation and His just, wise laws in all stages of his life. Allah, the Exalted says:

“the rule is only for Allah, He declares the truth, and He is the Best Judge.” (6:57).

2. Islamic Jurisprudence is the Constitution for Life, including Government

Islamic jurisprudence is not a set of individual rules of worship only. Rather, it includes the constitution for life, including Islamic government. It encompasses financial laws, civil laws (e.g. marriage and divorce) military laws, judicial laws etc.

Thus Islamic jurisprudence is the constitution of the Islamic government in its entirety.

3. Islamic Government is a Necessary Part of an Islamic Society

The endurance of Islamic jurisprudence necessarily requires there to be an Islamic government which ensures that Islamic jurisprudence is put into practice and which takes up the role of implementing it. Otherwise, the divine laws will be overlooked, as is the current situation in many countries which are 'Islamic' by name.

4. The Necessity of Appointing a Leader who will Implement Islamic Law

Because we need an Islamic government, we also need a trusted ruler who is well versed in the divine laws so he can implement them.

The Islamic Ruler must be the most knowledgeable of people about the laws of Allah and the most just amongst the Muslims. Of course, when an infallible Imam is present, he is obviously the leader.

5. It is not Permissible to Suspend Divine Laws in the Era of Occultation

However, during the ghaybah (occultation) of our Imam Mahdi (as), who will implement the laws of Islam and rule by Allah's command?

There is no doubt that the laws of Islam continue till Resurrection Day, they are not somehow 'put on hold' until Imam Mahdi (as) reappears. Otherwise, it would mean that the greater period of time was excluded from these laws. It would also lead to the spread of sins and

corruption during the ghaybah, and this is definitely something that Allah (SWT) does not want.

Thus, during the ghaybah, when we do not have an infallible ruler, we have two choices. Either we:

1. Ignore Governance: but this will be ignoring something important (Islamic Government) which people need in order to organize their worldly life and Hereafter

2. We say that the Allah (SWT) left it to the community: to run their own affairs as they see fit, according to democracy, dictatorship or any other doctrine that is popular at the time.

Both options are obviously invalid, because an important need of the Muslim community is ignored. Which need is greater than the need for the most knowledgeable (in the laws of God) and just person to manage the affairs of the community and maintain the order of the Muslim lands during the ghaybah, while maintaining and implementing the Islamic laws?

Therefore, the only option we have is to have an Islamic government. This government must be led by the most knowledge scholar of the time, who does his best to establish the laws of Islam in the land.

The important point to remember is that Islam and government are not separated, but go hand in hand. This is one of the most important lessons we can learn from the life of Prophet Sulaymān (as).

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>

السَّلَامُ عَلَى عِيسَى رُوحِ اللَّهِ

PROPHET 'ISĀ [A.S]

نبي الله (ع) عيسى

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Know some of the arguments that Christian evangelists make by referring to the Holy Qur'an, and how to rebut these arguments
- Discuss the fact that the Bible prophesied the coming of Prophet Muḥammad
- Understand in depth the arguments against the Christian doctrine of Trinity
- Understand in depth the arguments against the Christian doctrine of Crucifixion and salvation

FUNDAMENTALS OF ISLAM

LEVEL 5

Lesson 1: 'Isā in the Qur'an, Muḥammad in the Injīl

In past years, we have discussed the life of Prophet Jesus (as) and his mother Mary (as). We have also discussed some of the issues related to main Christian doctrines. In these lessons, we will discuss some of the arguments posed by Christian evangelists, before discussing the main Christian doctrines, and analysing them in more depth.

CHRISTIAN ARGUMENTS REFERENCING THE QUR'AN

Christian evangelists sometimes refer to Qur'anic passages to try to prove some of their theological points. This lesson will explore these arguments and rebut them.

1. God's Word Never Changes

Allegation: The Quran claims that no one can alter the word of God, so why do Muslims claim that the Bible has been altered?

“[This is] the established way of Allah which has occurred before. And never will you find in the way of Allah any change.” (The Holy Qur'an, 48:23)

“For them are good tidings in the worldly life and in the Hereafter. No change is there in the words of Allah . That is what is the great attainment” (The Holy Qur'an, 10:64)

Response: This particular verse has been intentionally quoted out of context, for known reasons. As soon as we read it in its context we can clearly see the meaning behind it. Allah is promising the “Allies of Allah” good news in this life and paradise in the Hereafter and his words or ‘Promises’ will never change. It doesn't mean

that Allah is promising that no one will be able to change the words of the previous Holy Books (Taurāh, & Injil).

The “words of Allah” as it is used in the Quran, does not refer to the previous holy books every time.

The expression the “words of Allah” has several meanings in the Qur’an, including:

- Promise
- Command
- Act of God, especially the act of Creation
- Signs of God

Below are some examples of different usages of this expression:

“When Abraham was tried by his Lord with words (commands) and he fulfilled them...” (2:124)

“Then Adam received from his Lord [some] words, and He accepted his repentance...” (2:37)

2. The Quran as a Guardian

Allegation: The Qur’an not only claims to confirm the previous scriptures but also claims the responsibility of being “a guardian” over them.

“And We have revealed to you the Book with the truth, verifying what is before it of the Book and a guardian over it” (5:48)

Muslim interpreters of the Qur’an say that “a guardian over it” means “The Qur’an is the protector of all the sacred books to preserve them from any kind of change”.

How can the Taurāh and the Injil be distorted, and yet the Qur’an remains a guardian over them? If this is the case, then the Qur’an itself is also open to the accusation of corruption and can be charged with failing in its role as a guardian.

Response: The Qur’an states that it is a guardian over the previous scriptures, for the following reasons:

- The Qur’an has not been altered by humans, as God has promised to preserve His words for the future generations. In saying that, the previous holy books which were revealed to prophets Moses and Jesus (as) were lost or destroyed. Then, people started re-writing them in their own styles, according to their understating and to suit their desires.
- God didn’t promise to preserve the previous holy books, even though that they are both his words

“originally”, because they were meant to be temporary. They were sent for a particular era. God has only promised to guard his Final Testament for ever to make sure every one hears His words, so that no one will be excused on Judgment Day. The Qur’an is an everlasting miracle, not dependent on any period of time or the presence of any particular person.

- The description of the Qur’an as the guardian means that we can check the authenticity of the stories told in the other scriptures by cross-checking them with the Qur’an, as it is the correct version of the story. In this way, the Qur’an guards the other scriptures by confirming the truth that may remain in them to this day, and by refuting any falsehoods that have entered into these books through distortion.

3. Jesus is introduced as a ‘soul from God’

Allegation: The Qur’an describes Jesus as the soul of God’ in the following passage. Does this not indicate the divinity of Jesus?

يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ لَا تَغْلُوا فِي دِينِكُمْ وَلَا تَقُولُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ إِلَّا الْحَقَّ ۚ إِنَّمَا الْمَسِيحُ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ وَكَلِمَتُهُ أَلْقَاهَا إِلَىٰ مَرْيَمَ وَرُوحٌ مِنْهُ ۖ فَآمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ ۚ وَلَا تَقُولُوا ثَلَاثَةٌ ۚ انْتَهُوا خَيْرًا لَّكُمْ ۚ إِنَّمَا اللَّهُ إِلَهُ وَاحِدٌ ۚ سُبْحَانَهُ أَنْ يَكُونَ لَهُ وَلَدٌ ۚ لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ ۚ وَكَفَىٰ بِاللَّهِ وَكِيلًا {171}

“O people of the Scripture, Do not exceed the limits in your religion, nor say of Allah aught but the truth. The Messiah Īsā (Jesus), son of Maryam (Mary), was (no more than) a Messenger of Allah and His Word which He bestowed on Maryam (Mary) and a spirit (Rūḥ) from Him; so believe in Allah and His Messengers. Say not: "Three (trinity)!" Cease! (it is) better for you. For Allah is (the only) One God, Glory be to Him (Far Exalted is He) above having a son. To Him belongs all that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth. And Allah is All-Sufficient as a Disposer of affairs.”

Response: the description of Jesus as a ‘soul from Him’ in the above āyah refers to the fact that Jesus (as) was created by God. God created the soul of Jesus (as) just liked he created the soul of any other living being.

Therefore, it is correct and natural to refer to any living creature as a 'soul from God'. Why is this specifically mentioned in the Qur'an in relation to Jesus (as) and not others? The reason is that Jesus (as) was born in a miraculous manner, and is the most vivid example of the miracles of God's Power when it comes to Creation.

This āyah has no reference to the divinity of Jesus and this expression of 'soul from God' is not indicating divinity to Jesus in any way. The remaining parts of this passage, which clearly denounce Trinity and the claims of Christians make this obvious.

4. Jesus is introduced as the 'Word of God'

Allegation: in the above passage (4:171), the Qur'an introduces Jesus as the Word of God- this is in line with the Biblical teachings about Jesus being the Word of God (logos), and this is an indication of the divinity of Jesus, because the Word of God must exist with God always, and thus the Word of God (here claimed to be Jesus) must be co-eternal with God.

Response: the use of the expression 'His Word' in this āyah does not indicate the divinity of Jesus. As explained earlier, the expression 'word' when related to God can have a number of different meanings. The meaning indicated here is that Jesus was a creation of God, and the creations of God are said to be His 'words' in the Holy Qur'an. This is confirmed by another Qur'anic ayah in which God says:

"Verily, His Command, when He intends a thing, is only that He says to it, "Be!" and it is!" (36:82)

The use of the title 'Word of God' may also be because Jesus was the direct creation of the word "Be" as his birth was miraculous and did not occur through a father.

So the āyah quoted above is merely confirming the status of Jesus as a creature of God. The reason for the special mention for Jesus (as) again is that he was born miraculously, and because there were false claims about his being divine. Thus, the Qur'an was to confirm Jesus as a creature of God through the use of this expression, while at the same time giving him the honour he deserves as a great Messenger of Allah.

JESUS (AS) PROPHESED THE COMING OF MUḤĀMMAD (SAW)

Now that we have refuted some of the common arguments Christian evangelists make by referring to the Qur'an, it is important to refer to the Bible in order to see how it confirms the Prophethood of Muḥammad (saw).

The Bible tells us that Jesus promised to send another prophet, "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another **Comforter**, that he may abide with you for ever" (John 14:16).

That comforter has been described as the spirit of truth in the same book of John. "I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. But when he, **the Spirit of truth**, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you." (John 16:12-14)

Notice the pronouns used in the verse (He/His). Ten masculine pronouns are used in one verse; no other verse in the Bible has so many masculine pronouns. This tells us that the 'Spirit of Truth' or the 'Comforter' is a human male, and not a ghost. This is certainly a unique verse for a unique personality, which is that of Muḥammad (saw).

The term used here is **Comforter**. This is an English translation of the Greek word "Periklyots" used in the ancient manuscripts. It is amazing that this word really means: "the praiseworthy". As you know, this is the meaning of the name Aḥmad or Muḥammad. Similarly, **the Spirit of Truth**. Is referring to the characteristics of Prophet Muḥammad, who was known as the Trustworthy and Truthful even before his mission began.

The distortion that has occurred in the Bible has made this point difficult to prove. However, if we analyse further, we can see that it is pointing to no one else other than Muḥammad (saw). We can make the following points in relation to this:

- John uses the words 'prophet' and 'spirit' synonymously in the following passage, further supporting the claim that the 'spirit of truth' we saw in (John 16:12-14) is referring to a prophet: "Dear friends, do not believe every **spirit**, but **test the spirits** to see whether they are **from God**, because many false **prophets** have gone out into the world." (1 John 4:1).

In another part, John declares that the spirit should be tested, if it declares Jesus as the "Messiah" or "Christ"

then it is a spirit from God. The word “Messiah” literally means the one who is anointed, as this was the traditional one of indicating a holy position for someone in the past. The Greek equivalent for this term is “Christos”, and Christ is derived from this. The Arabic equivalent for all these terms is ‘al-Masīh’. Now, Prophet Muḥammad clearly introduces Jesus as the Messiah through the Holy Qur’an, and therefore he passes the test and must be the Spirit of Truth who we are seeking:

إِذْ قَالَتِ الْمَلَائِكَةُ يَا مَرْيَمُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُبَشِّرُكِ بِكَلِمَةٍ مِنْهُ اسْمُهُ

الْمَسِيحُ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ وَجِيهًا فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَمِنْ

{45} الْمُقَرَّبِينَ

“(Remember) when the angels said: "O Maryam (Mary)! Verily, Allah gives you the glad tidings of a Word from Him, his name will be al-Masīh (the Messiah), Jesus the son of Mary, held in honour in this world and in the Hereafter, and will be one of those who are near to Allah." (The Holy Qur’an 3:45)

Furthermore, Jesus made it a condition that he has to go, in order for that ‘spirit of Truth’ or comforter to come. Jesus has been quoted to have said the following: “Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, **the Helper** will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you.” (John 16:7).

According to the bible, the Holy Ghost was there all the time helping Jesus to establish his ministry, and assisting his disciples to preach and heal. Thus the above description cannot apply to the Holy Ghost, because it was already there with Jesus. We are also told in the Bible that the Holy Ghost was with Zachariah, Elizabeth and John the Baptist.

This leaves us with clear evidence that Jesus (as) was referring to Prophet Muḥammad and prophesying his advent as the last Messenger of God.

Review Questions

Do some research into the Qur’anic use of the expression ‘word of God’. How many different meanings for this can you find? What is the significance of each meaning? Which of these applies to the use of this term in relation to Jesus (as)?

Lesson 2: Trinity

The doctrine of Trinity is the central doctrine in Christian theology. It is the belief in a Triune Godhead, that God is ‘three in one’. The trinity consists of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It also includes the belief that God became incarnate in Jesus and that Jesus (the Son) is of the same substance as the Father.

Historical development of the doctrine and how it was influenced by external sources

The doctrine of Trinity cannot be understood completely without an appreciation of the historical development of the doctrine of Trinity. Firstly, we must note it is not mentioned anywhere in the Bible itself. In the period immediately following the life of Jesus Christ on earth, there were many questions about his identity, his status and the claim of incarnation. The more the Church claimed that Jesus was God incarnate, the more need there was to explain the relationship of Jesus Christ to God. The roots of the doctrine of Trinity lie here.

It took until the middle of the fourth century for there to be any sort of consensus on this issue. Tertullian introduced the terminology of Trinity in the last second or early third century, but it was after this that the Arian controversy came about, forcing the Church to formalise its belief about the significance of Jesus. Arius (c.250-c.336) was a priest in one of the major churches in Alexandria. He taught that the Father and the Son do not have the same essence, that the Son is a created being, and that there was a time when the Son did not exist. Thus Arius taught that Jesus was ‘the first among creatures’, but not divine in any meaningful way.

Athanasius (c. 297-c. 373) was another Alexandrian priest who strongly opposed Arius’ teachings, and claimed Jesus to be divine. This controversy divided the Church, and it had to be settled. The Emperor Constantine the Great convened a council of bishops in order to come to an answer to settle this controversy, an answer which would then become official Church doctrine. The Council voted in favour of the view of Athanasius, and the doctrine that the Son and the Father were of the same substance became official Church teaching.

It is important to note that most bishops were not in agreement with either Athanasius or Arius. However, Athanasius managed to exert his influence over many of

the delegates, and so all but two signed his Creed. Arius, and two others, refused to do, and were later excommunicated.

INTERNAL EVIDENCE FROM THE BIBLE ITSELF THAT CONTRADICTS THE DIVINITY OF JESUS

There are a number of Biblical passages that clearly contradict the doctrine of Trinity. Some of them are listed below:

- These passages indicate God cannot be seen or heard, so can Jesus (who was seen and heard) be God?

"And the Father who sent me has himself borne witness about me. His voice you have never heard, his form you have never seen," (John 5:37).

"No man hath seen God at any time" (John 1:18)

In his letter to the Colossians, Paul says: "And He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation." (Colossians 1:15-21)

- Jesus is related to have prayed in the following passage, if he is God, then to whom does he pray?

"And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray." (Matthew 14:23)

- Here, Jesus is described clearly as a prophet, not as the son of God;

When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred and asked, "Who is this?" The crowds answered, "This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee." (Matthew 21:10-11)

"..... Then Jesus told them, "A prophet is honoured everywhere except in his own hometown..." (Matthew 13:57)

"What things?" he asked. "About Jesus of Nazareth," they replied. "He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people." (Luke 24:19)

"And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent." (John 17:3)

Here, he is described as someone needing God's approval and being dependent on God:

"Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him." (Acts 2:22)

"For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me." (John 6:38)

- The following passages clearly indicate there is only One God, which is the main point we want to prove:

"You were shown these things so that you might know that the Lord is God; besides him there is no other." (Deuteronomy 4:35)

"I am the LORD, and there is no other, besides me there is no God; I equip you," (Isaiah 45:5)

When Jesus was asked about the greatest commandment of all, he quoted this verse: "Hear, oh Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is One." (Deuteronomy 6:4)

We can see from the above passages that the Bible in many places indicates that God is one. However, Christians argue that God is one but in a plurality. They argue that the word "one" or in Hebrew (*Ehad*) is not one alone but one as a compound unity. And they will quote this passage: "Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh." (Genesis 2:24) or (Ephesians 5:31). Yet in fact, the word "Ehad" in Hebrew could mean one as alone and one as a compound unity, depending on its context. For example: "one person who has no other, either son or brother" (Ecclesiastes 4:8)

Christians may also quote this passage in the first book of the bible, and say this shows that god is more than one. "Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness..." (Genesis 1:26). However, that is the 'magestic we', used to indicate status and respect, not an actual plurality.

If we look in the Bible, we can see other verses that clearly used the word one or 'Ehad' to indicate a singular one, not a compound unity. Some examples follow:

- "Look to Abraham your father and to Sarah who bore you; for he was but one when I called him,

that I might bless him and multiply him.” (Isaiah 51:2)

- “See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god beside me” (Deuteronomy 32:39)
- The first commandment that Moses taught the Israelites says: “I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before Me” (Exodus 20:2-3).

Christians may also refer to the following passage to try to prove the divinity of Jesus: “I and the Father are one.” (John 10:30)

This may seem to indicate some sort of unity between God and Jesus, but when we look at the quote in context, we see that it is not claiming divinity for Jesus: “I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father’s hand. **I and the Father are one.**”

The passage is indicating that the Father and Jesus are one in seeing that if the person accepts faith, they shall remain in faith. It is referring to a *unity of purpose*, not a unity of substance. It is this same unity of purpose which is referred to in the following passage: “...Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one.” (John 17:11)

Jesus here is using the same word “one” for himself and for his disciples. Does that mean that his disciples are one in substance with him and with God? Of course not! He means his disciples should unify in one and same purpose.

So we can see that there is very little evidence within the Bible for the belief in Trinity, and in fact there is plenty of evidence for a belief in a true Unity of God.

TRINITY CONTRADICTS LOGIC

If we read the first passage of the Gospel of John: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” (John 1:1), we see it contains a clear logical contradiction. How can the Word be ‘with God’ (i.e. separate to God) and yet be God at the same time? In fact, this particular quote, was plagiarised by the writer of “The Gospel According to John”, who borrowed it from a Greek philosopher named Philo.

If we read verse 14 from the same chapter it says: “The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us” (John 1:14), we can clearly see that this verse implies that god has changed from the unlimited spiritual nature into humanly flesh nature. This fact of God changing his nature is rejected by God, in his own words according to the Bible itself: “I am the LORD, and I do not change.” (Malachi 3:6). If God can change, it means he can be updated, or created into a different form or new shape that he wasn’t like before, which implies that he needs that form or space to exist, and God cannot be dependent on anything. This shows that God the Son is not co-equal to God the Father and God the Holy Spirit, as he had to undergo change, and they (the Father and presumably the Holy Spirit) did not.

GOD’S OMNIPOTENCE

Christians typically ask, If God is omnipotent, (All Powerful) shouldn't he be able to take on a human form and dwell among humans and behave like humans? If not, how can such a being be called all-powerful?

From a logical point of view, the question itself is illogical and an example of fallacy. It is similar to the question: "Can God create a rock so heavy that He can't lift it Himself". The problem is it contains a self-contradiction, mainly, that God is all-powerful and not-all-powerful at the same time. The question works grammatically but not intellectually.

When we say God is omnipotent, we mean He has power over all things which have an intellectual existence. However, possibilities like the above do not have a real intellectual existence, we cannot even imagine them! Therefore, they fall into the realm of non-existence and thus have nothing to do with God’s Omnipotence.

A CHALLENGE TO CHRISTIANS

We found nowhere in the bible where Jesus says: “I am God” or where Jesus says: “Worship Me”. Can Christians present real evidence from their own book that Jesus is divine or should be worshipped?

The most a Christian may claim is by referring to the following passage: “For there are three that bear record

in heaven, the Father, the Word [Jesus], and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one." (I John 5: 7) KJV.

Note that this verse is only found in the King James Version. Almost all modern versions of the bibles do not include that particular verse anymore! It was removed and declared a fabrication. Even though this verse played such an important role in the faith and the prayers of Christians, it is no longer considered part of the Bible. Instead, the following versions of the verse are now found in different versions of the Bible:

- "For there are three that testify: the Spirit, the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement." (I John 5: 7) NIV.
- "For there are three that testify: the Spirit and the water and the blood; and these three agree." (I John 5: 7) ESV.

CONCLUSION

In this lesson, we have analysed the doctrine of Trinity. We have come to a number of conclusions:

- 'Trinity' is not mentioned in the Bible itself. It developed over four centuries after the ascension of Jesus (as)
- Trinity is illogical
- There is no sound evidence for the doctrine of Trinity in the Bible
- There is plenty of evidence contradicting the doctrine of Trinity within the Bible

Review Questions

Research some of the 'models' for visualising the Trinity presented by Christian theologians over time (e.g. the example of triangle having three sides but being one triangle). What is the problem with all of these models?

Lesson 3: Crucifixion

Another of the main Christian doctrines is that of Crucifixion and salvation. Christians believe that Jesus was captured by the Jews of his time, nailed to the cross and tortured, until he died. They believe he was resurrected three days later and came back to Earth as a final miracle.

The claimed event of crucifixion is central to Christian theology. They believe that all humans are born sinful, because of the 'original sin' of Adam. They believe the only way for our sins to be expiated is for god himself to suffer for them, and they see the crucifixion of Jesus as god suffering in for us to be freed from sin and achieve salvation. We read in Paul's First letter to the Corinthians, "And if Christ is not risen from the dead, then our preaching is vain, and your faith is also in vain. More than that, and we are then found to be false witnesses of God ..." (1 Corinthians 15:14-15)

THE DOCTRINE OF SALVATION IS ILLOGICAL

The doctrine of salvation as presented in Christianity is illogical. It is against God's justice that all humans should suffer and be born with an inclination towards sin, simply because one human, Adam, made a mistake. The justice of god rejects the idea that he can punish innocent people for the sins of the others, as we can see it clearly in the book of Ezekiel in the Old Testament. "The one who sins is the one who will die. The child will not share the guilt of the parent, nor will the parent share the guilt of the child. The righteousness of the righteous will be credited to them, and the wickedness of the wicked will be charged against them." (Ezekiel 18:20). We also see this reference to the justice of God in the following passage: "I the Lord search the heart, and examine the mind, to reward each person according to their conduct, according to what their deeds deserve." (Jeremiah 17:10).

The Holy Qur'an further confirms this idea:

"And no bearer of burdens will bear the burden of another" (35:18)

So we see that this doctrine goes against justice, and this ethical argument is supported by Biblical evidence.

BIBLICAL PASSAGES CONTRADICTING THE DOCTRINE OF SALVATION

We also find numerous passages in the Bible that contradict that dogma of the inheritance of the Original Sin, Crucifixion, and Resurrection.

- Jesus was baptised by John the Baptist (Prophet Yaḥyā) as we are told in (Matthew 3:13-17). This would imply that that Jesus was regarded as a sinner, who has inherited the original sin. How can he then be the vehicle for salvation?
- The following passage indicates that God does not want sacrifice in exchange for atonement of sins. Yet Christians claim that the sacrifice of Jesus was necessary for the atonement of sin.
“For I desire mercy, not sacrifice, and acknowledgment of God rather than burnt offerings.” (Hosea 6:6)
- If we read (Luke 23:26-34) we can clearly see that the person who was crucified could actually be Simon of Cyrene, and certainly not Jesus.

