



IMAMIA
SUNDAY
SCHOOL



SIRAAT

Name: _____

Class: _____

Teacher: _____

BOOK : 11

AGES: 15 Yrs

IMAMIA SUNDAY SCHOOL
Proposed School Calendar 2013-2014

WEEK	DATE	ISLAMIC DATE 1434/1435	COMMENTS	ISLAMIC EVENTS/NOTES
1	09/15/13	Dhu al Qa'dah 9		First Day of School/Orientation/25 Shawwaal Martyrdom of 6th Imam, Hazrat Imam Jaffer Sadiq (AS). 11 Dhu al qa'dah Birthday of 8th Imam, Hazrat Imam Reza a.s.
2	09/22/13	Dhu al Qa'dah 16		
3	09/29/13	Dhu al Qa'dah 22		25 Dhu al qa'dah Birthday of Hazrat Ibrahim (AS) and Hazrat Eesaa (AS)
4	10/06/13	Dhu al Qa'dah 30		1 Dhu al Hijjah Wedding of Imam Ali (AS) and Syedda Fatima Zehra (SA)
5	10/13/13	Dhu al Hijjah 7		9 Dhu al Hijjah Martyrdom of Hazrat Muslim ibne Aqeel (AS) / 10 Dhu al Hijjah Eid-ul-Adha
6	10/20/13	Dhu al Hijjah 14		15 Dhu al Hijjah Birthday of 10th Imam, Hazrat Imam Ali un Naqi a.s / 18 Dhu al Hijjah EID e Ghadeer
7	10/27/13	Dhu al Hijjah 21		24 Dhu al Hijjah Eid e Mubahila
8	11/03/13	Dhu al Hijjah 28		
9	11/10/13	Muharram 6		
10	11/17/13	Muharram 13		
11	11/24/13	Muharram 20		
12	12/01/13	Muharram 27	HOLIDAY	Thanksgiving Weekend/25 Muharram Martyrdom of 4th Imam, Hazrat Imam Zainul Abedin (AS).
13	12/08/13	Safar 4		7 Safar Birthday of 7th Imam Mossa Kazim (AS)
14	12/15/13	Safar 11		13 Safar Martyrdom: Bibi Sakina (SA) binte Hussain (AS)
15	12/22/13	Safar 18		Safar 20 - Arbaeen(40 th) of Shuhada of Kerbala
16	12/29/13	Safar 25		Safar 28-Martyrdom Prophet Muhammad SAW & 2nd Imam; Safar 29-Martyrdom 8th Imam Ali al Ridha AS
17	01/05/14	Rabi' al Awwal 3	MID TERM	4 Rabi' al Awwal -Wafat: Masooma-e-Qum (SA)
18	01/12/14	Rabi' al Awwal 10	MID TERM	9 Rabi' al Awwal -Eid e Zehra (S.A.)
19	01/19/14	Rabi' al Awwal 17		17 Rabi' al Awwal - Prophet Muhammad SAW & 6th Imam Jaffer as Sadiq AS / 18 Rabi' al Awwal - Birthday Syedda Umme Kulsoom bint Ali (AS)
20	01/26/14	Rabi' al Awwal 24	PARENTS DAY	Parents - Teachers Meeting
21	02/02/14	Rabi' at Thaani 1		
22	02/09/14	Rabi' at Thaani 8		10 Rabi' at Thaani - Birthday 11th Imam Hassan al Askari AS
23	02/16/14	Rabi' at Thaani 15	HOLIDAY	Presidents Day
24	02/23/14	Rabi' at Thaani 22		
25	03/02/14	Rabi' at Thaani 29		
26	03/09/14	Jamaada al Ula 7		5 Jamaada al Ula - Birthday Sayyida Zainab AS
27	03/16/14	Jamaada al Ula 14		13 Jamaada al Ula - Martyrdom Sayyida Fatima Zehar (S.A)
28	03/23/14	Jamaada al Ula 21		15 Jamaada al Ula - Birthday Hazrat Imam Zainul Abedin (AS).
29	03/30/14	Jamaada al Ula 28		
30	04/06/14	Jamaada al Thaani 5		3 Jamaada al Thaani - Martyrdom Sayyida Fatima Zehar (S.A)
31	04/13/14	Jamaada al Thaani 12		10 Jamaada al Thaani - Battle of Mu'ta & Maryrdom of Jaafar al Tayyar 8 AH
32	04/20/14	Jamaada al Thaani 19		20 Jamaada al Thaani - Birthday Sayyida Fatima Zehra S.A.
33	04/27/14	Jamaada al Thaani 26		26 Jamaada al Thaani - Martyrdom Imam Ali un Naqi (A.S.)
34	05/04/14	Rajab 4		1st Rajab - Birthday 5th Imam Ali un Naqi (A.S.)Mohammad Baqir (AS)
35	05/11/14	Rajab 11	FINALS	13th Rajab - Birthday 10th Imam Mohammad Taqi (A.S.)
36	05/18/14	Rajab 18	FINALS	
37	05/25/14	Rajab 25	HOLIDAY	Memorial Day Holiday
38	06/01/14	Shaban 2	RESULTS	RESULTS/GRADUATION PICNIC