CONTRADICTIONS WITHIN THE BIBLICAL NARRATIONS OF THE STORY

The story of crucifixion has many discrepancies and contradictions, if we compare the accounts across the Four Gospels.

- What day did Jesus die? That is a very simple question! We are told in both Mark and John. In Mark, we are told that it is the day after the Passover meal was eaten in Jerusalem. (Mark 14:12-16). And In John, we are told that it is the day before the Passover meal was eaten, on the day of preparation for the Passover. (John 19:14). And many more. Conclusion: these accounts are full of discrepancies and they are not reliable.
- What were Jesus’ last words? Mark and Matthew state they were: “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” John states that they were: “It is finished”, while Luke states they were: “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.”

There are many other contradictions within the Biblical narrations of this story, indicating that this story may not have a true origin.

BIBLICAL VERSES THAT REJECT THE CRUCIFIXION

Here, we would like to explore one important point in greater detail: did the historical event claimed by Christians- that Jesus of Nazareth, son of Mary, was crucified by the soldiers of Pontius Pilate- really occur? The intention of this argument is not to prove that a crucifixion did not take place but rather that it was not Jesus of Nazareth who was crucified. The early Christians had doubt about this. The Holy Qur’an rejects that Jesus was ever crucified and killed. This rejection is very much justified, because of the reasons below:

- We have no first-hand accounts of the event. The only sources we have are the accounts of Josephus, a Jewish historian, and Tacitus, a Roman historian, both of whom were not present at the time of the crucifixion.
- The Jewish Talmud tells us that Jesus was stoned to death. This contradicts the Biblical account (of course neither account is true)
- Early Christian sources: there are significant early sources that all suggests that were Christian groups that did not believe in the crucifixion and rejected that concept, or at least questions how the crucifixion took place:
 - **The Writings of the Early Church Fathers.** Such as Ignasous Polycarp, Justin, Uranaiuos, Tulian and Hepolaias. These fathers were attacking the groups who did believe in Crucifixion, indicating there were such groups. Perhaps most known among them was a group in Egypt called the Missillidions, who believed it was a person by the name of Simon of Cyrene who was in fact crucified.
 - **The New Testament Apocryphal Books.** Such as books of Jeeuo which go back to the third century in Egypt, says that Jesus was not crucified. The Apocrypha of Peter and the Acts of John are early books that were canonised but which state that Jesus was not crucified.
 - **The New Testament itself.** When Jesus was arrested and brought back to Pontius Pilate, the Roman Governor of Judea, we are told in Matthew that Pilate really did not want to do anything to Jesus. He asked the crowd to choose between freeing Jesus or freeing another prisoner, and that he would allow this as a gesture of mercy: “so when the crowd gathered,

Pilate asked them, "Which one do you want me to release to you, **Jesus Barabbas** or Jesus, who is called the Messiah" (Matthew: 27:16, NIV). The people chose Barabbas and then Jesus was crucified. However in the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible said that the two persons were "Jesus the Barabbas" and the other was "Jesus the Messiah" This is further clarified in the following passage: "At that time they had a well-known prisoner whose name was **Jesus Barabbas**." (Matthew 27:16) NIV.

So who was set free? Jesus of Nazareth or another man named Jesus?

It seems that it was Jesus of Nazareth who was set free. This is because the name "Barabbas" literally means 'son of the Father'. Of course, this would be referring to Jesus of Nazareth, and so if it is Barabbas who was set free, then it is Jesus of Nazareth who was set free, and another man, also named Jesus, who was instead crucified.

This may explain why the Coptic Christian Church canonized Pilate as a saint! Do you justify sainthood for the man who killed Jesus? Or for the man who saved him and set him free?

There is another issue to consider here. There is a variant in several Greek manuscripts of the Gospel of Matthew. The traditional text of Matthew 27:16-17 reads as follows in the New American Standard Bible (NASB): "At that time they were holding a notorious prisoner, called Barabbas. So when they the people gathered together, Pilate said to them, "Whom do you want me to release for you? Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?" Several manuscripts, however, name the criminal "Jesus Barabbas" and have Pilate ask:

"Whom do you want me to release for you, Jesus Barabbas or Jesus who is called the Messiah? "(v. 17). Many textual scholars believe the double name "Jesus Barabbas" was the original reading. They suggest that "Jesus" was omitted from several Greek manuscripts of Matthew out of reverence.

This shows us that the criminal being held along with Jesus of Nazareth was also named Jesus (Barabbas), and that he may have been the one actually crucified, but that this was later historically confused with Jesus of Nazareth, the Messiah.

It also seems from some account that Jesus Barabbas was claiming to the king of the Jews, and we see in many

places in the Bible that the person who was crucified was in fact the person who was claiming to be the king of the Jews. Thus it is likely that the other Jesus (The Criminal), and not Jesus of Nazareth (Barabbas) or the Messiah, who was in fact crucified.

THE JUSTICE AND MERCY OF GOD

Christian theologians object to the Islamic theological belief that we need both Faith and Good Works together to be saved. The Qur'an states:

"والذين آمنوا وعملوا الصالحات سندخلهم جنات تجري من تحتها الأنهار خالدين فيها أبدا "

"But those who believe and do righteous deeds - We will admit them to gardens beneath which rivers flow..."
(4:57)

Protestant Christians believe In "justification by faith alone", while Catholics place a little more emphasis on actions. Yet all Christians would not claim that a person who believes in Jesus is free to commit sins and crimes and yet still expect to go to heaven. So at the end of the day, they also acknowledge that both faith and good works are needed.

The other objection they have is this: how can a sin committed against God be compensated by the repentance of a human? They claim that a sin against God can only be expiated by the action of God. The simple answer is that it God's will that faith and certain acts of repentance cancel out certain sins committed against God. Just as Christians claim (without basis) that Jesus' death was willed by God to a vehicle for salvation, why can it not be God's will that certain good works done by a particular person atone for certain sins committed by the same person? Surely, this is more just than believing that the sacrifice and pain of one person wipes away the sins of other, independent people.

Review Questions

Research the Qur'anic concept of justice and mercy of God. How can we reconcile these two concepts?

السَّلَامُ عَلَى نَبِيِّ اللَّهِ أَيُّوبَ

PROPHET AYYŪB (JOB^{AS})

(ع)ايوب نبي الله

Objectives >>>

Students should:

Students should:

- Review the story of Prophet Ayyūb (as) and his patience
- Introduce the story of Prophet Ya'qūb and the similarities to the story of Prophet Ayyūb
- Discuss and compare the stories of these two prophets

FUNDAMENTALS OF ISLAM

LEVEL 5

Prophet Ayyūb (Job) (as)

"The greatest patience, when it reaches its pinnacle, is like the patience of Ayyūb (as)". Ayyūb has become the paragon of patience in the history and language of Islam.

Prophet Ayyūb (as), known in other scriptures as Job, was one of the prophets sent to the Bani Israel. It is likely that he was a descendant of Prophet Abraham (as). Allah (SWT) endowed him with prophethood and bestowed upon him unlimited kindness. He had a great many flocks of sheep, tracts of cultivated lands, honour and grace.

Prophet Ayyūb (as) was always grateful to his Lord for all His bounties. He was generous and entertained orphans and needy people. He treated his relations and well-wishers with kindness and generosity.

However, his piety and firm faith in Allah (SWT) was stopping Satan from gaining any control over him. Satan told Allah (SWT) that Prophet Ayyūb (as) was like this because he was living very comfortable and happy life, but if he lost all his wealth and comfort, then he would become ungrateful and disbelieve.

To prove Satan wrong, Allah (SWT) gave Prophet Ayyūb (as) a series of difficult tests which gradually led to him losing everything he had; his children, his property, his family, his land and even his health to a point that his people even abandoned him and no one would visit him.

Despite losing everything, Prophet Ayyūb (as) did not change his faith or behaviour towards Allah (SWT) or others. He showed an outstanding amount of patience.

GRATITUDE & PATIENCE - TWO KEY QUALITIES OF A SUCCESSFUL MUSLIM

GRATITUDE

Prophet Ayyūb (as) began his life always showing gratitude for the blessings that Allah (SWT) had provided to him. Allah (SWT) had blessed him with the good of this world to such an extent, that he was amongst the wealthiest people of his time. He was also granted him knowledge and wisdom in addition to all this.

Prophet Ayyūb (as) thus showed a tremendous amount of gratitude to Allah (SWT) for these blessings. He showed this gratitude in all the ways possible (see previous lessons on gratitude). The most important ways in Prophet Ayyūb (as) showed gratitude were:

1. To praise Allah (SWT) by word with a genuine feeling of thankfulness in the heart
2. By being obedient and careful of his responsibilities with those blessings – so he used to use these blessings to help a lot of people, feed the poor and contribute to the development of the community. He never used his blessings for things that would displease Allah (SWT).

Lesson: in times of comfort and prosperity, we should display a sense of gratitude by acknowledging the benefactor (giver) of those blessings, then by mentioning the words ‘Alḥamdulillāh’ – All praise is due to Allah (SWT) [for those blessings] and third to make sure we use those blessings in correct and proper way which will earn us the pleasure of Allah (SWT).

شَاكِرًا لِّأَنْعَمِهِ ۖ اجْتَبَاهُ وَهَدَاهُ إِلَىٰ صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ

[He was] Grateful for His favours; He chose him and guided him on the right path. (16:121)

PATIENCE

Patience is the first weapon for the believer to use when facing hardship. Patience has been mentioned in the Noble Qur'an more than 90 times. It is also mentioned many times in authentic Ḥadith of the Prophet (saw). All of these verses and Ḥadith talk about the importance of patience in the lives of the believers. All of the messengers of Allah suffered great hardships in their lives, yet all of them practiced patience. Therefore, Allah (SWT) alleviated their hardship and promised them great

rewards in the hereafter. The story of the Prophet Ayyūb (AS) is one such example.

As mentioned in the previous year's lesson on this Prophet, Allah (SWT) had allowed Satan to destroy everything the Prophet Ayyūb (AS) had of the good things of this world, including his health. However, Allah (SWT) did not allow Satan to influence or destroy the heart, mind and soul of Prophet Ayyūb (AS) as these faculties are necessary for the sanity of the human being.

Despite losing every comfort, Prophet Ayyūb (AS) remained intense in his patience and continued to repeat the following words, which Allah (SWT) has mentioned in the holy Quran:

“Allah gives to whom He wills and takes from whom He wills.”

Prophet Ayyūb (as) was never seen to or heard of complaining of his losses. He never questioned Allah (SWT)'s wisdom and did not lose his trust in Him.

He did not begin to doubt himself and ask things like ‘I have been obedient and grateful all my life and have never done anything to disobey Allah (SWT) – so why am I being punished?’

He tolerated the hardships by remaining patient, and understanding that this was a test from Allah (SWT) and sooner or later it would pass and things will get better.

Even after his wife was almost giving up, he reminded her of the blessings they enjoyed for so many years. He told her that we enjoyed the blessing of Allah (SWT) for eighty years and Allah (SWT) has afflicted me with these difficulties for only seven years – and then he would repeat the same words as follows:

“Allah gives to whom He wills and takes from whom He wills.”

Prophet Ayyūb (as) continued to pray to Allah (SWT) and always remained obedient, polite and humble towards Allah (SWT) even in his heart, he had trust in Allah (SWT).

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 (as) plea for relief from Allah

(SWT). Pay attention to the politeness of the supplication despite the desperation. The Prophet is careful not to attribute anything negative to Allah. He is also careful not to actually ask for anything, but to simply state the fact that he is in hardship. He also praises Allah without requesting for his situation to be changed:

“O My Lord, harm has touched me and You are The Most Merciful” (21:83)

PROPHET YA'QŪB –ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF PATIENCE

Prophet Ya'qūb is the father of Prophet Yūsuf (see previous lessons). However, when we look at the lives of previous Prophets, we see in them common features of the quality of their character and the virtues they demonstrated practically, despite being tested with difficulty and afflictions.

Prophet Ya'qūb (as) was tested with the ill-behaviour and jealousy of his sons amongst themselves regarding Prophet Joseph and finally the most painful test of being separated from his beloved son.

Prophet Ya'qūb (as) would cry to Allah (SWT) for several years until his eyes became white. At the same time, he would complain to Allah (SWT) about how his other children had treated Joseph.

It is important to note here, that the complaints of the Prophets were not directed towards questioning the wisdom of Allah (SWT), but instead they used to complain to Allah (SWT) about the people who had treated them wrongly or had been unjust to them. They would seek consolation from Allah (SWT) and not question, blame or doubt Him.

We can see from the stories of both these prophets, and indeed all other prophets, that they showed an enormous amount of patience when tested with difficulties despite their obedience.

They would remain close to Allah (SWT) at all times, and the level of their worship would not decrease even the slightest. They would maintain the same relationship with Allah (SWT) and the same level of worship, but the motivation of it would change depending on the situation. Therefore when in difficulty, they would display patience and when in comfort, they would show gratitude.

It is indeed from the lives of these prophets that we learn that our life really only falls into two categories:

1. Either things are going well for us and we are living comfortably and able to afford all our necessities and even luxuries
2. Things are hard for us and we are living in difficult times or conditions either because of money problems, sicknesses or loss of loved ones etc.

The response we should have in either of these should correspond to the response the Prophets taught us to have through their experiences, so that we come out of the situation strong if it is difficult or that we remain humble when we are comfortable.

We should always focus on the hereafter and ensure that we do not lose anything of the hereafter because that world is a world of permanence and if we lose anything of good in that world, we will suffer and feel regret for eternity.

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.
- 'When we are in a difficult situation, we should act ask Allah for His assistance in a polite and appropriate manner. Look at the delicate and positive manner of the words of the prophets we discussed above. Our prayers should not be aggressive, or ever attribute anything negative to Allah.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1) How should we respond, when we experience comfort and blessings in our life:

- a. By being careless of our blessing and being wasteful
- b. Being thankful and using the blessings to help others

- c. Becoming proud and forgetting our responsibilities
- d. By being greedy and wanting more

2) Prophet Ayyūb and Prophet Ya'qūb both had what in common:

- a. Both were very rich
- b. Both had many children which died
- c. Both were patient when tested with losses and trials
- d. All of the above

3) When we are facing a difficult time in our life, we should react by:

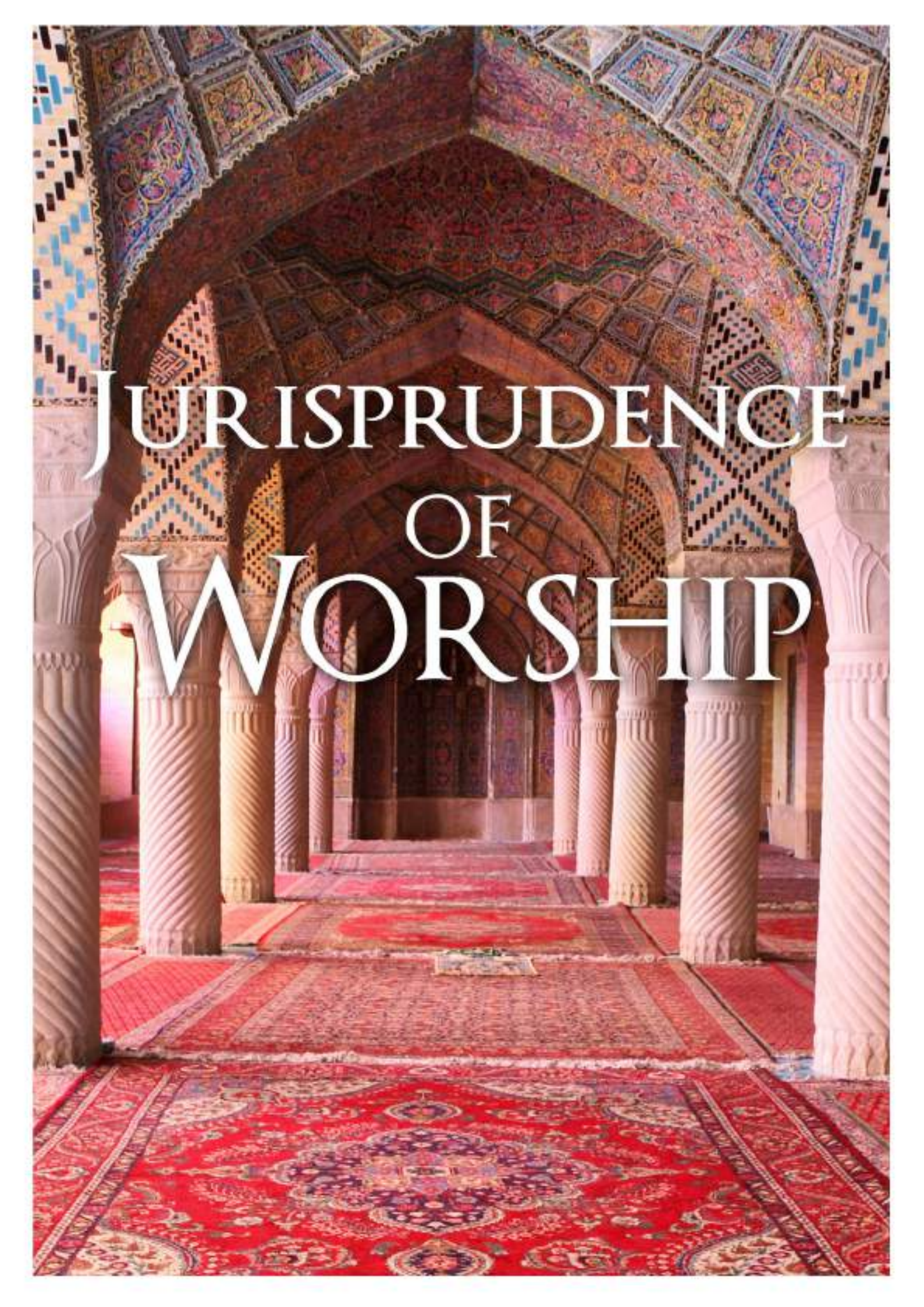
- a. Getting angry and upset that things are not going our way
- b. Tolerate the hardship and find ways to reduce the difficulty and continue seeking Allah (SWT)'s help through prayers
- c. Start demanding things from Allah (SWT) and complaining about the situation showing unhappiness with His decision and response
- d. All of the above.

ⁱ References

Holy Qur'an

www.al-islam.org – stories of the prophets

Prophet Ayyub, Shia Ithna 'Asheri Madressa –
<http://www.madressa.net/index.php/plays/383-prophet-ayyub>

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 5

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Learn the rules regarding the common doubts within prayer.

Further Prayer Rules

There are 23 types of doubts that one can have regarding the number of rak'at performed in prayers. Eight of these doubts invalidate the prayer, 6 of them are to be disregarded, and the remaining 9 are considered valid doubts and have to be mended.

In this lesson, we will focus on the *common* doubts and see how we should deal with them. For a list of all the doubts and their rulings, please refer to the Islamic Laws book of your marja'.

DOUBTS WHICH INVALIDATE PRAYER

1. A doubt about the number of rak'at that one has performed in a two rak'ah obligatory prayer, such as Fajr or travelers prayers. Hence, doubts about the number of rak'at in *mustahab* or *ihṭiyāṭ* prayers do not invalidate the prayer.
2. A doubt about the number of rak'at in a three rak'ah prayer (i.e. Maghreb prayer).
3. A doubt in a four rak'ah prayer as to whether one has performed one or more rak'at.

4. A doubt in a four rak'ah prayer before entering the second sajdah as to whether one has performed two rak'at or more.
5. A doubt in prayer as to the number of rak'at he has performed, such as when a person has no idea which rak'ah of the prayer he is in at all.

Note: When one has any of these doubts he should not break the prayer immediately. Rather, he should think for a short period of time and see if he can reach a probability that could save his prayer.

DOUBTS WHICH ARE TO BE DISREGARDED

1. A doubt about an action of prayer that has passed, for instance if one doubts in rukū' if he has recited Surah Ḥamd.
2. A doubt after reciting the Salam of prayer. This doubt is about whether the prayer was performed correctly or not. But, if one doubts as to whether he performed the prayer at all he must repeat it if he is still within the time of prayer.
3. A doubt after the time of prayer finishes. This doubt is about both whether the prayer one performed was correct and whether one performed the prayer at all. In both cases the doubt should be disregarded.
4. The doubt of an excessive doubter.
5. The doubt of a prayer leader as to the number of rak'at when the followers know. Likewise, the doubt of a follower as to the number of rak'at when the prayer leader knows.

6. Doubts in mustaḥab and iḥtiyāt prayers.

DOUBTS WHICH ARE VALID AND MUST BE CORRECTED

1. A doubt that happens after one has entered the second rak'ah of a four rak'ah prayer as to whether he performed two or three rak'āt. In this case one should assume he has performed three rak'āt and perform one more rak'ah before concluding the prayers. Then, he should perform a one rak'ah iḥtiyāt prayer standing.
2. A doubt that happens after one has entered the second rak'ah of a four rak'ah prayer as to whether he performed two or four rak'āt. In this case he should assume he is in the fourth rak'ah and finish the prayer. Then he should perform a two rak'ah iḥtiyāt prayer standing.
3. A doubt that happens after one has entered the second rak'ah of a four rak'ah prayer as to whether he performed two, three, or four rak'āt. In this case one should assume he is in the fourth rak'ah and complete the prayer. Then, he should perform a two rak'ah iḥtiyāt prayer standing and a two rak'ah iḥtiyāt prayer sitting.
4. A doubt that happens after one has entered the second rak'ah of a four rak'ah prayer as to whether he performed four or five rak'āt. In this case he should assume he is in the fourth rak'ah and finish the prayer. Then, he should perform two sajdah sahw. This goes for any doubt where the lesser number is four, for instance when one doubts as to whether he has performed four or six rak'āt.

In any of the above four rules, if a person has the doubt after the second sajdah, he should act as above. But if the doubt comes after the first sajdah and before the second sajdah then the prayer is invalid.

5. A doubt anywhere in the prayer as to whether one has performed three or four rak'āt. In this case he should assume that he is in the fourth rak'ah and finish his prayer. Then he should perform a one rak'ah iḥtiyāt prayer standing

6. A doubt when one is standing as to whether he has performed four or five rak'āt. In this case he should sit down and recite the tashahhud and salām. Then he should perform a one rak'ah iḥtiyāt prayer standing
7. A doubt when one is standing as to whether he has performed three or five rak'āt. In this case he should sit down and recite the tashahhud and salām. Then, he should recite a two rak'ah iḥtiyāt prayer.
8. A doubt when one is standing as to whether he has performed three, four, or five rak'āt. In this case he should sit down and recite the tashahhud and salām. Then he should perform a two rak'ah iḥtiyāt prayer standing and a two rak'ah iḥtiyāt prayer sitting.
9. A doubt when one is standing as to whether he has performed five or six rak'āt. In this case he should sit down and recite the tashahhud and salām. Then he should recite two sajdah sahw.

Note: When one has any of these doubts he should not act accordingly until he has thought ponders over the situation and tries to save himself from doubt. If one of the sides of his doubt becomes stronger than the other than he should choose that side and act accordingly. If he is not able to leave the state of doubt then he should act in the prescribed methods detailed above.

RULES OF PRECAUTIONARY PRAYER (ṢALĀT IḤTIYĀT)

If a person has to offer this prayer, they should make the niyyah immediately after the salām of their normal prayer. The rules of this prayer are the same as a normal prayer except the following:

- It may be one or two rak'āt depending on the doubt
- One should recite only Surat al-Ḥamd. There is no need to recite a second surah.
- There is no qunūt in this prayer
- The whole prayer should be offered silently, including even the Bismillāh at the beginning of Surat al-Ḥamd

INVALIDATORS OF PRAYER

مبطلات الصلاة

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Have a good understanding of invalidators of prayer
- Understand why the daily prayers have certain rules and appreciate that it is a form of communication with Allah (SWT)
- Learn more of the actions that invalidate prayer
- Know when prayers can be broken
- Know the Makrūh acts in prayers

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LEVEL 5

INVALIDATORS OF PRAYERS

REVIEW QUIZ

In the quiz below, the situations given are those occurring during your prayer. Some invalidate prayers and some do not. Using the knowledge you have gained from previous lessons, place a tick in the appropriate columns on the right. On completion, ask you teacher for the answers and give yourself a score out of 10.

SITUATION IN PRAYER	INVALIDATES PRAYER	DOES NOT INVALIDATE PRAYER
1. I reply to Salāmun 'Alaykum		
2. Wearing a shirt that I had stolen		
3. Forgetting both sajdahs of the same rak'ah		
4. Crying due to fear of Hell		
5. My feet are not facing Qiblah		
6. Only eating half an apple while in Qiyām (standing)		
7. Sleeping for only thirty seconds while in sajdah		
8. Crying because I failed my exam		
9. Forgetting tashahhud of the second rak'ah		
10. Laughing loudly and uncontrollably		

WHY DO WE HAVE TO BEHAVE IN A PARTICULAR MANNER WHEN PRAYING?

As Muslims we get an opportunity to communicate with Allah (SWT) throughout the day by praying. This is not an ordinary opportunity but a very special one because we are talking to the Lord of the Worlds, The Most Powerful. Allah (SWT), The Unique, Who sees, listens and pays attention to us when we stand for prayer. For this reason we have to be very careful that we do not show negligence and inattentiveness towards Him because that, in the least, is to be ungrateful. In this regard, Imam al Reḍā (as) says:

“Stand in from of your Lord as a slave appears before his master. Keep your feet in order and your stature (body) firm. Do not look here and there. Be as if you could see Him, and if you do not see Him, He sees you”

Eating and laughing loudly whilst talking to Him are few things that are not supposed to be done whilst praying to Him and they thus invalidate our prayer. Even if you stand in the presence of an important person and act in a rude manner, he will not accept your request or he will be unhappy with you. Similarly, we have to be very careful to avoid all things that our Prophets and Imams have taught us that are rude and inappropriate to do when standing in front of Allah (SWT).

¹Further to this, it is important that prayers are said in a place where there is minimal distraction from our surroundings. As such, it is not recommended to pray in a crowded or noisy area.

NOW LET US LOOK AT MORE ACTS THAT INVALIDATE OUR PRAYERS:

1. Folding hands before the body

The Prophet (saw) did not fold his hands during prayer. This was something introduced by others later and has no Islamic basis. Therefore, it is forbidden to do this during prayer and one must stand with their hands by their side or resting on their thighs.

2. Saying ‘Āmīn’ after Surah-al Fātiḥa

This is another thing that was introduced after the Prophet and has no real Islamic basis. The word ‘āmīn’ is not even a word from the Qur’an. Therefore, we cannot and should not say it in our prayer.

3. Doubts

- Doubt about the number of rak’ah in a 2 or a 3 rak’ah prayer
- Doubts about the number of rak’ah arising in the first 2 rak’ah of a 4 rak’ah prayer.

The details of this have been explained in other lessons.

4. Loss of the pre-requisites for prayer

- *Tahārah*. If one for instance discharges urine during prayer
- The place of prayer and the clothes of prayer have to be *Mubaḥ* i.e. permissible to use or not stolen.

5. Loss of Wuḍū’

If one exits the state of Wuḍū’, such as by passing gas, then the prayer becomes invalid.

Review of Other Invalidators of Prayer

1. Eating and Drinking
2. Laughing
3. Speaking words other than the words of prayer
4. Missing out or adding acts of prayer. The detailed rules of this have been explained in other lessons.

WHEN CAN PRAYERS BE BROKEN?

It is ḥarām to break prayers under any circumstances except in the four below:

1. In order to protect property or to escape from financial or physical harm, or from any worldly or religious purpose crucial to the person.
2. If a person whom you owe money to approaches you and demands payment and if is not possible to pay him while praying AND also if there is sufficient time to pray again, then the prayers should be broken.
3. If a person remembers during prayer that he has not recited adhān and Iqāmah before the prayers, then it is mustaḥab to break it and recite them.

4. If a person praying realises that the mosque is najis, and if he cannot make it ṭāhir during prayer AND he has sufficient time to pray again, then he should break his prayer.

THINGS WHICH ARE MAKRŪH DURING ṢALĀT

- Turning the face slightly towards the left or right
- To shut the eyes
- To play with one's hands or beard
- To look at the writing of the Qur'ān or some other book
- To become silent in order to listen to a conversation
- Any other such act that disturbs the humility and attention of the person praying is makrūh

Review Questions

1. Why is it important to have rules of prayer?

- a. So we can have a routine and pray as a habit

ⁱ References

- eHAWZA- lectures on prayer and its invalidators

- b. To maintain humility and respect for the communication with Allah (SWT)
- c. To make it look professional

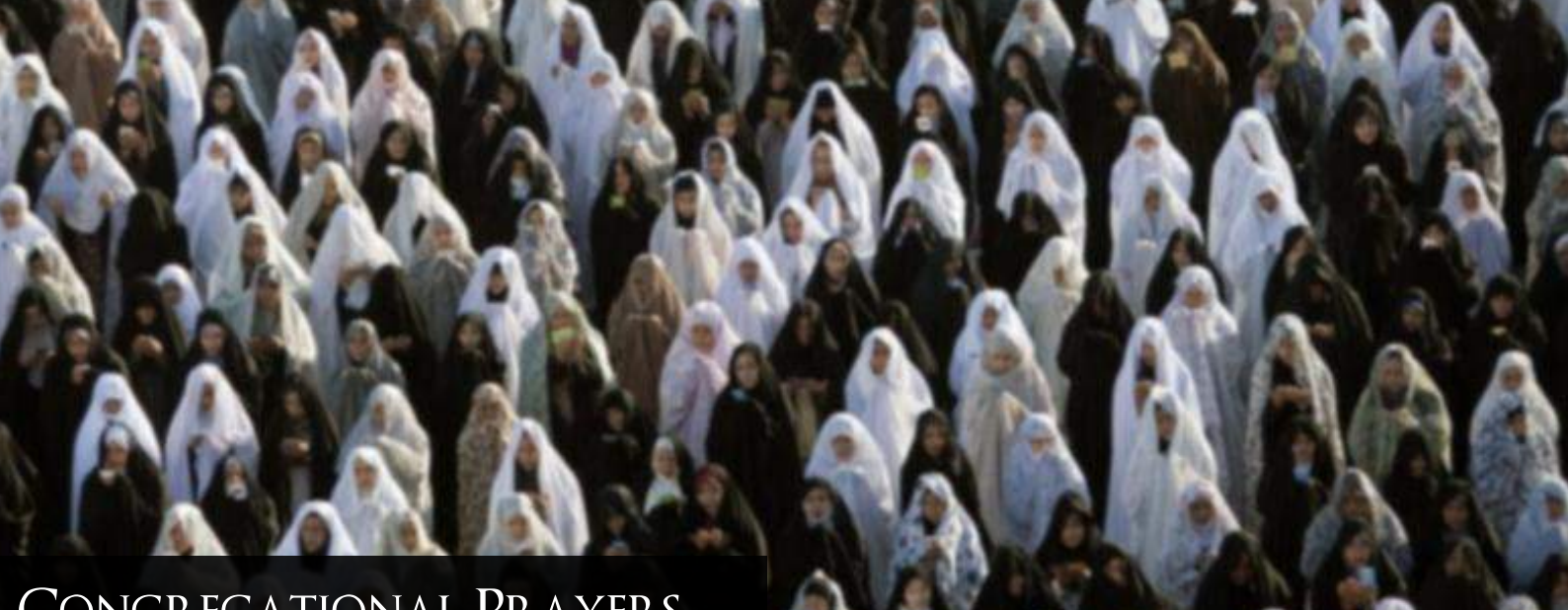
2. To clap your hands in prayer out of excitement

- a. Breaks the prayer
- b. Is makrooh
- c. Has no consequence

3. If a person is doing taqiyyah and is forced to fold his arms in prayer, this:

- a. Invalidates the prayer and he has to pray again at home
- b. Is permissible
- c. Is Makrūh

- Islamic Laws-Sayed Sistani



CONGREGATIONAL PRAYERS

صلاة الجماعة

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Be reminded of the importance of Jamā'ah prayer.
- Understand that Jamā'ah prayers is very rewarding
- Learn some of the general rules of Jamā'ah prayer

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 (saw) has said:

"One prayer of a man in congregation is worthier than his forty years of prayers at home (alone)."ⁱ

Explaining some of the wisdom of the congregational prayer, Imam al-Reḍā (as) said:

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"Certainly the congregational prayer has been decreed in order that the pure Faith in Unity, in Islam, and in worshipping Allah be openly revealed and (publicly) manifested, because... the proof of Allah, Almighty and Glorious, will be completed for the totality of people in the East and West (of the world)... Again, the congregational prayer causes people to know each other which allows for some of them to bear witness for others regarding their Islam, wherein there is the means of facility and association for righteous deeds and godly actions which prevents too much disobedience against Allah, Almighty and Glorious."ⁱⁱⁱ

We can see from this narration that the congregational prayer is a great way for Muslims to get to know one another and to encourage each other to do good.

So if our home is reasonably close to where Jamā'ah prayer is held it becomes almost compulsory upon us to pray in the congregational format. Similarly, it is ḥarām for one to avoid Jamā'ah without an excuse and simply because they do not like it. While if we are at a Mosque and there is congregational prayer occurring, it is impermissible to pray 'Furada' (alone) while there is a congregational prayer being held.

Some of us ignore the importance of congregational prayer when we are at home with the family. Congregational prayer, as will be seen later in the lesson, can be offered with only two people. We should not ignore the blessing of congregational prayer when with our families or visitors. Rather, we should take full advantage of praying in this format.

THE LEADER OF THE CONGREGATIONAL PRAYER

Prayer can be considered to be in the congregational format with as little as two people. However, the main condition is that there must be a prayer leader (Imām) who must have certain qualities. He does not need to be a scholar or sheikh. A basic summary of the conditions of the Imam is that he should be a practicing Muslim. Specifically, the Imam of the prayer must be:

- Adult
- Sane
- Just: A person is said to be just when he performs all those acts which are obligatory upon him, and refrains from all those things which are forbidden to him. And the sign of being just is that one is apparently of a good character, so that if enquiries are made about him from the people of his locality, or from his neighbours, or from those persons with whom he lives, they would confirm his good conduct.
- Of legitimate birth
- Male (when the followers are male)

The main condition from among the above is that the person must be just. As is explained above, we can determine whether a person is just or not according to their reputation amongst their community and by observing that they avoid sins and perform their obligations. It is sufficient that we observe this in general public life, we do not need to investigate about people and pry into their private life.

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 Sajdah, 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, Al-Hamd and the other 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 'Thikr' 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 at 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.

ETIQUETTES OF THE CONGREGATIONAL PRAYER

There are etiquettes which we should be aware of when praying in congregation. The majority of these are related to being considerate of those around you. One of the major blessings of the congregational prayer is that it is a gathering of the believers. Thus, we should help others achieve optimum comfort and concentration in prayer. This means we:

- Should not wear clothing printed with colours or images which may distract those around us
- We should also be considerate of those around us when reciting the Dhikr, that it is not too loud
- Generally for prayer, but especially for the congregational prayer we should put on some musk or fragrance
- Just like the followers of the congregation, the Imam should also be considerate of the followers. This means that he should not make the prayer so long that the followers get tired.

Review Questions

1. The leader of the congregational prayer must be:

- a. A male, regardless of who is praying behind the leader
- b. Just, regardless of who is praying behind the leader
- c. A sheikh, regardless of who is praying behind the leader

2. The minimum number of people required to offer congregational prayer is:

- a. 1
- b. 2
- c. 5

3. Congregational prayer can be offered:

- a. At the mosque only
- b. Anywhere
- c. Anywhere except one's home

ⁱ Mustadrak-ul-Wasa'il, vol. 6, p. 446

ⁱⁱ Bihar-ul-Anwar, vol. 88, p. 12



TRAVELLER'S PRAYER

صلاة المسافر

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Know the fact that we pray 'qasr' if we are travelling under certain conditions
- Know the main conditions of qasr prayer
- Understand other miscellaneous rules regarding the prayers of a traveller

Traveller's Prayer

In this lesson, we will learn more detailed rules of Qasr prayer, including most of its conditions. Remember that Qasr prayer refers to the obligation of shortening our prayers

CONDITIONS OF QASR PRAYER

We have to remember that if we are travelling to a place we consider our home town (waṭan) (a place of permanent living), or if we are staying at a destination for more than 10 days, we offer the prayer in its complete form. Similarly we can fast in that place too.

In general, if these two conditions are not met then we must shorten our prayers and we cannot fast either.

There are seven other major conditions that need to be met before a person must offer the shortened prayer:

- 1- The journey to the destination must be more than 22Km (or a total distance of 44Km or more

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return) outside what is considered to be the limits of the city. This limit is not the CBD of Sydney, for example, but the very border of Sydney.

- 2- One must intend to travel greater than 22km (or 44km round trip) before the journey. So if one only intended to go 5km but then ended going more than 22km, they would continue to offer shortened prayers until their intention changes.
- 3- The traveller should not change the above intention while on his way.
- 4- The traveller will have to pray the full prayer if he intends to pass through his home town and stay there or stay at some place for 10 days or more before reaching a distance of 44km (return or in total).
- 5- The purpose of travelling nor the trip itself should not be Ḥarām:
 - a. If the journey is ḥarām (like a wife travelling without the husband's permission for non-obligatory trips) then one has to offer the full prayer.
 - b. If the parents are unhappy or displeased about a trip that is not obligatory, it is ḥarām and therefore one must recite full prayers and should fast (if required)

- c. 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.

- d. 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.

- e. If a person is travelling with the intention of sinning (e.g. going to another city to gamble), then they must offer the full prayer.

- 6- The person should not be a nomad

- 7- Travelling should not be a profession. If a person frequently travels for work (or school) more than the minimum 44Km like a courier, bus/truck driver, sailor, pilot, some sales people, etc. they have to recite the full prayer.



- 8- 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.

- 9- 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

Aside from the regular travel, there are additional rules we must remember to determine whether we pray the full prayer or the shortened prayer.

- 1- One can pray the full prayer in specific holy cities like Mecca, Medina and Kufah. Also one can pray full prayer if one is 25 arms lengths from the tomb of Imam Ḥusayn (as).

- 2- If a person recites the full prayer when he should be reciting the Qasr prayer, his prayer is void. If he completely forgets he is a traveller (or does not know about Qasr prayers) and recites full prayers and by the time he finds out the time of prayer has lapsed it is ok, but if there is still time and he realises or is taught then he must offer his prayers again. This often happens when one is reciting congregational prayers in the city that one is visiting and we should be well aware of our responsibilities.

- 3- Similarly, if one offers Qasr prayer (even if in ignorance) when he was meant to be praying full prayers, his prayers would be void.

- 4- If one misses his prayers whilst travelling and the prayer becomes qadā', he should perform the qadā' as qasr even if he has returned to his home town. Similarly if a person misses his prayer at home, and wants to make it up while travelling, he needs to offer the prayer in full.

Homework

Refer to your marja's book of Islamic Laws to find out what one would do in regards to praying full or Qasr prayers in the following situations:

- A person who travels but does not have a homeland?
- If a traveller wishes to spend 10 days travelling but split between 2 cities that are greater than 22km apart.
- If a person who is travelling spends 10 days at a place but travels to the outskirts of the city doing some sightseeing
- If a person realises or finds out in the rukū' of his 2nd rak'ah of Ḍuḥr that he has to pray Qasr, what should he do?
- If someone finds out that he has to pray full and not qasr when he is in the middle of his prayers.

Review Questions

1. What distance do I need to travel before I should shorten my prayers?

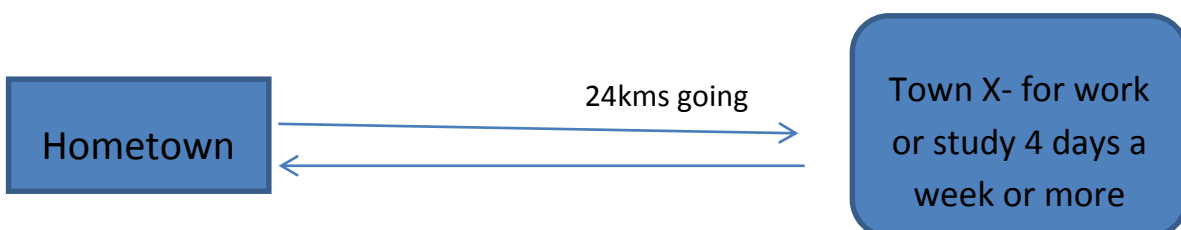
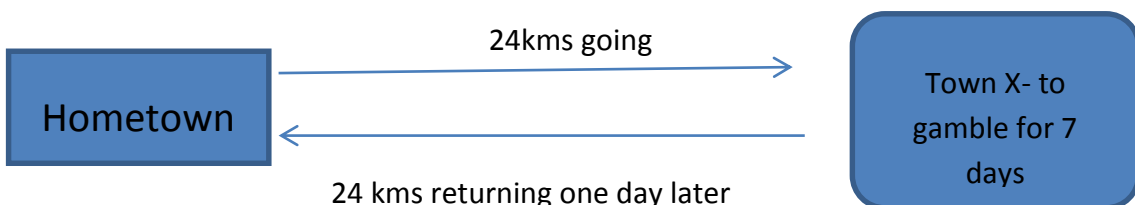
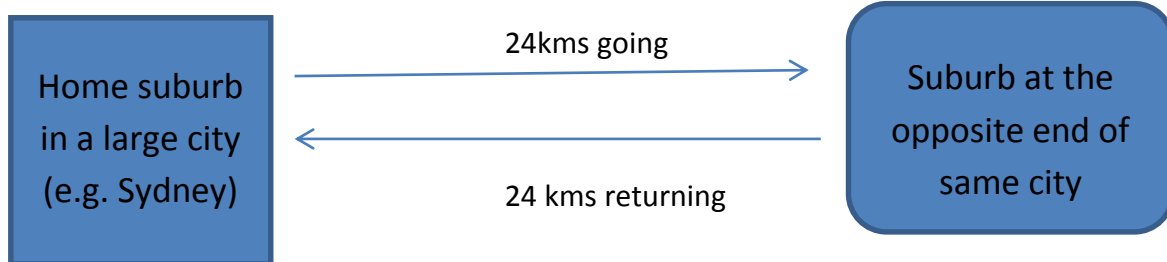
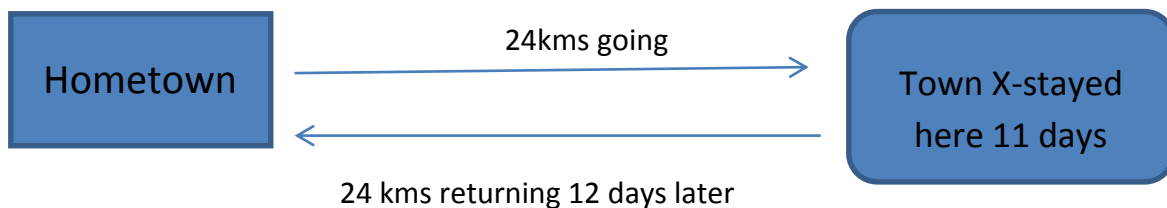
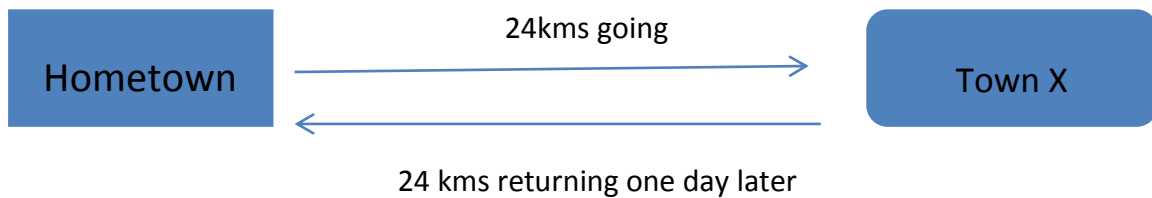
- a. 44kms one way
- b. 44kms return journey
- c. 38 kms

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

Class Activity

Indicate whether the person should pray full prayer or qaṣr (shortened) prayer in the following journeys:





SPECIAL PRAYERS

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Learn when Salātul Āyāt becomes obligatory
- Learn the method of praying Salātul Āyāt
- Learn about Salātul Mayyit and when it is prayed
- Learn the rules of Salātul Mayyit
- Learn about the significance and rewards of Salātul Layl
- Learn the method of performing Salātul Layl

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:



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- 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.

SALĀTUL MAYYIT ⁱⁱⁱ

Salat al-mayyit is wajib al-kifa'i, i.e. it is obligatory on every Muslim but as soon as it is performed correctly by one of them, it remains no more obligatory on others; but if no one offers the prayer everyone is a sinner.

If the deceased was six years old, the prayer for the deceased is obligatory. In offering this prayer, purity of the body or dress is not necessary; also ghusl, wudhu or tayammum is not obligatory. But the intention of the prayer (niyyah) and facing qibla is essential. The dead body should be placed in such a way that the head of the deceased remains on the right of those who offer the prayer. In the case of the dead body of a male, the Imam should stand near his waist; and in the case of a female, near the chest.

Prayer of deceased has 5 takbirs (including Takbiratul-Ihram).

After the first takbir (i.e., takbiratul-ihram) the Kalima al-shahadatayn is recited. After 2nd the takbir, salawat is recited. After the 3rd takbir, prayer is offered for all the believers and Muslims. After the 4th takbir, prayer is offered especially for the deceased one. Then the 5th takbir is said And the prayer comes to end.

The shortest method of offering this prayer is as follows:

Allahu Akbar;

Ashhadu an-la ilaha illallahu waḥdahu la sharika lah; Wa Ashhadu Anna Muḥammadan 'Abduhu wa Rasuluh;

Allahu Akbar;

Allahumma salli 'ala Muḥammadin wa Aali Muḥammad;

Allahu Akbar;

Allahummaghfir li'l Mu'minina wa'l Mu'minaat;

Allahu Akbar;

Allahummaghfir li haadha'l mayyit (In case the deceased is a female, say Allahummaghfir li haadhihi'l mayyit);

Allahu Akbar;

After the completion of the prayer recite "Rabbana ātina fid-dunya ḥasanatan wa fi'l ākhira ḥasanatan waqina adhaban-nār."

It is necessary to mention that even if this prayer is offered by jama'ah, everyone has to recite the whole prayer. It is not correct just to say 'Allahu Akbar' and remain silent between the takbirs. Such a prayer is invalid (batil).

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..."^{iv}

Imam Sadiq [a] said: "Never miss Salātul Layl, because, in fact, the real loser is he who misses Salātul Layl"^v

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 8 rak'at are performed in 4 set of 2. Each set of 2 is exactly like Fajr prayer except that we do not have to recite a second surah after Surat al-Ḥamd
- **The next two rak'at (al-Shaf')** 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 (al-Witr)** 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.al-islam.org/elements-islamic-studies-allamah-saeed-akhtar-rizvi/lesson-53-prayer-deceased-salat-al-mayyit>

^{iv} <http://www.ihic.org.au/book.php?id=60&idt=11>

^v Bihar-ul-Anwar, vol. 83, p. 127



FASTING

الصوم

JURISPRUDENCE

LEVEL5

Lesson 1: Introduction to Fasting

Undoubtedly, all of you have reached the age of maturity now and have been fasting in the holy month of Ramaḍān for a few years already. Fasting is one of the best and highest forms of worship for three major reasons:

- It is the longest worship one can possibly do (12hrs on average, a day)
- It is a private worship, meaning that no-one will know you are fasting (unless you tell them); it's a secret between you and God,
- Every action and thought (as long as it is not evil) is rewarded, even just sleeping or breathing!