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Introduction

The Book in your hands is part of a twelve-book series named “Sirāt Books”, produced by the ISSC West Madrasah (of Brampton, Canada) as part of its Religious Education (Diniyāt) programme.

Each book consists of 28 lessons: 7 each on Islamic Beliefs (Aqāid), Islamic Laws (Fiqh), Islamic History (Tārikh), and Islamic Ethics (Akhlāq). The first seven books are also supplemented by Workbooks from which teachers can assign exercises either in class or as homework.

The ISSC West Madrasah’s objectives in imparting Islamic education to students as well as their approach and strategy in the creation of these Textbooks, can be reviewed in the “White Paper on Teaching at the Madrasah” available at its website: <http://www.madrasah.ca/>

The Sirāt Textbooks and Workbooks are also accompanied by a Teacher’s DVD and a Quiz Book. The DVD contains media intended to serve as a teaching aid and the Quiz Book covers all Diniyāt key concepts in every Sirāt Textbook. This Quiz Book, it is hoped, will be a great resource for children at home as well as at inter-Madrasah quiz events.

The ISSC West Madrasah hopes to *inshā Allāh* continue developing and enriching the Sirāt Textbooks and their related resources on an annual or bi-annual basis.

Each Sirāt Textbook also has the syllabus and objectives for its own grade printed at the start. Topics that are highly recommended for students to demonstrate proficiency in before the end of the Madrasah year are prefixed with an asterisk (in the syllabus). The ISSC West Madrasah plans to use this as their criterion for promoting students to the next grade.

It is hoped that these Textbooks will *inshā Allāh* not only be of relevance to other Madāris, especially in the North American continent, but will also benefit parents living in places where there is no local Madrasah and they need to home-school their students in Islamic education.

Note: The ISSC West Madrasah’s Islamic education programme consists of two main streams: Qur’ān and Diniyāt. These Sirāt books are related to the Diniyāt stream only. For Qur’ān, please visit our website: <http://www.madrasah.ca/>

Was salām
Management, ISSC West Madrasah
Brampton, Ontario (Canada)

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- Br. Khalil Jaffer : For the creation of the ISSC West Madrasah’s Diniyat Syllabus and the production of all the initial Textbook and Workbook drafts and updates.
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DU`A BEFORE STARTING A LESSON

In Islam, learning and teaching, like other virtuous acts, are *'ibādāt* – acts of adoration and worship of Almighty Allāh (s.w.t). They have both physical and spiritual aspects. The physical is what we normally do while learning and teaching. The spiritual is when we invoke Allāh (s.w.t) to purify our souls and give us success in our endeavours. This we can do by performing *wudu* and reciting a supplication (*du'a*) before learning and/or teaching. The following is a *du'a* that can be recited before studying. It is given in the *Mafātih al-Jinān* of Shaykh `Abbās al-Qummi.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

(I begin) in the name of Allāh, the Beneficent, the Merciful

اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِ مُحَمَّدٍ

O Allāh, send your blessings on Muḥammad and his household

اللَّهُمَّ أَخْرِجْنِي مِنْ ظُلُمَاتِ الْوَهْمِ

O Allāh, remove me from the darkness of ignorance

وَ أَكْرَمْنِي بِنُورِ الْفَهْمِ

And favour me with the light of understanding

اللَّهُمَّ افْتَحْ عَلَيْنَا أَبْوَابَ رَحْمَتِكَ

O Allāh, open for us the doors of Your mercy

وَ أَنْشُرْ عَلَيْنَا خَزَائِنَ عُلُومِكَ

And unfold for us the treasures of Your knowledge

بِرَحْمَتِكَ يَا أَرْحَمَ الرَّاحِمِينَ

By Your mercy, O the most Merciful of the Merciful

اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِ مُحَمَّدٍ

O Allāh, send your blessings on Muḥammad and his household

Syllabus for Book 11

Note: The [●] symbol indicates topics the ISSC West Madrasah highly recommends a student to know (and where applicable demonstrate successfully) before he/she is promoted to study the next Book.