Once, the Holy Prophet asked his companions:

"Shall I tell you about something which, if you do it, will distance you from Satan as much as the distance between the east and the west?" They said, "O yes! Please do so," whereupon he (saw) said, "It is the fast. It darkens his [Satan's] face, while charity breaks his back and the love for Allah's sake and assisting others in doing good deeds cut off his tail and seeking Allah's forgiveness splits his spine. For everything there is a zakāt (purification), and the zakāt of the bodies is fasting."ⁱ

TYPES OF FASTING

As you have learnt in the previous years, there are different kinds 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 our jurisprudence i.e. from dawn to dusk, to avoid 9 things, etc. (to be discussed later)

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Know what it means to fast and its importance
- Know the importance of the Holy month of Ramaḍān
- Understand the rules regarding intention for compulsory and non-compulsory fasts
- Know the nine invalidators of fasting
- Gain a basic understanding of the moon cycle
- Learn how to determine the first day of the Islamic month using various resources available.
- Understand that difference between marāji' regarding the rules of moon sighting should not create disunity.
- That breaking a wājib fast under certain conditions requires different kaffārah
- Understand what fidyah is and when it is payable
- Understand the rules of fasting when travelling
- Be reminded of the categories of people exempted from fasting

- 3- **Ethical Fasting**- This is not only avoiding the things that break the fast from a jurisprudential point of view, but the organs of the body (the limbs, eyes, tongue etc.) also 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"*ⁱⁱ
- 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 RAMADĀN

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 life-time of the Prophet (saw), the blessed month of Ramaḍān used to be called al-marzūq, the one full of sustenance, due to the abundance of the blessings of Allah whereby His servants are sustained during it.ⁱⁱⁱ

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."^{iv}

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'an more often
- Worshipping (such as prayers, du'a, contemplating, etc.) in the night especially
- Avoiding all forms of sins (like swearing, being rude to parents etc.)
- Spending more time at mosques and Islamic centres and around pious people
- Avoiding wasting time
- The month of Ramaḍān is also a good time to take a 'time-out' from our usual routines and focus on improving ourselves spiritually. It is also important to focus on our own selves in particular. For example, if we are engaged in Islamic education or teaching all year round, during this month we should reduce our commitments so that we can focus on our own spiritual health.

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.

INTENTION OF FASTING

For any action of worship, we must have a clear intention for that worship. This intention does not need to be said out loud, just like for prayer, it suffices to be aware of the action one is about to perform. With regards to fasting, the basic intention one must make is that one will avoid anything that will invalidate the fast from the time of Fajr to the time of Maghreb for the sake of proximity and obedience to Allah (SWT).

INTENTION FOR WĀJIB FASTS

- 1- We can make an intention either every night (or moments before the adhān of fajr), that we will fast the next day, or we can make an intention at the beginning of the month, that we shall fast the whole month. The latter is better just in case we forget to make the intention every night.
- 2- If a person does not have an intention to fast before going to bed and wakes up before Ḍuhr prayers, he can intend to fast then. If he wakes up after Ḍuhr prayers, he should continue fasting but also give the qaḍā' for that day.
- 3- For keeping other wājib fasts (like that of a vow), one must know the intention of the fast.

- 4- One cannot offer mustaāb fasts if one owes wājib fasts (i.e. qaḍā fasts)
- 5- If one has fasts owing from Ramaḍān, they must offer their Qaḍā before the next Ramaḍān comes around. Otherwise, payment of fidya would apply/
- 6- If one intends to break their wājib fast, the fast becomes immediately void, even if they don't act upon it. For example, if in the afternoon a person decides in their mind: 'I am too tired, I am going to go and eat' but then changes their mind and does not eat, their fast is still not valid and must be repeated.
- 7- For Mustaḥab fasts, one can make the intention for fasting at any time of the day, even moments before Maghreb- provided he has not committed any act that invalidates the fast.

Class Exercise

Ali went on a holiday and when he returned to his home town it was the 3rd of the month of Ramaḍān. Ali forgot this and because he was tired from the trip, he went to sleep after his dinner and did not wake up until after the time of Ḍuhr. When he woke up, he realized that it was Ramaḍān and he had to fast. What should he do?

He should not do anything that breaks his fast until Maghrib (this is called Imsak) and then he has to offer Qaḍā' fast after the Month of Ramadhan.

List at least 2 things you will give up this month of Ramaḍān to help you achieve purity. Make the intention to stop these bad habits this Ramaḍān and get the help from your parents, teachers or friends to achieve this.

Lesson 2: Invalidators of Fasting

There are nine acts which invalidate or break the fast. Below is a list of the invalidators, followed by a review of the first three invalidators followed by explanations of the rest.

1. Eating and drinking
2. Swallowing thick dust
3. Immersing one's head completely in water (except for Sayed Sistani who says this is makrūh)
4. Ascribing false things to Almighty Allah, or his Prophet or to the successors of the Holy Prophet
5. Sexual intercourse
6. Masturbation
7. Remaining in Janābah or Hayḍ or Nifās till the Adhān for Fajr prayers
8. Enema with liquids
9. Vomiting

FAQS- REVIEW

If a person eats or drinks intentionally, his fast is void. Let us turn our attention to the more commonly occurring tricky situations that we may experience during fasting:

- a. Can I brush my teeth?
Yes you can brush when you're fasting teeth as long as you don't swallow the toothpaste or the water.
- b. Can I take injections, anaesthetics and drips (e.g. in the hospital)?
Anaesthetics are permissible and do not break the fast. You can take any injection and it also does not break your fasting. However, if you are taking drips in the hospital and it is a nutritious injection, then this is not permissible. Eye and ear drops also do not break the fast.
- 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.
- d. Swallowing thick dust: This does not include normal dust in the air. It refers to thick dust, for example if one is sweeping the floor and a cloud of dust comes up.
- e. Immersing one's head in water
With the exception of Sayed Sistani who says it is Makrūh, most other Marāji' say that intentionally immersing the

head completely in water invalidates the fast. This means that by and large one cannot swim while fasting.

OTHER INVALIDATORS

ASCRIBING LIES TO ALLAH AND HIS PROPHET AND INFALLIBLES

- If a person who is observing fast, intentionally ascribes something false to Allah and the Prophet (saw) and his trustees, verbally or in writing or by making a sign, his fast becomes void, even if he may at once retract and say that he has uttered a lie or may repent for it.
- If a person observing fast wishes to quote something about which he has no authority or he does not know whether it is true or false, he should, as an obligatory precaution, give a reference of the person who reported it, or the book in which it is written.
- If a person quotes something as the word of Allah or of the Holy Prophet with the belief that it is true, but realises later that it is false, his fast does not become void.

SEXUAL INTERCOURSE OR FOREPLAY LEADING TO EJACULATION

Sexual intercourse or foreplay that leads to ejaculation during the state of fasting invalidates the fast. Also if foreplay is with the intention of ejaculation then this requires a kaffārah. However if there was no intention to ejaculate but they ejaculated anyway, then it breaks the fast but there is no kaffārah.

MASTURBATION (ISTIMNĀ')

Masturbation, which means touching one's private parts resulting in ejaculation, invalidates the fast. If the ejaculation is intentional, the person must offer Qadha and pay Kaffarah.

Masturbation in general is a highly forbidden act in Islam and the punishment for it is very severe. We have several narrations which condemn this act and the one who performs it. Below is one such narration:

“Once a person was caught masturbating and was brought to Imam 'Ali. The Imam punished him by beating on his hands until it turned red; then he made arrangement for his marriage on the government's expenses”^v

BEING IN THE STATE OF JANĀBAH (FOR MEN AND WOMEN) OR HAYḌ OR NIFĀS (WOMEN)

- a) Janābah
 - If a person in a state of Janābah does not perform Ghusl intentionally till the time of Fajr prayers, his/her fast becomes void
 - If a person is in Janābah during a night in Ramaḍān and knows that if he goes to sleep he will not wake up till Fajr, he should not sleep before Ghusl and if he sleeps before Ghusl and does not wake up till Fajr, his fast is void, and Qaḍā' and Kaffarah become obligatory on him.
 - When a person in Janābah goes to sleep in a night of Ramaḍān and then wakes up, the obligatory precaution is that if he is not sure about waking up again, he should not go to sleep before Ghusl, even though he may have a faint hope that he might wake up before Fajr if he sleeps again.
 - When a person wakes up in the month of Ramaḍān after the Fajr prayers and finds that he has become jūnub his fast is in order, even if he knows that he became so before the Fajr prayers.
 - If a person is in the state of Janābah and goes to sleep being fairly sure of waking up before Fajr AND having the intention to perform Ghusl when they wake up, but they sleep in till after Fajr, their fast remains valid. They should perform Ghusl as soon as they wake up.
- b) Hayḍ or Nifās
 - If a woman who is in either of these states does not become ṭāhir before the time of fajr, then she cannot fast (if it is during the month of Ramaḍān)
 - If a woman exists or enters either of these two states during the day (between Fajr and Maghreb) then the fast of that day is not counted. Even if she enters Hayḍ just before Maghreb, the fast must be offered again
 - If a woman becomes clean before the time of Fajr prayers in the month of Ramaḍān but neglects her obligation and does not do Ghusl before Fajr, nor does she resort to tayammum as time becomes short, her fast will be void. She must offer Qadha and Kaffarah.

LIQUID ENEMA

An enema is a type of medication used to relieve constipation. It is placed in a person's rectum and dissolves into the end of the bowel, making it easier for the person to pass faeces. If this enema is a liquid enema, then its use voids the fast. If it is solid, then its use does not void the fast.

VOMITING INTENTIONALLY

If a fasting person vomits intentionally his fast becomes void even though he may have been obliged to do so on account of sickness. However, the fast does not become void, if one vomits forgetfully or involuntarily.^{vi}

Review Questions

Answer the following providing explanations for your answers:

1. If a person ascribes something to Almighty Allah or the Holy Prophet knowing it to be false and understands later that it was true, what is the state of his fast?
2. If a person throws himself into the water thinking that his entire head will not go down into the water, and after diving the water covers his entire head, what is the state of his fast?
3. If a person swallows something by mistake and remembers before it reaches the stomach that he is fasting, what should he do?

Lesson 3: Qaḍā' and Kaffārah

In the previous years, we have learnt a great deal about the rules of fasting, especially with regards to kaffarah and Qaḍā' fasts. In this lesson we shall review some of that information and introduce you to some of the more common issues regarding kaffarah and Qaḍā'.

QUIZ

For each of the questions below, write whether the person must give kaffarah, Qaḍā' or nothing or both.^{vii}

QUESTION	Answer
1. John reverted to Islam when he was 21 years old. Does he need to make up the fasts he missed before becoming Muslim?	
2. Mr. Ali is 75 this year and has problems with his kidneys. His doctor told him that if he fasted this year, it would be detrimental to his health. He did not fast this Ramaḍān	
3. Muḥammad, whilst fasting, did not know that he was not allowed to immerse his head into water but realized after	
4. Ali did not know he had reached the age of Taklīf, even though he had, and did not fast the whole Month of Ramaḍān.	
5. 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	
6. Yusuf was playing soccer with his friends in Ramaḍān whilst fasting and his mouth was very dry. He decided to rinse his mouth and some of it went down his throat.	
7. Ḥusayn was certain that if he fell asleep in the state of Janābah till after Fajr prayers, 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.	
8. Zaynab had her monthly period in the middle of Ramaḍān, and she was unable to fast for 8 days of the month	
9. Mrs R is in the late stages of her pregnancy and fasting would be harmful for her	

RULES OF KAFFĀRAH

There are 2 types of kaffarah. One must fulfil either one or both of them depending on conditions which we shall talk about later. They are:

- 1- Feed 60 poor people
- 2- Fast for 60 days (of which 1 month and 1 day should be consecutive)

As we have learnt in previous years, eating, drinking, sexual intercourse, staying in the state of Janābah till the time for Fajr prayers, if done deliberately whilst offering a compulsory fast, would oblige one to give (only one) kaffarah and qada' for each missed fast. We should also remember this kaffarah is for each fast, such that if we deliberately miss 3 fasts in Ramaḍān we have to fast for 180 days or feed 180 people!

Under certain conditions, it is a recommended precaution that BOTH the kaffarah become necessary (plus the Qada'). This is when one deliberately breaks one's fast by:

- 1- Doing something Ḥarām (eg masturbation, fornication, eating pork or wine etc.)
- 2- Attributing a lie to Allah (SWT) or the Holy Prophet (saw)

We must remember that apart from the above examples where both kaffarah become necessary, we can choose what kaffarah to give. If we decide to give the kaffarah for fasting 60 days then we must remember that:

- 1- We must fast continuously for the first month and 1 day and if within this period we are unable to fast without a valid excuse, we have to restart from the beginning
- 2- Within that first month and one day, there cannot be any day which is Ḥarām to fast (such as Eid al-Aḍḥā)
- 3- The Kaffarah can be given at any time, so in the case that one chooses to fast for 60 days, one is not obliged to fast before the next Ramaḍān but MUST fulfil the Qada' for that fast before the next Ramaḍān. Otherwise, he must give fidyah.

RULES OF QAḌĀ FASTS

We have learnt in the previous years about some of the rules of qada' fasts. What we shall discuss here is when

we need to perform these Qada' fasts. As a general rule, one must offer his/her Qada' fasts before the commencement of the next Ramaḍān. If one fails to do so then they must fulfil the Qada' and additionally pay something called a '*fidyah*' which equates to $\frac{3}{4}$ kg of food (this is equivalent to around \$3) per fast. This fidyah is not necessary when:

- 1- The person is a new revert to Islam
- 2- If the person is too old to fast any more

RULES RELATED TO DAYS OF FASTING

The table below outlines the fasts in each of these categories

Wājib	Mustaḥab	Makrūh	Ḥarām
In the Holy month of Ramaḍān	First and last Thursday of every month and the first Wednesday after the 10 th of the month	On the day one is not sure if it is the day of 'Arafah or 'Īd al-Aḍḥā	On the day of 'Īd al-Aḍḥā or 'Īd al-Fiṭr
If we have made a vow, oath or covenant to fast in general, or on a particular day	13 th , 14 th , and 15 th days of every month	On the day of 'Ashurā'	For a wife to keep a Mustaḥab fast if it hinders her duties to the husband or without his permission
For the eldest son to perform the Qada' fasts of the deceased father	All days of Rajab and Sha'bān		A child's fast if it causes emotional suffering to parents
Qada' fasts	On the Day of Ghadīr		If one is sick and knows it would be detrimental to fast
The fasts of Kaffarah	On the Day of Mubāhalah		If one is travelling (such that he prays qasr prayers)

THOSE EXEMPT FROM FASTING

Those who are sick (or for whom fasting causes extreme hardship) - For these people, if they have a prospect of getting better and/or do get better, they have to fulfil only the qada'. If they do not get better, they are required to pay fidyah for every day they have missed. Similarly, women who are in advanced stages of pregnancy or lactating mothers are not required to fast but in this case she has to pay fidyah as well as fast the qada'.

Very old people- Very old people are not required to fast nor do they have to offer qada' or fidyah for fasts they have missed. As a recommended precaution though, if they become capable of fasting somehow later, they should offer qada'.

Travellers- We have discussed in detail under the lesson of 'traveller's prayers', who is considered a traveller and who is not. As a general rule, any traveller who prays qasr prayers is not obliged to fast but must offer the qada'. Those travellers who offer full prayers (like a regular traveller, or one who travels for a haram purpose) must fast.

There are some additional rules we need to keep in mind when travelling in the month of Ramaḍān:

- 1- It is makruh to travel before the 24th of Ramaḍān
- 2- It is makruh to travel to avoid fasting
- 3- It is makruh for anyone who is not fasting for any excuse (even travelling) to have sexual intercourse or eat or drink to his fill in the month of Ramaḍān.

The table below shows when a traveller must break his fast or keep it.

Situation	Break his fast or keep it
Person travels after Ḍuhr	Keeps the fast
Person travels before Ḍuhr and had an intention to travel from the night before	Cannot fast that day- but cannot break the fast until he reaches outside city limits
If the person travels in Ramaḍān to a place where he intends to stay for 10 days or his home town (waṭan) and arrives in the hometown BEFORE dhuhr	Must fast on that day (provided he has not already broken his fast)
If one travels to a place he wishes to stay for 10 days or his home town and arrives AFTER Ḍuhr	He cannot fast on that day

Review Question

Refer to the Islamic Laws book of your marja'. Write down 3 conditions under which only the qada' fast is to be offered, without the need for a kaffarah.

Lesson 4: Moon Sighting

In the previous lessons, we have learnt a great deal about all the laws regarding fasting. We know that the Islamic calendar is lunar and the days of fasting depend on this lunar calendar. It is therefore important to understand how it works.

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 waxing crescent moon is sighted. We shall discuss the rules of moon sighting later in the lesson. We have to first understand the moon cycle first.



MOON PHASES

The diagram above shows the phases of the moon. Sunlight is shown coming in from the right. The earth, of course, is at the centre of the diagram. The moon is shown at eight key stages during its rotation around the earth. The dotted line from the earth to the moon represents your line of sight when looking at the moon. To help you visualize how the moon would appear at that point in the cycle, you can look at the larger moon image. The name of the moon phase is shown alongside the image.

The important thing to notice is that exactly one half of the moon is always illuminated by the sun. Of course that is perfectly logical, but you need to visualize it in order to understand the phases. At certain times we see both the sunlit portion and the shadowed portion -- and that creates the various moon phase shapes we are all familiar with. Also note that the shadowed part of the moon is invisible to the naked eye; in the diagram above, it is only shown for clarification purposes.

So the basic explanation is that the lunar phases are created by changing angles (relative positions) of the earth, the moon and the sun, as the moon orbits the earth.^{viii}

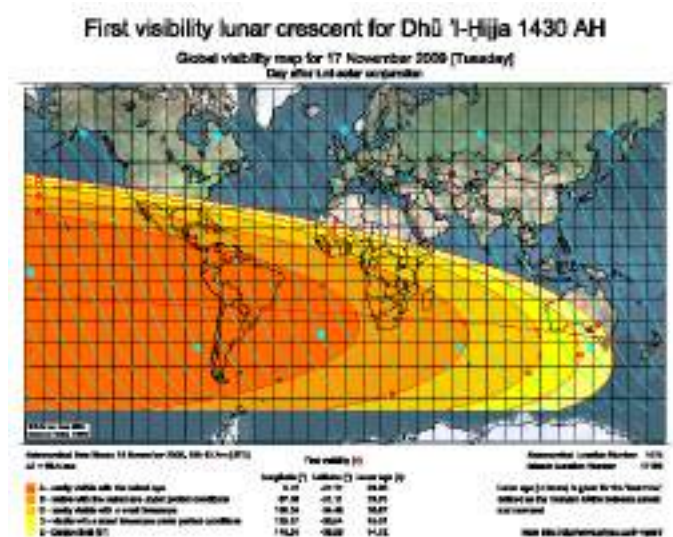
The crucial time for us Muslims is the observation of the first waxing crescent which signifies the beginning of the new month. From the point of view of people on the earth in order for us to be able to see the moon:

- 1- It has to be bright enough in the sky (at least 1% of the moon's face should be illuminated)
- 2- It should be far enough above the horizon to be in the line of sight (Fig 1)

For the first criteria, under normal circumstances, the moon has to be at an altitude of at least 10° (although in rare cases above 8°) above the horizon for an observer on earth to be able to see it (figure 2). Additionally, because the moon does not have its own light, the crescent moon is only visible more than 47 minutes after sunset and around $24\text{hrs} \pm 2\text{hrs}$ after the birth of the 'new moon'^{ix}. Furthermore, if we would like to go searching for the moon, we have to look just where the sun sets as that is the same place where the moon can be seen.

Although there are other criteria also involved in sighting the crescent moon such as brightness of the evening sky, contrast requirements of the eye, atmospheric reflection, etc... the above two mentioned criteria are the main ones

One can easily access the internet and check out the possibility of sighting of the moon with the above 2 criteria using visibility maps^x (figure 3). As we can see in the figure below, there was no possibility of sighting the crescent moon in the eastern part of Australia or even in the Middle East but it was clearly visible on the same day in any part of South America. Note that at point (E), the moon is at 8° below the horizon and therefore impossible to sight.



UNIFIED HORIZON VS. LOCAL HORIZON

Some marāji', from their research, believe that for the case of moon sighting, the whole world can be considered as one horizon and therefore if the moon is seen in any country (or city) that shares the night or part of the night with your city, it can be considered as the first month.

Most of the other marāji' believe in a local horizon, i.e. that the new month can only be declared if there was a sighting within the local horizon (for example Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane share one horizon, which is not the same as Adelaide and Perth). Therefore, if the new moon is sighted in Perth, and not in the eastern part of Australia, we cannot consider it a new moon (similar to the visibility maps shown above).

We should understand that because different people follow different marāji' it does not mean they are wrong. These marāji' have done several decades of study to reach these conclusions and we have no right to vilify them or their followers. Additionally, it is important to remember that if followers of different marāji' celebrate different occasions at different times, it does not imply disunity. It is our responsibility as sincere followers of our faith to ensure that we follow our own Marja' and to tolerate all the others. This very phenomenon is a test for us which we must not fail.

METHODS OF ASCERTAINING THE FIRST DAY OF THE ISLAMIC MONTH

The first day of the Islamic Month can be determined in any one of these 4 ways (we have discussed details of each one in the previous years):

- 1- If a person himself sights the moon
- 2- If many people have sighted it and one is convinced that it is indeed sighted or from any other source that one becomes certain and satisfied that the moon is sighted.
- 3- If two just (‘ādil) people say they have sighted the moon that night (without two other just people opposing them).
- 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^{xi}

“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.

HOMEWORK

Go to this website:

<http://www.crescentmoonwatch.org/nextnewmoon.htm>

Determine when you would be able to see the new moon for the next month in the Eastern part of Australia. Write it down and bring it to the next class to compare with the other students.

ⁱ al-Saduq's Amali (or Majalis) p. 59,

ⁱⁱ Fast of the Month of Ramadhan by Yasin T. Al-Jibouri

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid.

^{iv} Biharul Anwar Vol 94 p 351

^v (Wasa'il, vol. 14, p. 267; vol. 18, pp. 574-5)

^{vi} Islamic Laws – Syed Sistani

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^{vii} Answers to table

1. Nothing
2. Nothing
3. Qadha only
4. Qadha only

5. Qadha and Kaffarah

6. Qadha only

7. Qadha only

8. Qadha only


9. Qadha, she should pay fidyah also

^{viii} http://www.moonconnection.com/moon_cycle.phtml

^{ix} It should be noted here; the Astronomical new moon is invisible as shown in the image. The 'new moon' according to the Islamic view is the very first waxing crescent that is seen signifying the start of the new month.

^x www.moonsighting.com

^{xi} <http://www.sistani.org/arabic/qa/search/3692/>



JURISPRUDENCE OF FOOD AND DRINK

JURISPRUDENCE

LEVEL 5

Lesson 1: Ḥalāl and Ḥarām Animals

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Understand the basic rules about transactions with pork and alcohol
- Understand the rules of finding out about ḥalāl foods
- Understand the brief rules about slaughtering of animals
- Discuss some of the etiquettes of eating and drinking
- Be reminded to check the ingredients of packaged foods before eating them
- Discuss the prohibition of helping the enemies of Islam by purchasing products that profit them

As we have learnt in previous lessons, Allah, the Almighty and Wise, has placed in us many desires, one of these desires is hunger. With every desire though, He has given us a specific way to fulfil it. When it comes to the desire for food, He has commanded us to eat only those things that are permissible and those things that would not harm us. Allah says:

“O men! Eat the lawful and good things out of what is in the earth” (2:168)

In the next two lessons we shall delve briefly into the transactions of food whether for our own consumption or not.

PROHIBITION OF TRANSACTING WITH SPECIFIC FOODS

As we have learnt in previous years, the Holy Quran clearly mentions that pork, alcohol and meat from animals not slaughtered in the Islamic way (*al-mītah*) are completely forbidden to be consumed. It is also unlawful to buy or sell this meat.

AL-MĪTAH – NON ḤALĀL MEAT

As a general rule, selling non-ḥalāl meat to Muslims is prohibited and the money earned from such an activity is illegitimate. This applies to selling any meat or meat products whether canned, packaged or not.

When it comes to selling non- ḥalāl meat to non-Muslims, there are some general rules we should remember:

1. If it is a non-najis product like sea food it is ok
2. If it is najis then it cannot be sold, even if to a non-Muslim
3. If it is mixed (with ḥalāl meat) then it can only be sold to non-Muslims

Therefore, we are not allowed to work in food shops or restaurants where we are directly selling non- ḥalāl and najis products (e.g. ḥarām chicken at KFC or ḥarām beef at McDonalds). However, if we are not directly involved in selling (i.e. we are working in the kitchen not at the cashier), then this is okay.

ALCOHOL

Any involvement in providing alcohol is ḥarām. This applies also to transporting it, delivering it, driving a person to drink (for instance a taxi taking a person to the pub), sitting on a table where alcohol is served or even promoting it in any way. Imam al-Ṣādiq (as) has said:

“Allāh has cursed alcohol, its growers, those who squeeze it [from the grapes], its drinkers, its servers, its buyers, its sellers, those who live on its income, its transporter, and the one to whom it is being transported.”ⁱ

If wearing clothing with names of alcohol companies is considered advertising for alcohol, then one is not allowed to wear such clothing.

INVESTIGATING THE FOOD WE EAT?ⁱⁱ

Living in a western environment, we often tend to eat out either by invitation from our friends and colleagues or just as a recreational activity. We have to be very careful about where we eat from, especially the ingredients of the food we eat. We have to remember the basic rules about eating out:

1. It is permissible to eat food prepared by non-Muslims, as long as the ingredients of the foods do not contain anything ḥarām. However, if one knows that the food has somehow become Najis for certain, then it is not permissible to eat it. Remember that Ahlul Kitab are not considered najis, while other non-Muslims (e.g. Buddhists, Hindus) are considered najis and so if they touch the food it will become najis.
2. One is not obliged to ask about the faith of a cook/chef when buying food as long as he is confident

that the food does not contain any ḥarām ingredients.

3. If the food does not obviously contain animal products, then one does not have the burden of investigating further. However, one can take precaution by looking further into the ingredients of the product.

If the food does contain an animal product, then one must gain certainty that the animal is permissible to eat before one can consume the food.

See the below Q&As from the Islamic Laws Book of Ayatollah Sistani.

- Question: We are unaware of the ingredients of food sold in shops in Western countries: it might be free from those ingredients that are forbidden to us or it might contain them. Are we allowed to eat such items without looking into their ingredients, or inquiring about them? Or is that not allowed to us?
 - Answer: It is permissible [to eat such food] as long as it is not known that it contains meat, fat, and their derivatives that are forbidden to us.
- Question: The people residing in Europe are of different faiths, nationalities and religions; and when we buy moist or wet food items, the shopkeeper may touch it with his hands. Since we do not know his religion, can we consider that food as pure?
 - Answer: As long as it is not known that the hands of the shopkeeper were najis, the food is to be considered tahir.
- Question: Can we eat the food that has been cooked by a Hindu?
 - Answer: If it is not known that the food is Najis and if the food does not contain meat, there would be no problem in eating it. However, if the food has been touched with a wet hand, it is not permissible to eat it.
- Question: Is it permissible to the food that has been cooked by a non-Muslim?

- Answer: It is permissible to eat the food that is not known to be najis. All kinds of food with the exception of meat, fat, and their extracts are permissible for a Muslim as long as he does not know that they are najis.

RULES OF SLAUGHTER

In Islam, as you may be aware, there is a specific process for slaughtering animals. In most cases, we would not need to do this but it is useful to have a brief idea of what is involved:

- The animal should be slaughtered so that the four main vessels in the neck are severed completely
- The person slaughtering the animal must be a Muslim
- The animal should be made to face the Qibla
- A sharp instrument should be used to slaughter the animal
- The name of Allah should be mentioned during the slaughter process

HOMEWORK

In the question below, there are several possibilities that a person can choose. Using the risalah, determine how you should act.

You are invited out with your friends to go to a restaurant in the City, when you arrive there, you realize that it is a sushi restaurant run by Japanese staff and also serves alcohol? Would you be able to eat from there?ⁱⁱⁱ

Lesson 2: Etiquettes of Eating and Drinking

In the previous lesson, we discussed some of the rules of transactions with *halāl* and *harām* meat and other rules regarding what we should be careful about when we are eating out. We also discussed briefly about how we slaughter animals. In this lesson we shall discuss the *mustahab* and *makrūh* rules related to eating and drinking.

MUSTAḤAB AND MAKRŪH RULES RELATED TO FOOD

We have discussed in previous lessons, that the food we eat has a very significant impact on our spirituality. The Holy Prophet has said:

“Man cannot fill a container worse than his stomach”^{iv}.

Allah, in His Wisdom, therefore, has taught us specific rules we need to follow when it comes to the food we eat. Additionally, He has also given us some precautionary acts to protect ourselves from even coming close to the *ḥarām* foods. We will discuss some of these here, some may be new and some reminders from previous years.

MUSTAĪAB:

1. Washing both the hands before and after taking a meal.
2. The host should begin eating first, and should also be the last to withdraw his hand.
3. One should say *Bismillāh* before starting to eat, and if there are several dishes, it is *Mustahab* to say *Bismillāh* before eating from each dish.
4. One should eat with one's right hand and should eat using three or more fingers.
5. If several persons are sitting together for their meals, every one of them should eat from the food placed in front of him. One should avoid eating alone.
6. One should take small bits of food and should chew the food thoroughly.
7. One should prolong the duration of taking a meal and should look at the food when eating (not at the TV)
8. After taking one's meal one should praise and thank Allah.
9. One should use a toothpick (or floss or brush one's teeth) after a meal.
10. One should collect and eat the food which is scattered on the dining cloth. However, if one takes a meal in an open place, like a field etc... it is better to leave the food which has fallen aside, so that it may be eaten by the animals and the birds.
11. One should take one's meal in the earlier part of the day, and in the earlier part of the night and should not eat during the day or during the night. (this means,

we should not nibble on things the whole day through or have too many snacks in between similarly we should not have 5 meals a day as many advertise)

12. One should take salt or vinegar before and after the meal.
13. When eating a fruit, one should first wash it before eating.

MAKRŪH

- 1- Eating any raw or uncooked meat
- 2- Over eating, gluttony (eating too quickly) and eating before digestion
- 3- Eating when full
- 4- To lean whilst eating
- 5- Eating hot food (and blowing on food)
- 6- Putting bread under the dish
- 7- Peeling fruits that can be eaten with the skin
- 8- Eating whilst walking
- 9- Eating alone
- 10- Separating one's food from his/her subordinates (workers)
- 11- Sitting on the table with kuffār.

CHECKING INGREDIENTS

Living in Australia, most of the foods that we buy are packaged and labelled with the ingredients. Therefore it makes it very easy for us Muslims to be aware of the various ingredients and therefore we can avoid these items when we go shopping.

Some foods may have ḥalāl signage on the packaging. If this is enough to give us assurance that the food is ḥalāl, then so be it. Otherwise, the rules we discussed earlier apply.



SUPPORTING OPPRESSORS

As Muslims, we are obliged never to support oppressors in any way, shape or form. Allah says in the Holy Quran:

“and help one another in goodness and piety, and do not help one another in sin and aggression; and be careful of (your duty to) Allah; surely Allah is severe in requiring (evil).” (4:2).

Allah is telling us that we are not permitted to assist anyone in the committing of ḥarām acts even if that person is a non-Muslim. It is therefore clear that even buying goods (including food) from an oppressor is ḥarām because this allows them to grow financially and is a support for them. Imam al-Ṣādiq (a.s) said:

“The one who is oppressing others, the one who is supporting it, and the one who is happy with what is happening, all of them will be companions in hellfire.”^v

Imam Baqir (a.s) said to Abu Basir who asked if he was allowed to work in the Bani ‘Abbas (tyrants) government:

“you are not even allowed to sharpen their pen, no one would gain anything from them in this world unless they take away similarly from his religion.”^{vi}

It is important that we remember that we should not support companies that are known to support or commit oppression themselves by buying from them. These include companies that actively or directly support illegal invasion of lands inhabited by Muslims and the oppressors of Muslims.^{vii}

ⁱ Man La Yahdhurhu 'l-Faqih, vol. 4, p. 4.

ⁱⁱ Code of practice for Muslims living in the west. Sayyid Seestani.

ⁱⁱⁱ References

eHawza- Rules of Transactions – Semester 2
Islamic Laws – Sayyid Seestani.

^{iv} Mizaanul Hikmah- Hadith 186

^v Wasa'el 17:177

^{vi} Wasa'el 17:177

^{vii} References and Bibliography

eHawza- Rules of Transactions – Semester 2
Islamic Laws – Sayyid Seestani.



HIJAB

الحجاب

JURISPRUDENCE

LEVEL 5

Rules of Ḥijāb

The Hijāb 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}

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

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 WOMEN

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.

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 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 DRESS FOR LADIES:

Q: What is the rule concerning women's wearing swimsuit in the swimming pools specified for females? Is there a 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.^{vi}

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.^{vii}

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.^{viii} [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'.]

Lesson 2: Further Rules of *Hijāb*

In this lesson, we will continue our discussions on *Hijab*. In this lesson, we will focus on ornamentation, as well as categories of *maḥram* and non-*maḥram*.

WHAT IS CONSIDERED AN 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.^{ix}

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.^x

ORNAMENTS FOR MEN

Q: Can a man wear white gold?

A: Regarding white gold for men: There are two things called white gold: a) Platinum, which is permissible for a man to wear; b) 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.^{xi}

SHAVING ONE'S BEARD (MEN)

A common issue in question is the growing/shaving of the beard. According to the marāji' it is not permissible (i.e. ḥarām) to shave the beard. However trimming it to a maximum length of one's fist and keeping it neat is very much recommended. Let's look at the following questions and answers to define what a beard is.

Q: Some men leave the hair around the chin to grow, i.e. goatee, and shave the rest of the beard. What is the view on such practice?

A: The ruling on shaving a part of the beard is the same as that passed on shaving the entire beard.

Q: Is it ḥarām to shave the hair of the cheeks or remove it in any other way, i.e., by using a string or tweezers?

A: It is not ḥarām to remove the hair growing on the cheeks, even by way of shaving.

Q: What should the minimum and maximum length of a beard be?

A: There is no definite measure. However, the criterion is based on what the common view recognizes as a beard. That said, it is disliked to let it grow longer than one's own grasp.

Q: What is the view on shaving one's moustache? Is it permissible to let it grow long?

A: There is no objection to shaving the moustache, nor is there any objection to leaving it to grow long. However, to let it grow long in such a way that the hair comes into contact with food and drink while one is eating or drinking is disliked.

Q: What is the ruling in the matter of shaving one's beard if growing it would lead to denigration?

A: For a devout Muslim, growing a beard should not be a cause for feeling inferior or lowly. It is not, as a matter of caution, permissible to shave it unless growing it leads to putting oneself in harm or causes unbearable hardship.^{xii}

Q: Is it permissible to shave the two sides of the face and leave the hair on the chin?

A: Shaving the beard is *ḥarām* based on obligatory precaution, and this includes the hair that grows on the sides of the face. However, there is no problem in shaving the hair that grows on the cheeks.^{xiii}

MAḤRAM AND NON-MAḤRAM

As we have learnt in previous years, a *maḥram* is a person whom, between you and them, most of the barriers of *ḥijāb* do not apply. They are also people whom one cannot marry. These people consist of the following:

1. one's own children
2. the children of his/her spouse (if the marriage is consummated)
3. nieces and nephews
4. parents
5. grandparents
6. paternal and maternal aunts and uncles
7. paternal and maternal great aunts and uncles
8. siblings
9. females are *maḥram* to females and males are *maḥram* to males
10. brothers and sisters through breastfeeding (this is rare in today's society)

Any person other than the ones mentioned above are considered non-*maḥram* and hence we must practice the rules of *ḥijāb* in front of them as described in this lesson.

In front of *maḥrams* (with the exception of a husband and wife), the bare minimum that must be covered is the private parts. However it is more respectable and dignified to dress modestly in front of *maḥrams*. Furthermore, if there is any risk of falling into sin or lust or leading the other to take a lustful look then it becomes *wājib* to cover what is usually covered by both men and women^{xiv}.

FURTHER FAQS RELATED TO MAḤRAM

Q: Hand shaking among people in Western countries is considered as a cultural norm. In some instances, it would be insulting and could create discomfort if you refuse to shake hands with the opposite gender. In my profession, I interact with some people of opposite sex that expect me to shake their hands whenever I meet with them. Question: What is my duty in this situation?

A: Shaking hands is forbidden for non-*maḥrams*. However, there is no harm (under obliging situations) in

doing so while having gloves or similar things on, unless it is accompanied by pressing.^{xv}

Q: In some countries it is customary that the person who arrives [at a meeting or an office] will shake hands with all who are present including women, of course, without lustful intention. And if he refuses to shake hands with the women, it would be considered abnormal, and more often than not it would be considered an act of contempt and insult towards the woman. All this would reflect negatively on their view concerning the person. Is it, therefore, permissible to shake hands with women?

A: It is not permissible. And the problem should be tackled by not shaking the hands of anyone or by wearing gloves, for example. If this is not possible for the person and he thinks that refusing to shake hands would cause great and unbearable difficulty for him, then it is permissible at that time. All this is based on the assumption that it is necessary for him to attend such a gathering; otherwise, if it is not possible for him to refrain from *ḥarām*, then it is not permissible for him to attend such a gathering.

Q: I am a married man and live in a joint family system; my father, mother, grandfather, my younger brother and my uncle live in my house; how about my wife's *ḥijāb* in such a situation?

A: Your wife is *maḥram* to your father and grandfather only (and not to your uncle or brother).^{xvi}

PRACTICE QUESTIONS:

- Hoda wants to go to her friend's wedding. She thought that the men and women would be separate so she bought a tight dress. She later found out that the wedding will be mixed (i.e. men and women will both be present). Now she is unsure whether she should wear her dress or not. What should she do? According to Islamic rulings, give the definition of a complete *hijab* for Hoda so that she can shop for new clothes.
- Abbas is a builder. One day while working, the weather was extremely hot and so he wanted to take his shirt off. He realised however that there was a group of non-maḥram girls at the café across the road. What should he do?
- It is your graduation day. It is customary to shake the hand of the person presenting the certificates. On the day, you realise that presenter of the certificates is a person of the opposite gender. How would you react to the situation in regards to shaking the person's hand? Also state different options one can take under different situations, such as if we found out beforehand who the presenter was (and if possible to speak to them beforehand) or if it was on the spot.

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} Keep in mind that if one knows that a lady who sees her without her *ĥijāb* will tell men what she looks like without her *ĥijāb*, then she should not remove her *ĥijāb* in front of that lady. This aids to maintain the *ĥijāb* and protect the dignity of the Muḥajjabah.

^{vii} 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.

^{viii} These last 2 questions are addressed by Ayatullah Sistani

^{ix} These first 2 questions were addressed by Ayatullah Khamenei

^x These 2 were addressed by Ayatullah Sistani

^{xi} These last 3 questions were addressed by Ayatullah Sistani

^{xii} These 5 questions were addressed by Ayatullah Khamenei. Sayyid Sistani gives the same fatwa:

Q: Is it permissible to shave the beard, if one is faced with an unavoidable or a difficult situation?

A: A Muslim is allowed to shave his beard, if he is compelled to do so or if he is forced to shave it for medical reasons, etc. It is also allowed if he fears harm to his life by not shaving or if growing the beard would put him in difficulty (for example, if it becomes a cause of ridicule and humiliation that is not normally tolerable by a Muslim).

^{xiii} This was addressed by Ayatullah Sistani

^{xiv} **References:**

The Islamic modern dress, by Sayyid Murtada Mutahhari

A code of ethics for Muslim men and women

Sayyid Sistani's website: www.sistani.org

Sayyid Khamenei's website: www.leader.ir/langs/EN

^{xv} Ayatullah Khamenei

^{xvi} The last 2 questions were addressed by Ayatullah Sistani



MUSIC AND DANCING

JURISPRUDENCE

LEVEL 5

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Understand the things that make music ḥarām
- Know the rules of dancing for men and women in brief
- Discuss some commonly raised questions related to music and dancing

Music and Dancing

In this lesson, we will review the rules related to music, singing and dancing, before considering some commonly asked questions about these issues.

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.

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).

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.



For men, dancing is forbidden in all situations. It is also forbidden to women to dance in front of men (with the exception of a woman dancing in front of her husband if there is no other *ḥarām* act being committed).

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.

FAQS

This section of the lesson is dedicated to answers given by the office of Ayatollah Sistāni to questions about issues related to music and dancing. The text is quoted directly from the official website of Ayatollah Sistāni.ⁱ

LEARNING MUSIC AND DANCING

Question: Is it permissible for a Muslim to send his son to a music institute to learn music as an art, provided that he does not use his artistic skills in *haraam* matters?

Answer: There is no harm in children learning *halal* music as such. However, when sending children to music schools, there must be the guarantee that this would not adversely affect their upbringing. Allah is All Knowing.

Question: Some schools in Western countries compel pupils to learn dancing. Such dancing is not accompanied by singing and it is not for pastime, rather a component of the curriculum. Is it *haraam* for the parents to permit their children to attend such classes?

Answer: Yes, if it contravenes religious upbringing, rather in general, as a matter of *ihtiyat*. That is, with the assumption that the student be adult. The exception to this is that the *mukallaf* has a valid reason permitting his learning, such as following in *taqleed* (The following, by a lay person, of a learned scholar "*mujtahid*" in matters of religious practice). Such a *mujtahid* may have ruled on the

permissibility of this act; there will, therefore, be no objection to him attending such a study.

Question: In government schools of the United Kingdom and may be some other countries also, students have to take part in dance classes to the sound of special musical tunes that synchronize the movements of the students while they are dancing. Is it permissible to attend such classes? Is it obligatory on the parents to prevent their children from attending such classes if the young boy or girl is inclined towards attending them?

Answer: It is not permitted, if it has any negative effect — which is quite common— on their religious upbringing. Rather, it is not permitted at all, as a matter of obligatory precaution.

Question: Is it permissible to learn dancing?

Answer: It is not allowed at all, as a matter of obligatory precaution.

GATHERINGS INVOLVING MUSIC AND DANCING

Question: It is permissible to visit places where *halāl* music is being played, and it is permissible to listen to it as long as it is *halāl*.

Answer: It is permissible to visit public places where music is being played, even if it is suitable for entertainment and amusement gatherings, provided that one does not intentionally listen to it: for example, passengers on course, waiting areas for visitors, public parks, restaurants and cafes, etc... —even if the music played there is suitable for entertainment and amusement gatherings— because there is no problem in hearing forbidden tunes without intending to listen to it.

Question: is it permissible to applaud?

Answer: It is permissible to applaud in a marriage ceremony, religious gatherings, seminars, and other functions. This is equally permissible for women and men.

Question: Is it permissible for women to sing in the wedding party in whatever tune, even if it is suitable for the gatherings of sinful people? Is it permissible for them to use musical instruments while singing that night? Is it permissible for them to sing, wearing henna [on the bride's hand and feet], or on the eve of the seventh night [after the marriage]? Or is the permission restricted to the marriage eve?

Answer: Based on compulsory precaution, they should refrain from it, even on the marriage eve, let alone other occasions. As for the issue of music, its rules have already been mentioned earlier.

Question: Is it permissible to organize dance parties where each husband dances only with his own wife to the sound of soothing musical tunes, wearing dresses that are not indecent?

Answer: It is not allowed.

'RELIGIOUS' SONGS

Question: Is it permissible to listen to religious songs in praise of Ahlul Bayt (as) that are accompanied with music?

Answer: Songs (al-ghinā') are harām absolutely. However, singing praise [of the Prophet or the Ahlul Bayt] that is sung with a good tune but is not in ghinā' form is without problem. As for the music, it would be allowed, if it is not suitable for entertainment and amusement gatherings

Question: Is it permissible to soothe the senses by listening to the reciter of the Qur'an who recites in a vibrant, quavering tone?

Answer: If the tune used in its recitation is not ghinā', there is no problem in listening to it.

Question: Some of the reciters, singers or chanters adopt the tunes of sinful people [i.e., harām entertainers] and then sing or chant with their tunes poems in praise of the Prophet (saw) and his family—the result is that the context is different from that of the sinful people, yet the tune is suitable to theirs. Is it forbidden to sing in this way? Is it forbidden to listen [in this case]?

Answer: Yes, based on obligatory precaution it is forbidden.

TRANSACTIONS RELATED TO MUSIC

Question: Musical instruments are of different kinds. Sometimes they are used in musical gatherings and sometimes for soothing the soul. Is it then permissible to buy these instruments, manufacture them, deal in them, or play them to soothe the soul or listen to the sounds when someone else is playing them?

Answer: It is not permissible to deal in the instruments of harām entertainment: neither selling nor buying, just as it is not permissible to manufacture them and accept remuneration for making them. "An instrument of harām entertainment" means that its physical shape—that gives its value and eventually the purpose for acquiring it—is not suitable except for use in harām entertainment.

Question: Is it permissible to manufacture, sell, or buy musical instruments that are made for children's play? And is it permissible for adults to use them?

Answer: If the music that is suitable for entertainment and amusement gatherings comes out of it, then it is neither permissible to deal in, nor are adults allowed to use them.

Question: Certain makes of watches have a device fitted in them whereby you can listen to musical phrases. Can one trade in such watches as well as listen to the type of music they play?

Answer: Yes, it is permissible.

ⁱ Sistani.org/english



HAJJ



JURISPRUDENCE

LEVEL 5

Hajj- Spiritual Journey

Hajj 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 Hajj and 'Umrah, for they discard poverty and are an atonement (Kaffarāh) of sins and make paradise obligatory (for the person who completes them)"

HAJJ 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)

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Understand that Hajj is Wājib for every Muslim (with conditions)
- Understand the consequences of delaying Hajj
- Be reminded that Hajj is made up of 2 major portions,
- Understand the spiritual significance of the rites of Hajj
- Understand briefly the major themes of Hajj and how they apply to our world

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.

CONSEQUENCES OF DELAYING *HAJJ*

Counting *Hajj* insignificant and postponing it when you are able to perform it is regarded as a **major sin** in Islam which has consequences in both worlds:

- Failure in worldly affairs which you have delayed your *Hajj* for. Imam al-Baqir (as) says that if a person postpones *Hajj* in order to acquire or complete some worldly affair he will see that other people have gone and come back from *Hajj* while neither his aim is achieved nor his work complete.
- Imam al-Ṣādiq (as): "When a person is capable of doing the pilgrimage but does not do it, he has indeed flouted (disregarded) a law from the laws of Islam."ⁱ
- Imam al-Ṣādiq (as): "One who keeps postponing *Hajj* until he dies, Allah will resurrect him on the Day of Judgment as a Jew or a Christian."ⁱⁱ

A TWO PART JOURNEY

The journey of *Hajj* is divided into two main sections:

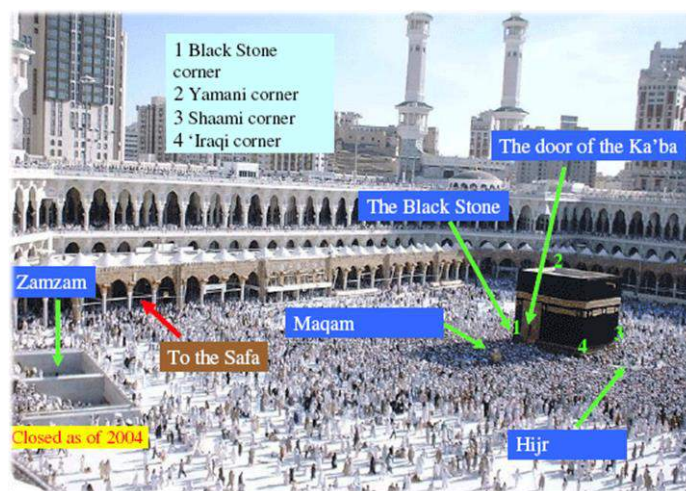
- 'Umrat al-Tamattu'
- *Hajj* al-Tamattu'

'UMRAH TAMATTU'

1. This starts when we wear *Iḥrām* (after performing a *mustaḥab* Ghusl) at one of the stations on the way to Mecca (*Miqāt*).
2. **Ṭawāf**: Upon entering *Masjidul Ḥarām* in Mecca, we walk around the Holy Ka'bah seven times, resembling angels circling the throne of Allah (SWT), filling the heart with the remembrance of Allah (SWT).
3. **Ṣalātul Ṭawāf**: Upon completion of *Ṭawāf*, 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.