Lesson	Aqāid	Fiqh
1	NUBUWWAH - History of the Qur'ān - How the Qur'ān was compiled and Preserved - The Seven Reciters	Jabira wudu, ghusl and tayammum - How to Pray Salāh when Injured
2	NUBUWWAH - The History of Hadith - How Hadith was Compiled - the Prohibition of Recording Hadith - Types of Hadith - Shi'ah and Sunni Sources of Hadith	Tawalla & Tabarra - why they are part of Furu ad-Din and how to practice them
3	NUBUWWAH - The History of Hadith (cont'd)	Tijārah (Trade) in Islām - Halāl and Harām Occupations - Difference between gambling & investment - Interest / Usury - Misappropriating trust - theft - cheating others - dealing with stolen goods
4	IMĀMAH – Tawassul & Wasila – Tawassul in Qur'ān & Hadith - Common misconceptions	Tijārah (Trade) in Islām (cont'd)
5	Tawassul in Islām (cont'd)	Dhibh - conditions by which meat becomes halāl - fishing - types of fish – halāl and harām birds
6	MA'AD –Tajassum al-A'māl	Burial Rites - Rules concerning the Dying and the Dead - helping a dying person (sakarāt) [●] - accompanying a funeral procession (tashy'i al-janāza) - burial (dafan) & other funeral rites [●]
7	MA'AD –Tajassum al-A'māl (cont'd)	Burial Rites (cont'd): visiting the cemetery (Ziyārat al-qubur) - praying for the dead after burial (salāt al-wahsha or salāt hadiya al-mayyit)

Lesson	Tārikh	Akhlāq
1	Legacy of the Early Caliphs - After Rasulullāh (s) - Saqifa - Abu Bakr	Sin and the causes of hard-heartedness - forbiddance of propagating one's sins by word or action - definition of "fāsiq" - Jihād al-Akbar
2	Legacy of the Early Caliphs (cont'd) - Events in the Caliphate of Abu Bakr - Fadak - Malik b. Nuwaira - Fijat Salimi	Integrity and Honesty (Amānah) vs. Khiyānah - Love of leadership (Hubb ar-Riyāsah)
3	Legacy of the Early Caliphs (cont'd) - Umar b. al-Khattāb - The Shura	TRUST in Allāh (tawakkul) – Not begging from others - not hoarding - patience vs. haste - istiḳāma
4	Legacy of the Early Caliphs (cont'd) - Uthmān b. Affān	Seeking knowledge - merits & obstacles - rights of teachers - etiquette of teachers and students with each other - Innovations (bid'ah) - importance of Islāmic culture – separating religion from culture, superstition and rituals
5	The Khilāfah of Imām Ali ('a) - The Battles of Jamal, Siffin and Nahrawān - Kharijites and Mu'āwiya - Martyrdom of Imām Ali ('a) and the Rise of the Umayyad Dynasty	WORLDLINESS – far-fetched hopes and desires – moderation vs. extravagance - forgetting death – zuhd vs. materialism – being enslaved by physical desires - lack of sinfulness - hereafter as ultimate goal in life
6	The Khilāfah of Imām Ali ('a) (cont'd)	Rremembrance of Allāh (dhikr) vs. Heedlessness (ghaflah)
7	AIMMAH - IMAM AL-MAHDI ('atfs) – His longevity, Reasons for the Ghayba and Its Benefits - Signs of his Return - History of Early Shi'ah Ulama after the Ghayba	Modesty and bashfulness (hayā) vs. Permissiveness

Objectives for Book 11

At the end of the year the student should:

For Aqāid

- (a) be well aware of the history of the Qur'ān and how it was compiled; and the history of hadith as well as the major sources of hadith for the Shi'ah and Sunni Muslims
- (b) understand the concept of tawassul and wasila and its validity in Islām
- (c) understand the concept of tajassum al-'Amāl

For Fiqh

- (a) know how to perform wudu, ghusl and/or tayammum when injured and using casts & bandages.
- (b) know how to pray if injured and cannot bend or sit on the ground or stand freely or when lying in bed due to hospitalization or injury
- (c) know the importance of tawalla and tabarra and how to practice them
- (d) know the occupations and career choices that are harām in Islām, the basic rules when one finds lost property, the prohibition to gamble or play the lottery - the sin of dealing with stolen goods and the basic rules regarding interest as usury and the use of credit cards
- (e) know the conditions required for meat to be considered halāl - types of fish and birds that are halāl and basic rules regarding catching fish
- (f) know what to do when one is faced with death or one is with another Muslim who is dying, the importance of participating in the funeral of a Muslim, what rites are performed for the deceased, and the reward of visiting the dead
- (g) know the thawāb of remembering the dead through salāt al-wahsha and salāt hadiya al-mayyit
- (h) have reviewed issues related to chastity and morality as well as Islām's views on sexual matters (that were taught in Book 8 and Book 9)