4. **Sa'y**: After performing *Ṭawāf*, one is then expected to perform *sa'y* which is walking or running between the hills *Ṣafah* and *Marwah*.
5. **Taqṣīr**: 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 *Hajj*. This marks the end of the 'Umrah al-Tamattu'.



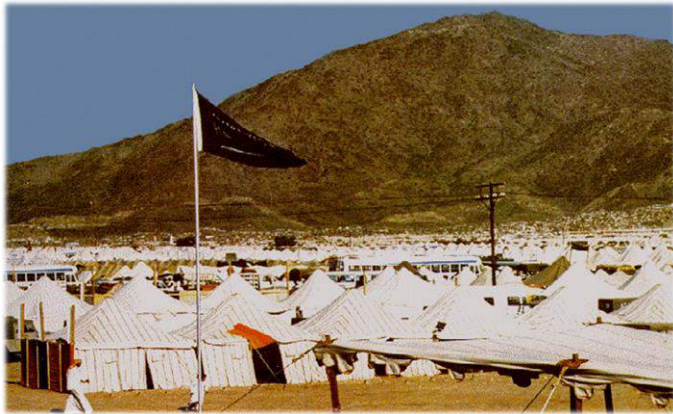
HAJJ AL-TAMATTU'

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 *Hajj* by re-wearing their *Iḥrām* and then heading to the desert of 'Arafah. On the 9th day of Dhul Ḥijjah, at noon, the *Hajj* begins.

STAYING AT 'ARAFAH

The first part of the *Hajj* process is to leave Mecca and stay in a plain desert outside Mecca called 'Arafah. 'Arafah literally means 'to know' or to gain insight and vision. A person must spend the afternoon of the 9th day of Dhul Ḥijjah in this place. There are no compulsory rituals while staying there, and other than tents and other humans that look exactly like you, there is nothing. It symbolically represents the whole world as the plain land which Adam (as) and Eve descended to, and returned to their Lord through supplications of forgiveness. This means that it is the best time to reflect and connect with Allah (SWT), ask his forgiveness, and let everything within

you that prevents you from Allah burn under the scorching sun of 'Arafah. Prophet Muḥammad (saw) said: "Ḥajj is 'Arafah", meaning the major spirituality of Ḥajj shall be achieved in 'Arafah. The du'ā of Imam Ḥusayn (a) in 'Arafah is recommended to be recited, and it is also the best time to ask Allah (SWT) to bless you with the visitation of the Imam of our time.



STAYING AT MUZDALIFAH (MASH'AR)

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, and prepare our souls for the symbolic battle against Satan. Within the darkness, no buildings, tents, or signs exist. You are left alone amidst millions that look exactly like you, and the great sea of Allah (SWT)'s servants have unified in preparation to battle evil.

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 7 pebbles at each of three pillars or walls which represent Satan. This is symbolic of Prophet Abraham's stoning of Satan on his way to sacrifice Prophet Ismā'il (as). It represents throwing away everything that prevents you from being obedient to Allah (SWT); your ego, arrogance, bad manners, ignorance, intolerance – whatever evil there is within you. You must purify yourself and defeat the Satan if you want to be able to sacrifice your Ismā'il purely for the sake of Allah (SWT).



THE SACRIFICE (AL-QURBAN)

Part of performing Ḥajj is to sacrifice an animal and feed its meat to the poor and needy. The sacrifice is symbolic of the sacrifice of Prophet Abraham (as) who had passed all the previous stages such that he was now prepared to even sacrifice his very son for the sake of Allah (SWT).

Now, you are about to act as Ibrāhim. He brought his son Ismā'il to sacrifice. Who is your Ismā'il or what is it?
- Your position? Your honour? Profession? Money? House? Farm? Car? Love? Family? Knowledge? Social class? Art? Dress? Name? Your life? Your youth? Your beauty? How do I know? But you know it yourself whoever and whatever, you should have brought it with you to sacrifice here. I cannot tell you which one, but I can give you some clues to help - whatever weakens your faith, whatever stops you from "going", whatever distracts you from accepting responsibilities, whatever causes you to be self-centred, whatever makes you unable to hear the message and confess the truth whatever forces you to "escape", whatever causes you to rationalize for the sake of convenience, whatever makes you blind and deaf ... You are in the position of Ibrāhim whose weakness was in his love for Ismā'il (his son). He was teased by Satan. Imagine yourself at the peak of honour, full of pride and there is only ONE THING for which you can give up everything and sacrifice any other love for its love. THAT IS YOUR Ismā'il! Your Ismā'il can be a person, an object, a rank, a position or even a "weakness"! But - for Ibrāhim it was his son!"ⁱⁱⁱ

Cutting the throat of the animal resembles cutting the throat of selfish desire in order to achieve piety. The Holy Qur'an describing this step says:

"It is not their meat nor their blood that reaches Allah; it is your piety that reaches Him." 22:37

SHAVING OF THE HEAD (TAQSĪR)

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.

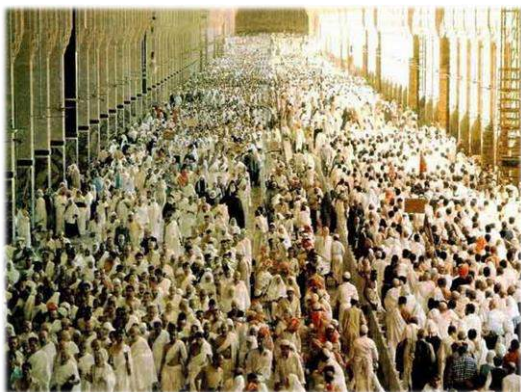
ṬAWĀF

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, Ṣafah 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 *Ḥajj* is complete.

THE RITES OF ḤAJJ

It is important throughout the rites of *Ḥajj* to remember that it is the act itself which is obligatory and which brings about the rewards. While it is useful to find a symbolic meaning for the action and apply it to our lives to increase our piety, it is important to remember that we cannot ever forego the act itself or diminish from the significance of the jurisprudential aspects of *Ḥajj*.

The following narration from Imam al-Ṣādiq (as) demonstrates this:

وَأَذْبَحْ حَنْجَرَتِي الْهُوَى وَ الطَّمَعِ عِنْدَ الدَّيْحَةِ

Note that the Imam says: “when you slaughter your Sacrifice, also slaughter your whim and greed.”^{iv}

There is a very important point in that. The Imam (as) while taking us to a higher level of *Ḥajj* and pointing at its spiritual and self-building significance does not ignore its jurisprudential procedure and hence he says do so and so **while you are slaughtering the animal**.

MAJOR THEMES OF ḤAJJ

Ḥajj has various applications to both our physical world as well as our personal spiritual consciousness.

- **Unity of Muslims:** During *Ḥajj*, it does not matter where you are from or what Islamic sect you belong to. You dress and act the same way as everyone else, and nothing identifies you apart from the sea of millions of Muslims around you. Everyone comes together from all parts of the world and stands united besides one another.
- **Learning about others:** At certain times during *Ḥajj* you have the opportunity to talk with others and learn about their background, culture, ideologies,

concerns and needs. The Imams of Ahlul Bayt used this opportunity to deliver sermons to Muslims from around the world, with Imam Ḥusayn (as) going to Mecca and talking with the people before leaving for Karbala.

- **Humility to Allah (SWT):** Being prepared to put your worldly affairs aside and take upon yourself all the difficulties of Ḥajj, including the travel, expenses, heat, flies, walking...etc. for the sake of Allah (SWT) humbles man in obedience. Being amidst a crowd of millions of people who look exactly the same as you, where nothing distinguishes the rich from the poor, reminds us that we are all humans equal in our creation, and we are nothing before Allah (SWT).
- **Discipline & Spiritual Upliftment:** Ḥajj disciplines us against our very souls, teaching us to fight our desires, to sacrifice our wants, to kill the whispers of Satan, and make our hearts circle only around the remembrance of Allah (SWT) – as this is the key to achieving tranquillity upon the land which man has descended to:

“Those who believe and whose hearts are set at rest by the remembrance of Allah; Verily in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest.” 13:28

Ḥajj is the training camp in which one detaches from all worldly desires and abstains from all bodily pleasures, elevating themselves to the realm of spirituality and light. Ḥajj therefore is a rebirth for the pilgrims to start a new and different life based on piety. Thus, Imam al-Ṣādiq (a.s) said:

“(The one who completes) Ḥajj... will exit from his sins like the day that his mother gave birth to him.”^v

Review Questions

Q1. Discuss the spiritual significance of the sacrifice and what you would be prepared to sacrifice.

Q2. Discuss the worldly benefits of Ḥajj for the global Muslim population.

Q3. Discuss the spiritual significance of circling the Ka’bah

ⁱ Tafsilu Wasa'il 'ilī 'sh-Shi'a, p. 28.

ⁱⁱ Shaykh as-Sadūq, Man La Yahdhuru 'l-Faqih, vol. 4, p. 266. Wasa'il ul-Shia Vol. 8 page 21

ⁱⁱⁱ “Ḥajj”, Dr. Shari'ati

^{iv} Misbahul Shari'a

^v Behaarul-Anwaar, vol.99 p.26



ENJOINING GOOD AND FORBIDDING EVIL

الامر بالمعروف والنهي عن المنكر

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 5

Lesson 1- Enjoining Good and Forbidding Evil

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 and some ways of carrying these obligations out in relation to more global issues.

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.

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)

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, but 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.

THE CONDITIONS

Mas’adah ibn Sadaqah narrates: “Imam al-Ṣādiq (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.
- 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.

- 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.
- 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.
- Give advice politely.
- Give advice privately.

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.

Lesson 2-Enjoining Good on a Global Scale

In the last lesson, we spoke about enjoining good and forbidding evil in different situations. In this lesson, we will focus on doing this in relation to issues that have a global impact.

ADVERTISING

These obligations can come about in many different contexts. 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 in relation to this may include the following:

- Protect and shield ourselves and our families/loved one and community from such advertising. We can do this by minimising television use. Even if there is a suitable TV program we want to watch, we can stream this and watch it on our own terms. We can also set up our internet use settings to protect ourselves and our families from inappropriate advertising.
- Positive advertising: while formal advertising is expensive, we can use social media tools to advertise for positive things. A positive example is the 'Women in Solidarity with Hijabs' (WISH) campaign initiated by one of our community

members in Australia. This was highly successful in raising awareness of Hijab in the community.

'POLITICS'

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 fester conflict between them.

We also see politics affect our communities at a local level in Western countries. For example, changes to data security laws, 'terrorism' laws and discrimination laws may unfairly target or affect Muslim.

Our duties in relation to this may include

- Following the news and being aware of what is happening around the world
- Lobbying our local and national governments by sending letters to MPs, attending peaceful protests and making the issues known to our community
- Supporting or participating in social media and mainstream media campaigns which work to denounce oppression. A great example is the 'Boycotts, Divestments and Sanctions' campaign which is working to reduce the interaction of the wider world with the illegitimate regime in Occupied Palestine. Another example is the 'Islamophobia Register Australia' which aims to highlight instances of discrimination against Muslims in Australia.

EDUCATION

It is difficult for people to follow the truth if they do not know it. Therefore, education is an essential part of enjoining good. This may include:

- Community education on Islam: setting up after-hours Islamic schools for children and classes for adults is a great way of bringing the community together while teaching important Islamic values

and beliefs. The aim for all our communities should be to eventually have full-time Islamic schools with a holistic Islam-oriented educational model.

- Individual education of the wider community: this is done simply by talking about contemporary issues with our non-Muslim workmates, colleagues, friends, sports teammates etc...This can have a great impact on the way they view Islam and Muslims.
- Mass education of the wider community: a good example of this is the 'Who is Hussain' campaign, which aims to educate the wider Muslim and non-Muslim community about the great personality of our third Imam, the Great Martyr of Islam.

CLASS ACTIVITY

Research some social media or mass media campaigns that have had a positive impact. What elements do you think made them successful? Are there any negative aspects to these campaigns?

Do you have any ideas for future campaigns?

Review Questions

Q1. Enjoining good and forbidding evil are:

- Recommended acts
- Individual Obligations
- Alternative Obligations

Q2. Enjoining good and forbidding evil are:

- Only obligatory on an individual level
- Are obligatory on all levels
- Are only obligatory on a community level

Q3. The conditions of these two obligations include:

- Sufficient knowledge of the rules in the situation
- The probability that the person being advised will take some heed
- The person giving advice must be a scholar or a leader

Q4. When giving advice to one who has is doing something wrong, we should:

- Do it publicly
- Do it privately
- Be harsh so the person understands

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 5

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

In these lessons, we will be discussing issues related to work and business in Islam.

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. This point is 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.

Further to this, Imam 'Ali (as) says:

“Attend business, because will make you needless of what is in people's hands.”

Islam recommends that we make a decent living. This means we should not become greedy in seeking wealth, and to not become workaholics. It also means we should not cheat, bribe or do things like lie to receive welfare payments illegitimately. 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. Here, we will discuss the main types of these business. Included in this lesson are some jurisprudential questions and answers which are included to further elucidate the points in the lessons. These are quoted directly from the website of Ayatollah Sistāni.

INTOXICATING DRINKS

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.

Question: Is it permissible to work in a restaurant where intoxicating drinks are served, if the worker does not himself serve them; nevertheless, sometimes he would be washing the cutlery [in which the drinks were served]?

Answer: If washing the cutlery used for the intoxicating drinks is considered as a first step in drinking the liquor and serving it to the customers, it is forbidden.

A Muslim is not allowed to serve intoxicating drinks to anyone at all, even to those who believe it is lawful to them. He is not [even] allowed to wash the dishes or give them to others, if that washing and giving is part of the drinking of intoxicants. A Muslim is not allowed to hire himself out for selling or serving intoxicating drinks or for washing the dishes for that purpose, just as it is not allowed for him to take the wages for this work, as it is unlawful. As for the “extreme need” justification used by some people for this kind of work, it is an unacceptable justification.

Question: Is it permissible to invest in companies who deal in part, in intoxicating drinks without the possibility of separating one’s investment from that of the others in that line of production?

Answer: It is not permissible to participate or deal in the production of intoxicating drinks

Question: A Muslim calligrapher is approached for preparing a billboard promoting intoxicating drinks, or for an all-night dance party, or for a restaurant that serves pork. Is it permissible for him to accept these jobs?

Answer: It is not permissible because it involves advertising indecent acts and promoting immorality.

Question: During some nights the clubs are filled with their non-Muslim customers who usually get drunk, and come out looking for restaurants to eat their meal. Is it permissible for a Muslim to work in such restaurants to serve permissible food to drunkards and sober customers alike? Is it a sin, if that permissible food helps in decreasing the effect of intoxication or other similar effect?

Answer: On its merits, there is no problem in this.

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). He can however serve or prepare these things (except pig products)
- If the *mītah* is not najis (for example non-ḥalāl seafood such as calamari) then we can sell it only to those who deem it ḥalāl

Question: Can a Muslim serve (not sell) non-halal meat to non-Muslims?

Answer: A Muslim is allowed to serve meat of an animal that was not slaughtered according to Islamic laws to those who consider it lawful like Christians, Jews, and others. Similarly, it is permissible for him to work in preparing and cooking that meat. The money that he receives in return for that work can be legitimized by the rule of *tanāzul* (withdrawing your exclusive right from that meat). It is not permissible for a Muslim to sell pork

to those who believe it is lawful for them among the Christians and others. Based on obligatory precaution, one should not even serve that meat to them.

Question: It is permissible to sell wild non-halal animals?

Answer: It is permissible to sell wild animals whose meat is forbidden like tiger, hyena, fox, elephant, lion, bear, and other similar animals like cat and whale if there is any legitimate benefit which makes them valuable in the market (even if in view of only some experts of that field). Non-hunting dogs and pigs are exempt from this rule.

PIG PRODUCTS

- It is *ḥarām* to eat products derived from pigs. 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”

Question: Is it permissible for a Muslim to sell pork to those who believe it is permissible for them like the Ahlul Kitāb?

Answer: It is not permissible to deal in pork at all.

Question: Is it permissible to work at a store that sells pork in the sense that the Muslim supervisor asks one of his employees to give pork to the customer?

Answer: It is not permissible to sell pork, even to those who consider it lawful, be it directly or through an intermediary. As for handling pork for those who consider it lawful, there is problem in it; however, based on obligatory precaution, one should refrain from it.

Question: A printer in the West prints the menus of restaurants. Such menus include pork. Is this allowed? Is he allowed to print the advertisements for pubs and establishments that provide forbidden entertainment knowing well that his business will be affected, if he does not print these kinds of materials?

Answer: It is not permissible for him to do that even if it affects his business.

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).

- All forms of betting are impermissible, this includes betting on sporting matches, online poker, poker machines, TAB, and so on.
- Furthermore, 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.

Question: Can a Muslim buy lottery tickets?

Answer: It is not permissible for a Muslim to buy tickets of chance (including lottery), if he buys them with the intention of luckily winning the prize. It is permissible for him to buy the lottery tickets if he buys it with the intention of participating in a charitable cause that is accepted Islamically like building hospitals, orphanages, etc., but not with the intention of winning the prize. However, this hypothetical situation is extremely difficult to occur in non-Muslim countries that consider certain activities that are forbidden in Islam to be of a charitable nature according to their own understanding. In both the cases [of “a” and “b” if a Muslim wins the lottery], it is permissible to receive the prize from a non-Muslim [person or company].

Question: Is it allowed for a mature and responsible Muslim to encourage a child to buy a lottery ticket and then ask him to present it to himself as a gift? Is it permissible for him to ask an Ahlul Kitāb person to buy the ticket [for him] with the intention of winning the prize?

Answer: The prohibition is not lifted by any of those [loop holes] because the rule of causing or delegating [the act of buying the lottery ticket] is like doing it directly.

Question: Is it permissible to buy, say, honey, which has on it a lottery ticket with the intention of winning the probable prize at the time of buying?

Answer: It is permissible, if the entire price is for the honey and not for the probable prize.

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.

IMPERMISSIBLE ENTERTAINMENT

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.

Question: Can a Muslim work in a place of entertainment?

Answer: It is not permissible to work in places of entertainment and other similar places of debauchery if that work would cause one to drift towards unlawful acts.

Question: An electrical engineer in a European country is sometimes called to install or repair public address systems; at times those places are establishments for illicit entertainment. Is it permissible for him to engage in this work in such places with the knowledge that if he

declines the customer, it will hurt his business, in that customers will eventually leave him?

Answer: It is permissible.

Question: A printer in the West prints the menus of restaurants. Such menus include pork. Is this allowed? Is he allowed to print the advertisements for pubs and establishments that provide forbidden entertainment knowing well that his business will be affected, if he does not print these kinds of materials?

Answer: It is not permissible for him to do that even if it affects his business.

IMMORAL PRODUCTS

Islam prohibits dealing in immoral products such as pornographic material and similar products.

Question: Is it permissible to work as salesman or cashier in shops that sell pornographic magazines? Is it permissible to deal in these kinds of magazines? Is it permissible to print them?

Answer: None of these [activities] is permissible because they aim at promoting forbidden acts and propagating immorality.

Question: A person knows for sure that one day he will see a ḥarām scene on television or video. Is it then permissible to buy it?

Answer: The reason compels him not to buy.

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”

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.

Question: Can a Muslim buy products from a country that is war with Muslims or Islam?

Answer: It is not permissible for a Muslim to buy products of the countries that are in a state of war with Islam and Muslims, for example, Israel.

Question: Is it permissible to buy goods from companies that allocate part of their profits to supporting Israel?

Answer: We do not allow that.

Question: A Muslim who is committed to promote his religion is compelled to work in a government department in the West; this may lead to committing certain forbidden acts. He does this with the hope that he will have in future a greater influence in that department. In this way he serves his religion and considers this service more important than committing the forbidden acts. Is this permissible for him?

Answer: It is not permissible to commit a forbidden act just for future [positive] expectations.

Review Questions

1- A Muslim is:

- Is allowed to sell al-mītah to non-Muslims
- Is allowed to sell only al-mītah which is ṭāhir and only to non-Muslims
- Is allowed to sell any meat to anyone

2- A Muslim

- Is not allowed to gamble but can engage in gambling-related businesses
- Is not allowed to gamble or engage in gambling-related businesses
- 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.

Imam al-Ṣādiq (as) says in an authentic narration:

“the one who cheats us is not one of us”.

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.”

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.

Question: A Muslim works in a non-Muslim country, in a private office, or in a government office, or on contract for a specific project where he is paid by the hour. Is it permissible for him to waste some hours or work negligently or intentionally delay the job? Does he deserve the full wages?

Answer: This is not allowed; and if one does it, he is not entitled to full wages

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, unless one has no choice at all. 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*. 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.”

LAW AND JUDGMENT

It is not permissible to judge, or to seek judgment based on non-Islamic laws.

Question: Is it permissible for a holder of a law degree to become a lawyer in a non-Muslim country upholding the laws of that country, and taking cases of non-Muslims since his purpose is to attract cases irrespective of their nature?

Answer: If it does not involve violation of a right or lying or other forbidden acts, there is no problem in it.

Question: Is it permissible for a holder of a law degree to become a judge in non-Muslim countries in which he acts according to their laws?

Answer: It is not permissible to administer judgement for those who are not qualified, and [it is not permissible to judge] based on non-Islamic laws.

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.

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.

QUESTIONS RELATED TO USURY AND INTEREST

In this section, we will discuss some questions and answers related to work and investment. This material is directly quoted from the website of Ayatollah Sistani.

Question: Can a Muslim deposit money into, or take a loan from a bank which charges interest?

Answer: It is permissible to deposit [money] in non-Muslim (private or state-owned) banks. If a Muslim intends to get a loan from such banks, it is necessary that

he should do so with the intention that it is a transaction without return, even if he knows that he will end up paying the capital as well as the interest. And he should not do so with the intention of getting the loan with the condition of [paying] interest.

Question: In the West, it is possible for a person to open a variety of current accounts with high or low interest rates equally without any difficulty in both the cases. Is it permissible to open accounts with high interest rate with the understanding that the person will not demand the interest, if the bank denies it to him? If it is not permissible, is there a solution that would allow them to open such an account knowing well that they, in their heart, are seeking the best interest?

Answer: They are allowed to open the account in the bank and it is [also] permissible for them to deposit in it with the condition of earning the interest, if the bank is financed by non-Muslim governments or people.

Question: Banks in the West give loans —known as mortgage— to those who do not have enough money to buy houses; this is to be paid back in [weekly or monthly] instalments with a high rate of interest. Is a Muslim allowed to use this facility? If it is not permissible, is there a solution in your view for someone who claims that he needs the mortgage to buy his own residential house and does not possess enough money to pay for it?

Answer: It is permissible to take the money from the bank that is financed by non-Muslim government or private funds but not with the intention of loan. The knowledge that the bank will sooner or later force him to pay the capital as well as the interest does not affect [the lawfulness of] his taking the money.

MISCELLANEOUS QUESTIONS

Question: Some Muslims deal in the manuscripts of the Holy Qur'ān which they import from Muslim countries. Is this permissible? If the obstacle in selling is the law that forbids selling the Qur'ān to non-Muslims, is it possible to overlook this condition so that the deal may be legitimate? If it is permissible, how do we bypass this condition?

Answer: We do not allow this since it is detrimental to the [intellectual and cultural] heritage of the Muslims and their resources.

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

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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 5

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.