For Tārikh

- (a) be aware of the history of Islām immediately after the demise of Rasulullāh (s) including the major events in the lives of the first three caliphs and how they were elected
- (b) be aware of the major events during the khilāfah of Imām Ali ('a) such as the battles of Jamal, Siffin and Nahrawan up to his martyrdom
- (c) know the brief history of Imām al-Hujjah, al-Mahdi ('atfs)
- (d) understand why the Imām ('atfs) can live for so long, the benefits of the ghayba and the major signs of his return

For Akhlāq

- (a) know the importance of Jihād al-Akbar and preventing 'hard-heartedness'
- (b) understand the various forms of vices that lead to sin such as the love of leadership, fame, power, wealth, comfort and pleasure

- (c) understand the importance of trusting Allāh and neither hoarding nor begging from others - the importance of remaining steadfast and the vice of haste
- (d) know the importance of seeking knowledge in Islām and the respect for a teacher
- (e) know the vices of worldliness and materialism
- (f) know the importance of remembering Allāh frequently (*dhikr*) and the dangers of heedlessness (*ghaflah*)
- (g) understand the importance of integrity and honesty and living by them in Islām
- (h) understand the importance of bashfulness and modesty in Islām and knows the sin of permissiveness

Aqáid **(Beliefs)**

Lesson 1

History of the Qur'ān

In Book 7 we learnt about the differences between the Qur'ān, Hadith and Hadith al-Qudsi. We also looked at how the Qur'ān remains a living miracle to this day, one of its miracles being its preservation from *tahrif* (change).

Also, in Book 9 we studied some of the terminologies related to the Qur'ān such as Makki and Madani, Muhkam and Mutashābih, Nāsikh and Mansukh, Asbāb an-Nuzul, and so on.

In this lesson and the next two, we wish to look at the **history** of the Qur'ān and hadith. By this we mean *how and when* the Qur'ān was compiled and preserved, *how and when* hadith was recorded, the major sources of hadith for Muslims and other matters related to these subjects.

The Writing & Collection of the Qur'ān

The Qur'ān was committed to writing from the very beginning. There are numerous āyāt in the Qur'ān that refer to the Qur'ān as “al-Kitāb” (the Book). Al-Kitāb literally means ‘that which is written down’.

In fact there was a time when Rasullāh (s) would repeat everything that Jibrāil (‘a) was reciting to him, even as the verses were being revealed and Allāh (s.w.t.) assured him not to worry about preserving the Qur'ān:

﴿لَا تُحْرِكْ بِهِ لِسَانَكَ لِتَعْجَلَ بِهِ. إِنَّ عَلَيْنَا جَمْعَهُ وَقُرْآنَهُ﴾

Do not move your tongue with it to hasten it. Indeed it is up to Us to put it together and to recite it.

- Surah al-Qiyāmah, 75:16-17

In other words, Allāh (s.w.t.) Himself guarantees that the Qur'ān would be collected and recited. In other āyah, Allāh (s.w.t.) says:

﴿لَا يَأْتِيهِ الْبَاطِلُ مِنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَلَا مِنْ خَلْفِهِ تَنْزِيلٌ مِنْ حَكِيمٍ حَمِيدٍ﴾

Falsehood cannot approach it (the Qur'ān), from before it nor from behind it, a [gradually] sent down [revelation] from One All-wise, All-Praiseworthy.

- Surah al-Fussilat, 41:42

The Scribes of the Qur'ān

Some of the companions (ashāb) of Rasulullāh (s) were specially entrusted with the task of writing down the suwar and āyāt revealed to Rasulullāh (s). These included:

1. Imām Ali b. Abi Tālib ('a)
2. Ubay b. Ka'b
3. Abd Allāh b. Rawāha
4. Khālid b. Sa'id
5. In the later period Zayd b. Thābit and others.

As soon as āyāt were revealed, Rasulullāh (s) dictated them to anyone of the scribes mentioned above.