THE RULES OF JIHAD

- The foremost rule of Jihad in Islam is that it should be with the intention of ‘for the sake of Allah’, and hence it is often referred to as a ‘holy war’. This condition on the one hand dismisses any fights for worldly or personal gains, and sets many moral rules on the other.
- Initiating Jihad is not permissible in the four holy months (*ash-hurul ḥurum*), which are Rajab, Dhil, Qi’da, Dhil Hijja, Muḥarram
- Just as Jihad is obligatory in a substitutive sense (*wājib kifāi*) in relation to one’s self, it is also obligatory on one’s wealth. Thus if one has the ability to resist the enemy of Islam with both his physical self, as well as his wealth, then both types of struggle are obligatory. If he is only able

to do one of the two, then that one becomes obligatory.

- It is impermissible to flee from warfare, unless it is a strategic withdrawal.
- It is recommended to patrol the borders of Muslim lands. If those Muslim lands are being threatened by enemies, then this becomes an obligation.
- Related to the rules of Jihad is the following rule; if one fears that he is not able to practice the obligation of Islam in the land in which they live, then it is obligatory on them to migrate from that land, if they have the ability to do so

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)

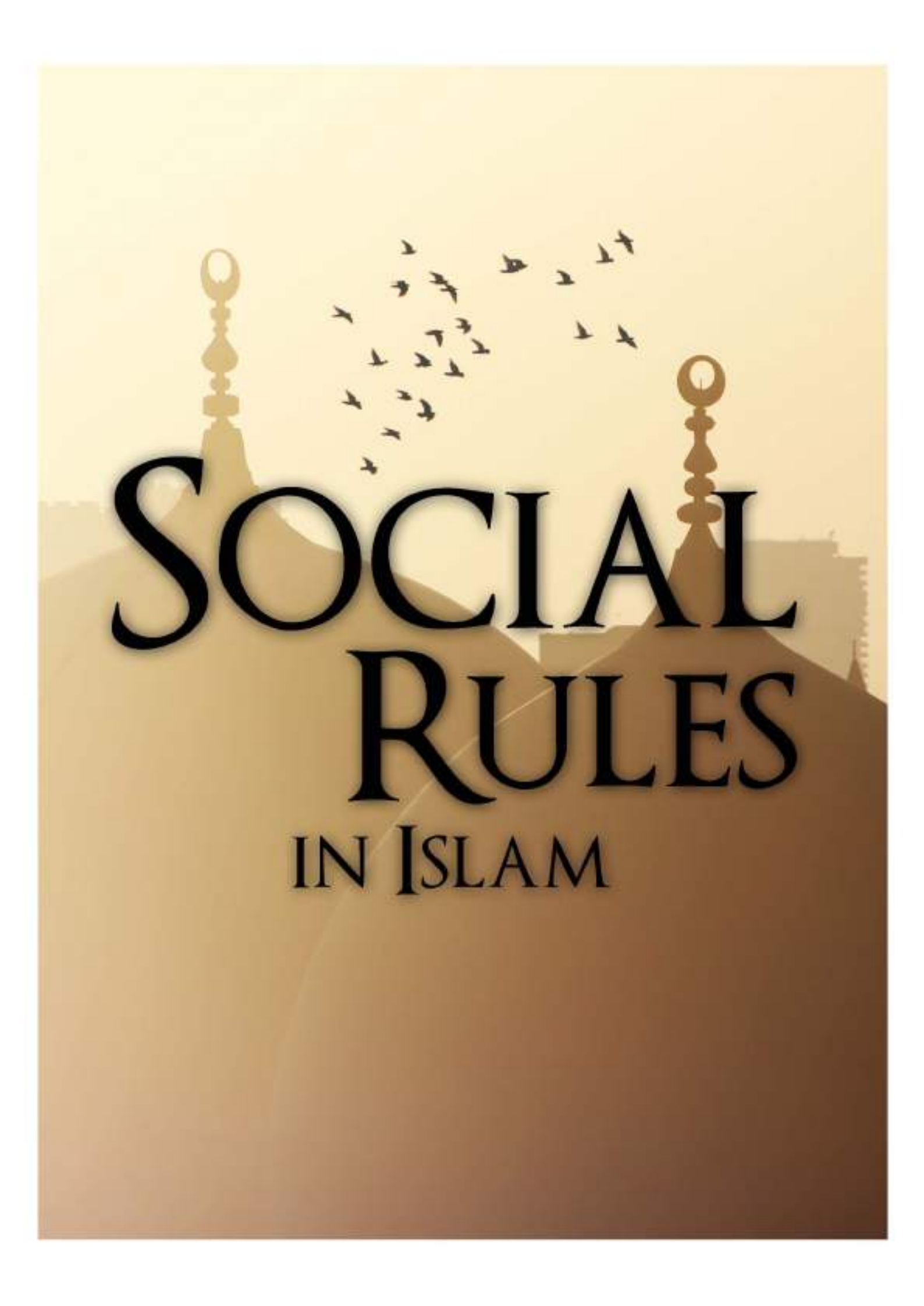
Many groups or individuals claim to be practising Jihad when in fact they are committing murder and grossly violating the laws of Allah (SWT). These include:

- 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 individuals who are ignorantly inspired or influenced by these groups are going down a misguided and dangerous path.

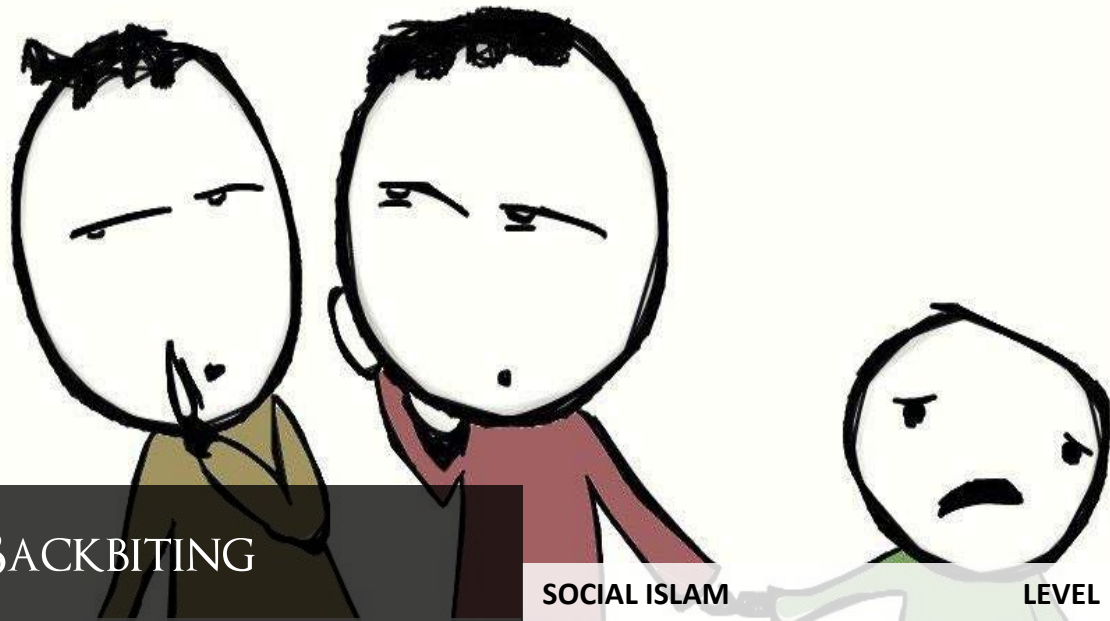
FALSE APPLICATIONS OF JIHAD

ⁱ Nahjul Balagha, Sermon 206



SOCIAL RULES

IN ISLAM



BACKBITING

SOCIAL ISLAM

LEVEL 5

الغيبة

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Be reminded of what it means to backbite/gossip and be able to distinguish it from slander
- Understand the motivations for backbiting and slander and how to avoid them
- Know the social and emotional effects of backbiting and slander
- Understand that backbiting is forbidden in Islam
- Understand the exceptions to the rules about backbiting
- Know how to seek forgiveness for backbiting

Backbiting

We have learnt in the past that backbiting (Ghībah) is regarded as a major sin in Islam, and that the reality of backbiting which will be shown to us in the hereafter is illustrated by the following āyah:

“...nor let some of you backbite others. Does one of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother?...”

Holy Qur'an 49:12

Revealing a bad quality of a believer which is in reality found to be true is called Ghībah (backbiting). However, accusing someone of something in their absence which is untrue is called Tohmah (slander). In English, we often describe these both with the term 'gossip'.

These evil acts can be performed in a number of ways:

1. In our face to face conversations or gatherings.
2. Over the phone when speaking to others.
3. Through online communications such as chatting (iMessage, Whatsapp, Viber etc.) or sharing posts (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram etc.). Insulting others publicly or highlighting their sins and mistakes whether true or not come under this category.
4. Listening to someone else backbiting without taking actions to stop or discourage is also not permitted.

The Holy Prophet (saw) has said:

“The one who listens to Ghībah is one of those who perform Ghībah”ⁱ

WHAT ARE THE MOTIVATIONS?

There are various reasons as to why one might backbite or slander others. We must understand these motivations and identify them if they exist within ourselves and then remove them. Backbiting is mainly due to the evil traits of jealousy, pride and hatred, and might occur because one wants to:

- Damage other people's reputation in order to make themselves look better.
- Gain revenge on a person that they have a grudge or grievance against.
- Entertain those around them by mocking someone who is absent.
- Pass the time by having something to talk about.

EFFECTS OF BACKBITING

The following two quotes from Prophet Muḥammad (saw) exemplify the effect of backbiting on a believer:

“Allah will not keep a person who reveals the fault of a Mu'min, along with him in Paradise, and if he accuses him of faults the Mu'min does not have, the pure relationship of their faith will be destroyed and the back biter will forever dwell in Hell, which is a dreadful place.”ⁱⁱ

“Ghība affects the religion of a person faster than leprosy spreads in human body.”ⁱⁱⁱ

As stated in these narrations, backbiting destroys the faith of a believer and cuts the beautiful relationship that they have with Allah (SWT).

There is also a deep and disturbing social effect of backbiting. Backbiting destroys trust within a community and takes away the reputation of members. It creates enmity and division in friendships, partnerships and even families and marriages. One of the traits of Allah (SWT) is that he is The Concealer and we must aspire to be like Him and cover up the faults of others rather than revealing them. It is by concealing the shortcomings of others that we can give them a chance to grow and protect their dignity.

Imam al-Ṣādiq (as) says,

“Ghība is exposing that aspect of your brother which Allah had concealed.”^{iv}

FORBIDDEN IN ISLAM

In the Holy Quran, Allah (SWT) says:

“Wayl (Hell) is for every Slanderer, defamer,”
Holy Quran 104: 1

From all that we have learnt so far, it is clear that backbiting and slander are both among the major sins and severe punishments have been promised for them. This is because they spoil the character and name of people and cause others to think badly about them, all this while they are not even given the chance to be there to defend themselves.



Backbiting & slander are therefore regarded as betrayal and must be removed from our communities if we are to be able to trust each other and unite with one another. The first step of this process is that we take action ourselves, and block those around us from this evil by:

1. Telling them that we do not want to listen to this
2. Leaving that gathering or conversation, unless we really cannot
3. Defending the person who is being criticised

SLANDER

As we have learnt, slander is accusing others in their absence of what is not true, and circulating myths about them. Allah (SWT) in Surat al-Nūr describes the punishment of those who perform this act:

“Surely those who love that slander should be spread concerning those who believe, theirs will be a painful punishment in the world and the Hereafter. Allah knows, and you know not.”
Holy Quran 24:19

This surah goes on to warn that the punishment for slander is especially severe if a person accuses another of immoral sexual acts, because such accusations are especially hurtful and damaging.

WHEN IS BACKBITING PERMITTED?

There are some circumstances when mentioning a person's sin in their absence is not considered Ghībah:

- 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”^v

- When an oppressed person complains about the oppressor and mentions his acts of injustice, it is not Ghībah
- When one discusses the defects of a patient with their doctor in order to help treat the patient.
- When a person enquires about another person whom they are interested to marry, one should let the person making the enquiry know of any necessary issues that may affect the future marriage.
- ^{vi}When a person narrates false narrations and gives false testimonies or brings new innovations into religion. Ghībah of such a person is allowed to ensure that people are not misled by his falsehood.

SEEKING FORGIVENESS

In order to repent from this sin, we must:

1. Regret the act.
2. Seek forgiveness from Allah (SWT).
3. Have the intention of never repeating the act.
4. 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 them directly, but we must make sure we seek Allah’s forgiveness and try to stop the things we said from spreading.
5. We must make up for the ill which we have said by speaking well about the person to others.

Review Questions

Q1. Ghībah means to:

- a. Tell a lie about someone behind their back
- b. Tell a good thing about someone behind their back.
- c. Tell a true defect or sin of someone behind their back.

Q2. Slander is defined as:

- a. Falsely accusing someone of something in their absence.
- b. Accusing someone of something which is true in their absence.
- c. Speaking well of someone in their absence.

Q3. Which of the following should one NOT do when seeking forgiveness for backbiting?

- a. Regret the act and never intend to do it again.
- b. Try to restore the person’s reputation by speaking well about them in their absence and retracting their ill words.
- c. Repeat the backbiting after 40 days.

ⁱ Makasibul Muharima

ⁱⁱ Makasibul Muharima

ⁱⁱⁱ al-Kāfi Vol. 2 page 357

^{iv} Makasib, al-Kāfi Vol. 2 page 358

^v Makasib Muhrima page 27, Vol. 4

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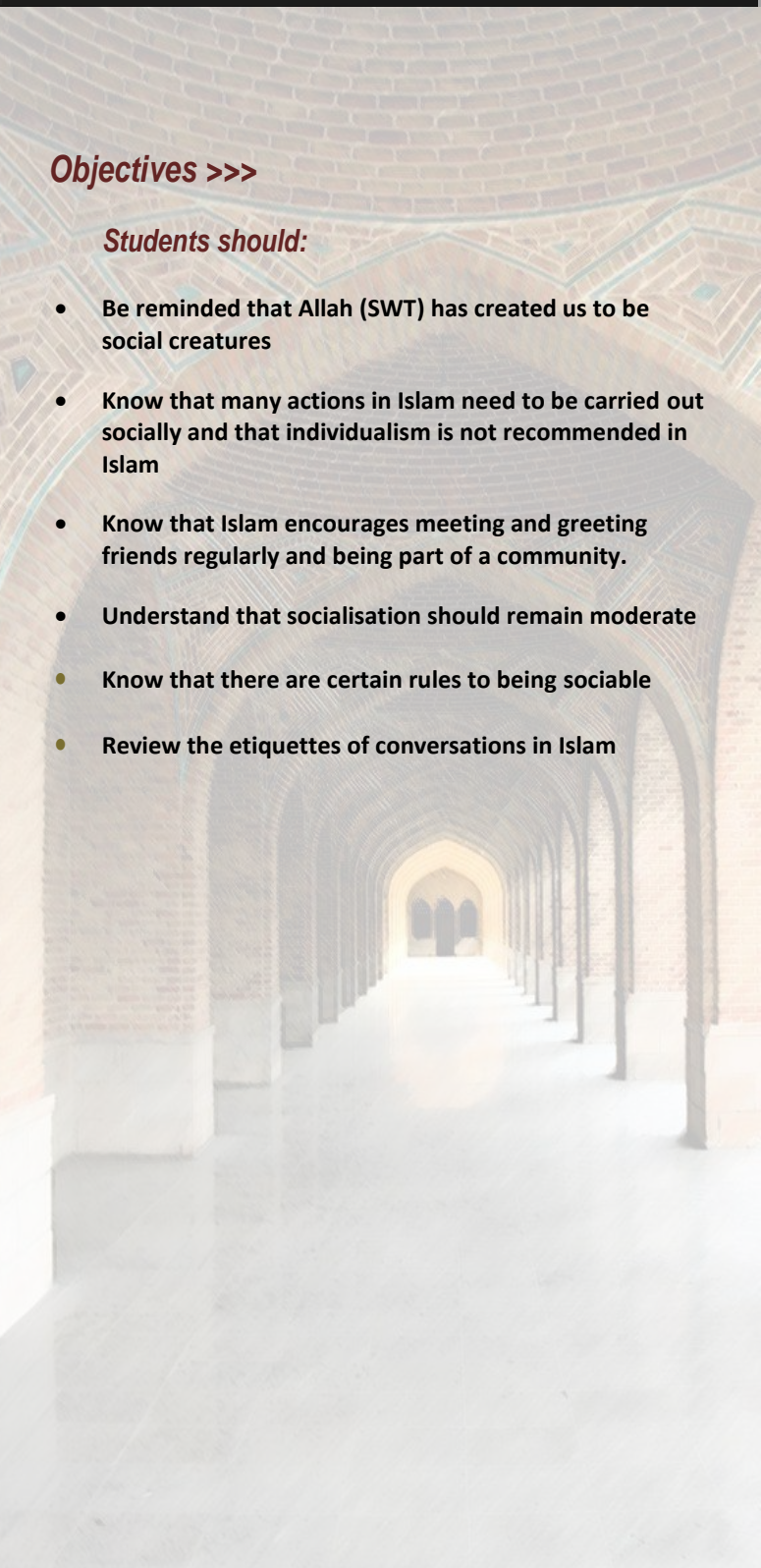
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BEING SOCIABLE

SOCIAL RULES

LEVEL 5



Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Be reminded that Allah (SWT) has created us to be social creatures
- Know that many actions in Islam need to be carried out socially and that individualism is not recommended in Islam
- Know that Islam encourages meeting and greeting friends regularly and being part of a community.
- Understand that socialisation should remain moderate
- Know that there are certain rules to being sociable
- Review the etiquettes of conversations in Islam

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-Şādiq (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

WHO SHOULD WE SOCIALISE WITH?

Whilst being social is highly encouraged, Islam does not advise us to socialise with just anybody. It advises us to carefully select who we should befriend. We should only socialise with those people who will help us to get closer to Allah (SWT) and we must avoid the company of those who are ill-mannered and careless about their duties toward Allah (SWT).

Imam Ali (AS) said, 'Beware of befriending corrupt people, immoral people, and those who openly commit acts of disobedience to Allah.'ⁱⁱⁱ

HOW MUCH SHOULD WE SOCIALISE?

Depending on whom we usually hang around with, the time we spend with people should vary. If the people around us always make us feel very spiritual and close to Allah (SWT), and we feel that we learn a lot from them, then the time spent around such people should be increased. However, if our company is usually non-Muslims who of course don't care about Islam, then we need to limit our socialisation with them. This is because their behaviour and thinking can eventually have a negative effect on our behaviour without us realising.

ONLINE SOCIALISING

Another form of socialisation is on social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter. Again, the rules of socialisation on the internet are not different to those outside the internet. We must ensure that the people we befriend on these sites are people who are God-fearing i.e. good Muslims. If we find that a 'friend' on Facebook continuously uses vulgar language (swear words) or posts links to indecent video clips, we must immediately cut this e-relationship.

RULES OF SOCIALISING

Whether in person or on the internet, there are certain rules for socialising that Islam has laid down:

ALWAYS HAVE A SMILE

Even when we are in a lot of worry or trouble, keeping a cheerful face is very beneficial in maintaining a healthy social life. People like happy people and not those who are always angry and frowning.

RESPONSIBILITIES FIRST!

If our socialisation causes us to forgo or neglect important duties such as praying on time or obeying parents, or even for instance studying for a school test, then this kind of socialisation is negative. We must put our Islamic priorities first and then set aside the time for our friends and community.

ḤIJĀB

We must ensure that when we are talking to the opposite gender we must observe all forms of ḥijāb. For girls this includes covering their bodies with loose clothing, not talking with a soft voice and not perfuming themselves in a way that causes lust. For boys it is to lower their gaze and restrict the communication to what is necessary only.

NO ALCOHOL OR MUSIC

Any event that includes alcohol or ḥarām music must be avoided. On the internet, we also must avoid any conversation that supports the use of alcohol and the selling/ listening of ḥarām music.

NO RACISM

We should always treat people fairly irrespective of where they come from. Our socialisations should not encourage racism or nationalism of any sort.

ISLAMIC CONVERSATIONS

Another important aspect of socialising is of course conversation. Let us review some of the etiquettes of Islamic conversation that we have learnt in the past.

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.*”

Review Questions

Q1. ‘Human beings are social beings’. What does this mean?

- a. Allah (SWT) has created us in a way that we need to be around people
- b. Human beings must socialise for a healthy lifestyle
- c. Both a and b

Q2. Why does Islam encourage socialisation?

- a. Because it is part of man’s inner nature to do so
- b. Because it breaks the selfish nature and develops concern for others
- c. None of the above
- d. Both of the above

ⁱ Ibid No. 8760

ⁱⁱ Holy Qur’an (3:103)

ⁱⁱⁱ [Ibid. no. 2601]

^{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



NEIGHBOURS AND GUESTS

الاحسان بالجار

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

SOCIAL ISLAM

LEVEL 5

Neighbours and Guests

Islam encourages us to have guests and to socialise with other believers and Muslims by inviting them to our homes. In fact, there are great rewards for hosting and visiting other believers. Islam also emphasises the importance of being good to our neighbours. We will quickly review what we have learnt about neighbours in the past, and then discuss issues related to hosting and guests.

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.

In fact, 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”ⁱ

DOING GOOD TOWARD THEM

In addition to avoiding harming our neighbours, we should always perform acts of kindness toward them.

IMPORTANCE OF HOSTING AND VISITING

Imam ‘Ali (as) used to say that if he was deprived of guests, then he was deprived of God’s mercy. He did not like it when he had had no guests for one week. The Prophet (saw) used to say:

“a house that guests do not enter, the angels do not enter”

Islam also encourages us to accept others’ invitations. In fact, we should accept invitations unless we have a good Islamic reason for not accepting them: Imam al-Ṣādiq (as) says:

“One of the rights of a believer over another is to accept his invitation”

In fact, the Prophet (saw) says that one should accept an invitation within 10 kilometres of his own home.

Another issue mentioned in Islamic narrations is that the guest is the one who is doing the host a greater favour. One of the companions of Imam al-Ṣādiq (as) was telling the Imam (as) that he always made sure he would have guests for each of his meals. The Imam (as) told him that their favour on him was greater than his favour on them. The man was surprised, saying that it is the host who feeds and serves the guests, so why should they have a greater favour on him? The Imam (as) answered:

“When they enter into the house, they come with great blessings and provision from Allah the Exalted, and when they leave, they leave with forgiveness from Allah for you.”

MODERATION

Although there are great rewards in hosting and visiting other believers, however, this should be done in moderation. The first important point to note is that we should not forego other important tasks simply to have gatherings. In addition to this, it is important to note the following etiquettes in order to maintain moderation.

THE HOSTS

- One should not be overly formal. The worst friend is the one with whom one is overly formal.
- Although it is good to be generous to guests, one should not over-extend themselves and their family

when preparing for the guest (e.g. should not borrow/overspend etc...)

- One should not adversely affect one’s family (e.g. making wife cook many meals every day or making one’s family go hungry for the sake of guests)

Imam ‘Ali (as) was asked by a person: “if I invite you to my house, will you accept my invitation?” The Imam (as) said he would accept the invitation on three conditions: “Do not bring anything from outside the house (because people used to keep their supplies for a year in their house, so the Imam means do not overspend or go out of your way too much), do not give me the share of your family, and do not trouble your family”

- One should not allow their guests to do any work while they are guests. Imam al-Ṣādiq (as) would not even allow his guest to help him light a fire saying:

“we are not a family that puts their guests to work.”

- In another example, Imam ‘Ali (as) would even bring the jug to the guest to wash his hand. He would get his son Imam al-Ḥasan (as) to do the same for the guest’s son, so that the level of honour for the man and his son is appropriate. This also shows that one should serve guests appropriately (e.g. men serving men, women serving women etc...)

BE SELECTIVE

Islam encourages us to be selective about whom we invite to our homes, and whose invitations we accept.

The best gatherings for both the host and the guest are those that are undertaken for the sake of God.

- One should be careful not to invite guests who will commit sins.
- One should be careful not to hold gatherings where time is wasted and nothing beneficial is achieved.
- One should also avoid guests who are used to an extravagant lifestyle and who will not appreciate what is served to them and waste it. Imam ‘Ali (as) censured his representative in Basra for accepting an invitation for a very lavish banquet where no poor people were in attendance.

- Finally, one should avoid inviting guests for purposes like business and improving one's social standing. This is not considered part of hospitality.

THE GUESTS

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَدْخُلُوا بُيُوتَ النَّبِيِّ إِلَّا أَنْ

يُؤْذَنَ لَكُمْ إِلَى طَعَامٍ غَيْرٍ نَاظِرِينَ إِنَاهُ

وَلَكِنْ إِذَا دُعِيتُمْ فَادْخُلُوا فَإِذَا طَعِمْتُمْ فَانْتَشِرُوا وَلَا

مُسْتَأْنَسِينَ لِحَدِيثٍ إِنَّ ذَلِكُمْ كَانَ يُؤْذِي النَّبِيَّ فَيَسْتَحْيِي

مِنْكُمْ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَسْتَحْيِي مِنَ الْحَقِّ

“O you who believe! Enter not the Prophet's houses, except when leave is given to you for a meal, (and then) not (so early as) to wait for its preparation. But when you are invited, enter, and when you have taken your meal, disperse, without sitting for a talk. Verily, such (behaviour) annoys the Prophet, and he is shy of (asking) you (to go), but Allāh is not shy of (telling you) the truth. (33:53)

- The Prophet had invited some of his companions to his house for dinner. While most of them left shortly after eating, some remained in the house of the Prophet for a very long time, engaged in long

discussions and conversations. They inconvenienced the Prophet and his family very much. However, the Prophet (saw) was too shy to tell them to leave. Therefore, the above āyāt were revealed, instructing the believers to limit their social visits to reasonable lengths of time, and to not inconvenience their hosts. It is not appropriate for believers to spend hours socializing unproductively. We should learn the habit of not only setting a start time, but also an end time for our social gatherings, in order not to put undue pressure on ourselves and not let our time waste away.

Review Questions

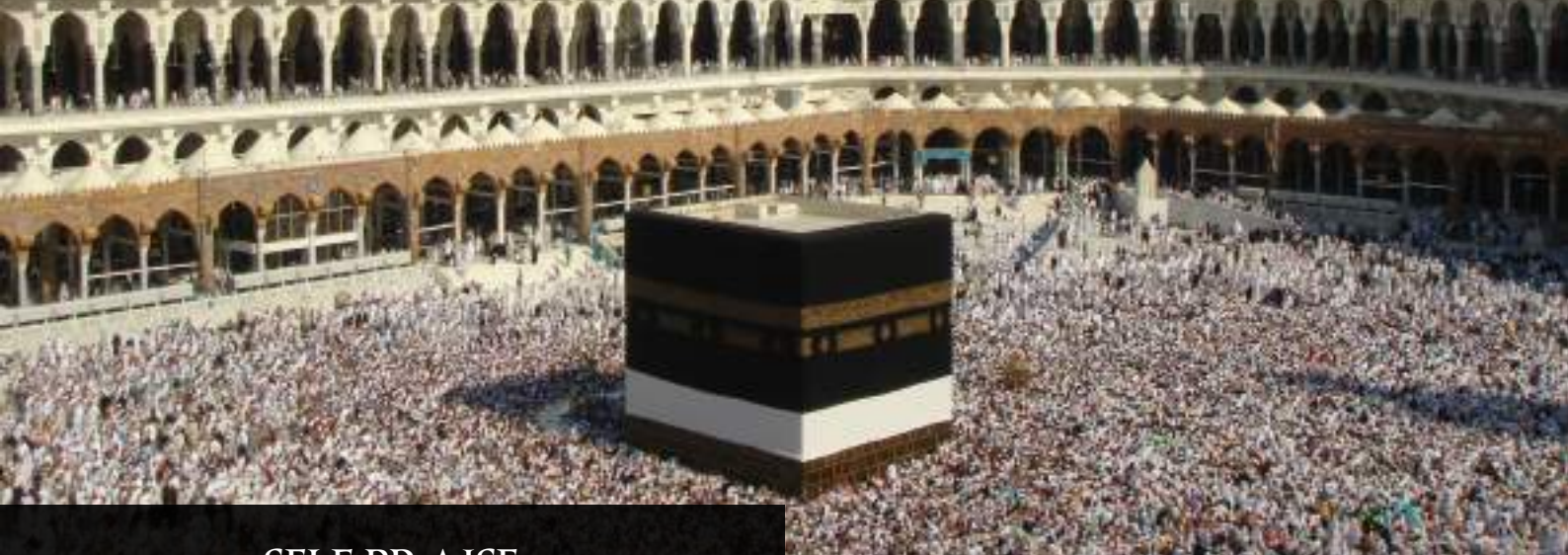
Q1. Islam encourages us:

- To never accept invitations, instead attending to more important things
- To accept all invitations as it is so rewarding
- To accept invitations in moderation

Q2. We should be:

- Generous to our guests, but in moderation
- Be stingy with guests and use the money for better causes
- Spend lavishly on our guests because of the reward of feeding a guest

ⁱ Wasaelu-Shia (12:125)



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 5

Self-Admiration

In the opinion of the scholars¹, 'Ujb or self-admiration is a state of the heart where a person magnifies his actions, is satisfied with them and feels superior over others on account of those actions. This sense of pride applies to both good and bad qualities and afflicts both the faithful and the faithless. Amongst the faithful, this inner-pride often extends to believing that a person is doing a favour onto Allah (SWT) and to His religion, instead of the other way around!

The signs of 'Ujb are often hidden and very subtle and therefore one has to be extremely critical with his self in order to uproot this vice.

In Imam Khomeini's book '40 Ḥadith', he divides 'Ujb (related to virtues and vices) into the following 3 degrees:

1. in faith and religious doctrines and whose opposite is 'Ujb in disbelief and polytheism
2. in good traits and qualities as opposed to 'Ujb in moral vices and ugly qualities
3. in pious deeds and good actions as opposed to 'Ujb in abominable deeds and repulsive acts

In this lesson we will focus only on the first and the most fatal degree of self-admiration.

'Ujb in regards to faith and religious teachings

The first stage which is the most dangerous kind of 'Ujb is a stage in which the faithful person believes that with whatever good he performs, he is doing a favour onto Allah. He believes that by praying and fasting in the long days of summer, paying 1/5th of his hard-earned savings and by offering a helping hand to others, he or she is actually doing a favour to the religion and to God. Although he may not show this feeling off openly, he thinks in this manner in his heart. In addition to the feeling of doing a favour upon Allah (SWT), the other symptoms are:

- If he hears a lecture describing the pious people, he believes that he is the best example of that description
- When faced with small hardships which greatly disturb his mental peace and his opinion of God, he describes his experience though the hardship hasn't affected him at all because of his high spiritual station. This is done in order to match his outer appearance with his mental image of himself.
- This individual also considers himself to be worthy of reward from God because he believes that the high quality of his actions must necessitate a reward.
- He considers his own faith and belief to be superior to others and the quality of his actions to be far greater than others.
- He magnifies his own good deeds yet undermines the actions of others
- He is very sensitive and critical of the mistakes of others yet overlooks his own faults
- Loves to be praised in public yet will never speak positively about others, particularly those who are involved in the same activities as him, for example one scholar's view of another.
- Begins to expect others to treat him in accordance to the how highly he admires himself. So for example, when a scholar enters a room full of people, he'd expect the crowd to stand up for him as a gesture of acknowledging his greatness.

In this regard, Imam al-Ṣādiq (as) says: "Satan says to his troops, 'If I can gain mastery over three things in man, I will no longer care how much good he does for it will not be accepted from him: If he overrates his good deeds, forgets his sins and is overcome by self-admiration' "ii

THE WICKED ROLE OF SATAN

The tricks of Satan are not haphazard; instead they are very strategic and well-calculated. He will never try to convince a pious person to commit murder or adultery because these sins are obviously abhorrent. Instead, he asks us to focus carefully on all *mustahab* (recommended) actions and other acts of piety and then turns our attention to the sins of other believing people. Then he will whisper into our ears that we are definitely, based on logical principles, justified in considering ourselves superior to others.

Gradually, as we obey these Satanic whispers, this vice becomes even more settled in our hearts until eventually our fate becomes exactly like his fate- being expelled from God's kingdom of mercy and residing in hell forever!

HOW TO AVOID THIS SIN

1) Carefully study the dangers of this vice:

It is very effective to learn and remind ourselves of the dangers of 'Ujb both in this and the next world. This can be done by repeatedly reading specific āyāt and aḥādīth in this regard. For example, the Holy Qur'an refers to those who were proud of their supposedly pious deeds in this world as the biggest losers on the Day of Judgment.

"Say: Shall We tell you the greatest losers in respect of (their) deeds? : Those whose efforts have been wasted in this life while they thought that they were acquiring good by their deeds!" (18:103-104)

In a Ḥadīth from Imam 'Ali (as), he says:

"The consequence of self-admiration (in this world) is hatred (of other people towards you)"iii

2) Always give the benefit of doubt to others and be critical on yourself

Often due to self-love, we tend to be very critical of the mistakes of others and are quick to justify our own bad action. This mode of thinking is very dangerous and buries us even more deeply in this the vice of self-admiration.

We should therefore force ourselves to look for excuses for the mistakes of other i.e. give them the benefit of doubt and be more critical towards our own selves. This way we will never feel superior over others.

Whenever one feels a sense of superiority over another on account of seeing another person sinning, he should speak to his own self in the following way:

"Perhaps it is possible that this person who is guilty of committing that sin may possess other good qualities unknown to me or might have performed certain good deeds for which God may bless him with His grace and mercy. Perhaps it is also possible that Allah (SWT) afflicted this person with the sin so that he does not develop any self-admiration ('Ujb), which is even worse than the sin"

3) Belittle your own action and magnify the goodness of others

The Holy Prophet (saw) said, describing the intelligent person:

"He regards the little good that others do as being much and regards the abundance of good that he himself does as being little"

4) Believe that goodness comes to us on account of the grace of the Almighty only

Whichever spiritual or material blessing we enjoy is a gift from Allah (SWT) – a gift that has been given to us solely as a result of the grace and mercy of God and not because of the quality of our actions. Remember! All our righteous deeds are imperfect in their essence and do not warrant any divine reward whatsoever. Who can dare claim to say that his good actions were better than the prayers of Imam al-Sajjād (as)?! Yet, the Imam says in the supplication he taught to Abu Ḥamza al-Thumālī:

“I do not rely on my actions to gain your forgiveness,
but in Your Grace do I put my hopes”

5) Always pray to Allah for protection:

Imam al-Sajjād (as):

“Make me worship You and do not corrupt my worship
with self-admiration”^{iv}

ⁱ Imam Khomeini’s 40 Ahadith – Chapter on Ujb.

ⁱⁱ Al-Khisal p 112, no. 86

Homework:

1) Is it wrong to feel pleased with our good actions? Think about it and answer in class in the following week.

2) Spend some time during the week to go over the signs of self-admiration. Identify which areas you are most likely to be affected by this (for example in religious knowledge & religious actions, or your intelligence when compared to others). Decide how best you can solve this problem. Make sure to write down your thoughts and keep the document safely. Remember to review this in 4 weeks to see whether you are progressing, or getting worse.

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid No. 4606

^{iv} Dua Makarimul Akhlaq



COMMUNITY SERVICE

SOCIAL ISLAM

LEVEL 5

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Know the meaning of community service and the main categories of this
- Plan and carry out a viable and beneficial community service project as an individual, group or class

Lesson 1+ 2 : Community Service Practical

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.

Community service is very much encouraged in Islam. 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.”

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”

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 projectsⁱ

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.”

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.

Community Service Major Project

As part of this lesson, and as part of the completion of this curriculum, all students are encouraged and expected to undertake a community service project.

We will use this lesson and next lesson to plan a community service project without our community. These projects can be individual, group or class-based.

Your teacher will guide you through this process by considering the following advice.

Planning a community Project

Before starting any community project, three major aspects must be well planned:

1- Purpose, aim and vision

Every community project must be planned and have a clear vision and aim. A haphazard or inconsistent or vague aim usually results in disillusionment, failure and may in fact be detrimental to morale and enthusiasm. The following need to be considered

- What is the purpose (aim) in term of what do you want to achieve at the end
- Is the purpose specific
- Is it a long term or short term project
- Who is the target audience
- Is it necessary, will it make a difference, is anyone else doing it, can you assist those already doing it?
- Ensure that the vision and aim is not too big that it would be impossible to practicably be achieved (eg paint the WHOLE masjid) not too small to have any real impact (eg. Spend 1 hr a year painting the masjid)

2- Execution: Before (or during) one executes a community service project, there are several important things to consider, to plan and work out these include

- Have the dates and times for activities been checked and confirmed, have bookings been made and confirmed in time?
- Who will volunteer, are they competent, and are they trained?

- Has advice been sought from others who have either done this or a similar activity previously?
- Who will be the main supervisor/leader (you can only have one) of the project. Are they competent? (They have to be competent and responsible and have enthusiasm and belief in the vision and purpose- not just popular!) Without a competent leader a project should not be attempted.
- Have permissions been sought, whether from the Islamic centre, the parents, the teachers, other stake holders etc.
- How will it be financed? You need to spend money often for such projects
- Is the activity safe and legal?
- Is it manageable, practical and feasible? Has each minute of an event, for instance, been carefully thought out and managed?

3- Reflection and Evaluation – This is perhaps the most important part of any project, an opportunity to think about what went right and wrong and if the project is to be attempted again, whether the aims were met. Often this may mean an acknowledgement (in form of gift/kind message) to the volunteers, community leaders etc.

There are also a number of things that one should take into consideration for a successful community service project.

- 1- The leader and participants should be constantly reminded of the purpose, goals and vision so as not to divert from the goals
- 2- One has to be careful not to feel like one owns the project or the outcome. Community service is for Allah (SWT) and therefore is owned by the community
- 3- Accepting help from outside the core group is important as it may assist in bringing a project to completion quickly but management is important.
- 4- Making everyone feel important and useful is key as most workers are volunteers.
- 5- Don't expect reward or recognition. Only God (SWT) is the giver of recognition and reward.
- 6- Don't overly hype or advertise your activities as the charity that is done covertly is more liked by God (SWT) than that which is done for the public (show off).

- 7- Volunteers are not paid therefore depending on the priorities in their life, some may abandon the project. If good counsel and encouragement does not work, it is important to acknowledge their contribution, similarly, abandoning a project halfway for weak reasons is not appropriate.
 - 8- Working in the path of God can be difficult and often thankless, it is important to persevere and have patience. Quitting early and often is demoralising for the community, does not achieve the purpose and destroys the goals.
 - 9- Avoid long meetings. Having a clear concise agenda sent out to all participants and keeping to the important topics and issues can mean pleasant, productive and constructive meetings.
 - 10- Community service is often associated with criticism (cultural objections, moral objections, political objections etc.) it is important to take criticism constructively and diplomatically.
 - 11- Do not be disappointed with failure if everything was done right. Allah (SWT) rewards for intention first before actions and acknowledging that the true rewards are from Allah the Almighty, failure means one may need to try again and do better or try a different strategy or idea therefore the evaluation must be more thorough.
 - 12- Finally be ORGANISED! It will save time, effort and pain during any project.
- We will come back to this lesson at the end of the year to evaluate the projects that were undertaken.

¹ 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.



SOCIAL INDEPENDENCE

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Understand that Islam encourages us to be independent in our personal and social needs, where possible
- Discuss some examples of independence in personal and social needs
- Understand that a person who is independent and does not ask from others is liked by people, and a person who asks a lot is often not liked
- Understand that when it comes to Allah (SWT), we should ask Him for all our needs, big or small and that we get rewarded for just asking Him
- Understand that where it is necessary to seek help, we should do so
- Understand that when it comes to helping others, we should not wait to be asked

SOCIAL ISLAM

LEVEL 5

Self-Reliance and Independence

... وَشَاوِرْهُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ ۖ فَإِذَا عَزَمْتَ فَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَوَكِّلِينَ

"... And consult them in the affairs, and once you are resolved, put your trust in Allah. Indeed Allah loves those who trust in Him." (3: 159)

The reality that self-reliance and independence in relation to our own needs is well established as a source of positive pride, success and maturity. This sort of self-reliance is highly encouraged in Islam and is actually a sign of having greater trust and hope in Allah (SWT) – such that a self-reliant person is closer in his relationship to Allah (SWT) than a person who depends on others despite having the ability to secure his own needs.

RECONCILIATION BETWEEN RELIANCE ON ALLAH (SWT) AND SELF-RELIANCE

There are several examples of how the Imams of the Ahlul Bayt (as) have shown that self-reliance is not in contradiction to reliance on Allah (SWT) – if it is practiced within its limits. Have a look at this story.

Imam 'Ali (as) was once walking along the streets going about his own work and he happened to come across a group of people who did not seem to be engaged in work. Imam 'Ali (as) enquired further with them.

They responded: 'we are religious and we rely on Allah (SWT) for our sustenance. If it comes to us, we accept and are grateful. If it doesn't come to us, we bear hunger and hardship patiently'.

Upon hearing this Imam 'Ali (as) responded 'such is the nature of a dog. It eats when it finds food and remains hungry when it does not find anything to eat.' He then told them that he was the kind of person who is grateful when he has nothing, and gives away what he has when he does have it. A further point that can be taken from the Imam's advice is that we should not be idle and passive. We must be active and independent, but keep our trust in Allah.

Therefore, we must use the opportunities, blessings and will power that Allah (SWT) has given us to help ourselves improve both in this world and in the next world.

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.”

EXAMPLES OF SELF-RELIANCE

When considering needs, it is important to understand where and upon whom the responsibility lies to secure those needs. Of course because we are talking about our individual personal and social needs, it is obvious that the responsibility lies on that individual.

Examples of such needs include something as simple as getting a glass of water or the remote control of the TV that is lying on the coffee table to as complex and sophisticated as finding a job, working and earning a living to pay your bills and fulfil your other needs.

As students, you are at stage where your major responsibility is to get through school and complete your education. As such, all responsibilities within that lie with you.



Therefore, you cannot give your homework to a friend to do or pay someone over the internet to write your assignment. These are things you must do yourself and you must apply your personal effort to achieve them.

Social needs are again as simple as asking someone to get something that you can get yourself. Many situations at home involve such situations where we tend to ask someone else to do something for us though we can do it ourselves, like asking your mum to make you a snack while you're sitting on the computer or Play Station.

As you grow older, another example would be driving. Some people are older and have families but they have not learnt to move around or drive. They expect someone to take them out all the time even if it is to do their own work. This creates a lot of inconvenience on the other person who has to stop doing what they are doing so they can do what you need.

DISADVANTAGES OF RELYING ON OTHER PEOPLE ALL THE TIME

In previous lessons we have learnt the advantages of self-reliance which include a greater sense of responsibility and maturity, as well as more independence.

Let us look at the opposite of these and consider the effects of too much reliance on others:

1. **Ruins your reputation** – people consider you incompetent and tend to stay away from you because you are always asking them to do your things for you.
2. **Makes your life difficult** – this happens regularly because you have limited your ability but have not limited your desires. Therefore, when people you rely on cannot help you and you cannot help yourself, you end up living a life of misery.
3. **Causes inconvenience** to people who you depend on – this is usually the case, because the people you depend on have their own needs to fulfil. If they have to stop or go out of their way to get what you need, it creates disturbance and therefore also leads to them avoiding you.
4. **Makes you lazy and limits your intelligence and your skills.** If you do not attempt things yourself, you will not learn and your skills and knowledge will remain limited.

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 and might make big mistakes! We have to ensure to keep to the middle ground.

THE LIMITS OF SELF-RELIANCE

As we mentioned above, self-reliance does not oppose reliance on Allah (SWT). Therefore it is important to understand that asking Allah (SWT) is in fact an act of self-reliance and it means that we are depending on Allah (SWT) only to give us strength and *tawfiq* (success) in securing our needs. It has been narrated in several *hadith* that God loves it when his servant asks Him for his need, even though it may be as small as the strap for his slipper. Other *hadith* have shown that simply asking Allah (SWT) for a need results in reward – even if the need is not immediately fulfilled. The reward is just for the act of asking Allah (SWT)!

However, when we do not have the ability or knowledge to secure a certain need, we must not remain stubborn and become arrogant by not asking someone who can help us. For example, if you are struggling in a particular subject at school, it is necessary to approach a friend or a teacher who can assist us.

The important thing to remember is that we must perform our part of the responsibility independently in as much as we can. Considering the example above, if a teacher decides to put in some extra personal time to help the student improve in that subject and gives them extra lessons, the student must put in appropriate effort and attempt those lessons with extra effort.

HELPING OTHERS

Self-reliance creates in us the responsibility to help others who cannot help themselves. In the Qur'an, Allah (SWT) has mentioned several times to give *zakat*, to be charitable, to donate etc. The Imams of the Ahlul Bayt (as) have also encouraged and practiced this very often.

Allah (SWT) says in the Qur'an:

وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ...

"And maintain the prayer and give the *zakat*...(2:110)

There is an important note here to understand when it comes to the manner of giving or donating. The wording of 'give' in the Qur'an is used in such a sense that it means **'to give without being asked'** or to **'take the donation or money'** towards the recipient rather than the recipient coming to you.

This was displayed in the lives of all the Prophets and Imams (as). The common examples are those of Imam 'Ali (as) and Imam al-Sajjād (as) who used to go out in the night with sacks of food, money and other needs to distribute to the homeless, the sick and the poor. They would distribute in such a way, that they would not wake the recipient if they were sleeping or they would not even knock on the door.

Individual Challenge

For the next week keep a record of how many times you have asked someone to do something for you, even though you could have done it yourself. Examples could include: asking someone to fix you're a computer bug when you could have tried yourself, or asking someone to help you with a maths problem when you could have tried harder yourself, and so on...



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 help 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 5

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 always 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 a 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 (ḥusnul ḍānn) 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
- Understand some of the etiquettes of looking after the elderly

Community Care

In previous years, we have learnt some of etiquettes for dealing with members of our community who may be ill. In this lesson, we will review this briefly, before discussing another important issue: how to deal with elder members of our community.

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.

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?!'"ⁱ

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b) Forgiveness of sins.

Imam al-Şādiq (as) said: "Whoever visits a sick person, seventy thousand angels will escort him repenting for him until he returns to his house."ⁱⁱ

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."ⁱⁱⁱ

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?”^{iv}

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”^v

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”^{vi}

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

Q1. In regards to dealing with the elderly:

- Islam has not laid much emphasis on it
- Islam has laid as much emphasis on this as it has on individual acts of worship
- By providing financial assistance only we have fulfilled our duties.

ⁱ al-Tarhib wa al-Tarhib, v. 4, p. 317, no. 3

ⁱⁱ [al-Kafi, v. 3, p. 120, no. 2]

ⁱⁱⁱ Kanz al-`Ummal, no. 25143

^{iv} Holy Qur'an (36:68)

^v Holy Quran (17:23)

^{vi} Holy Quran (17:24)



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 5

Animal Rights

In this lesson, we will discuss some of the Islamic teachings related to animal rights.

ANIMALS IN THE HOLY QUR'AN

It is worth noting 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 curative function 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. 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.

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.

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 Wuḍū' or for the animal, we should do tayammum and give the water to the animal.
- 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.

MASS PRODUCTION OF MEAT

In today's world, where human populations are growing at a rapid rate, there is always a need for mass supplies of food products including meat. This has unfortunately led to cruel practices such as:

- Animal overcrowding
- Unsanitary and oppressive conditions for animals to live in
- Cruel slaughtering practices where animals may be subjected to unnecessary pain and suffering
- The use of antibiotics and other substances to increase the yield of meat from animals
- Genetic manipulation of animals to maximise output

There must be a reasonable balance between the needs of humans for basic food supplies, and the protection of animals from abuse and suffering. We should try to be moderate and responsible in our meat consumption in order to reduce the need for mass production of meat. However, we should not take the extreme option of being vegan, as this is not encouraged in Islam, but is rather discouraged. Moderation and being careful about waste and extravagance are Islamic principles which must be kept in mind when we approach issues like this.

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)