Placement of the Ayāt

At the time of dictation, Rasulullāh (s) himself would fix the position of the āyāt and tell the scribes where to place them, in which surah, and so on. The reason the placement was not in the order of revelation is because verses would be revealed depending on the relevance of the occasion but Rasulullāh (s) was aware of the original composition of the Qur'ān in the Preserved Tablet (*al-Lawh al-Mahfudh*) where the Qur'ān first existed before revelation. So Rasulullāh (s) would re-create the surahs accordingly. That is why in some cases, there are Madani āyāt in Makki surahs and vice versa.

Memorization of the Qur'ān

Rasulullāh (s) used to stress the importance and reward of memorizing the Qur'ān. Hundreds of people did that even during the time of Rasulullāh (s).

The proof of this is that in the Battle of Yamāma, that was fought just six months after the wafāt of Rasulullāh (s), 500 (or according to some 700) huffādh (those who had memorized the Qur'ān) were killed in one day alone. This is not counting those who were killed later or survived the battle.

Rasulullāh (s) selected four individuals to teach the Qur'ān, who in turn then taught others to recite and memorize it. These four were:

1. Abd Allāh b. Mas'ud
2. Salim Mawla Abi Hudhaifa
3. Ma'ādh b. Jabal
4. Ubay b. Ka'b

Completion of Collection

Many orientalist like to say that the Qur'ān was never compiled until during the time of the 3rd Caliph Uthmān b. Affān and it was collected based on what people could remember and what they were able to find from parts of suwar written on palm leaves, animal skins and so on.

This however is not true. The Qur'ān was compiled in full before the passing away of Rasulullāh (s). Rasulullāh (s) himself said during his Farewell Hajj (Hijjat al-Widā) Sermon that the angel Jibrāil ('a) used to recite the entire Qur'ān to him every month of Ramadan but that year he had recited it twice and therefore he felt he was going to leave the world that year.

We also know that several companions of Rasulullāh (s) had a complete written Qur'ān in their possession before the wafāt of Rasulullāh (s) and these included Imām Ali ('a), Sa'd b. Ubayd b. Nu'mān, Abu Darda, Ma'ādh b. Jabal, Ubay b. Ka'b, Abd Allāh b. Mas'ud, Zayd b. Thābit and others.

There are also ahādith from Rasulullāh (s) that allude to the existence of the written Qur'ān. For example, the Hadith ath-Thaqalayn that says, '*I am leaving behind two important matters: the Book of Allāh and my family....*' Obviously Rasulullāh (s) would not say this if there was no Qur'ān accessible to people and if he did that then someone would have also asked, 'where is the Book of Allāh?'

Four days before Rasulullāh (s) passed away, he asked for a paper and pen to write a will for the Muslims so that they would never go astray. But Umar b. al-Khattāb shouted, 'The man (i.e. the Prophet) is delirious. The Book of Allāh is enough for us!' This also proves that the Qur'ān was known to exist and to be accessible to the Muslims at the time.

What did happen during the time of Uthmān however is that the arrangement of the suwar was altered and the order of the suwar today is not the same as the order in which Imām Ali ('a) had arranged his copy of the Qur'ān based on the instructions of Rasulullāh (s).

The Qur'ān is Complete

We know that the Qur'ān is complete and nothing is missing in it for various reasons. Firstly because Allāh Himself guarantees to preserve the Qur'ān:

﴿إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ﴾

Indeed We have sent down the Reminder (i.e. the Qur'ān), and indeed We will preserve it.

- Surah al-Hijr, 15:9

Secondly, there are many ahādith from Rasullāh (s) and the Aimmah (‘a) on the merits of reciting each surah. If the suwar were incomplete, then the Ma’sumeen (‘a) could not have said, ‘whoever recites this surah will be rewarded....’ and so on.

Thirdly, in our salāh, we are required to recite a complete surah after Surah al-Hamd. If some of the suwar were incomplete than the Aimmah (‘a) would have forbidden us to recite those suwar in our salāh.

There are also ahādith that forbid us to recite the ‘whole Qur’ān’ in one night or in less than three days. The word ‘whole Qur’ān’ or ‘complete Qur’ān’ would not occur in such ahādith if it wasn’t complete.

Lastly, in many museums today (such as the Qur’ān museum in Mashhad in the Haram of Imām Ali ar-Rida (‘a)) there are copies of the Qur’ān that were handwritten by the Imāms. These include the Qur’ān handwritten by Imām Ali (‘a), Imām Zayn al-Abidin (‘a), Imām Ja’far as-Sādiq (‘a) and Imām Ali ar-Rida (‘a). None of these copies of Qur’ān have any verses in them that are missing in our copies of the Qur’ān. This also proves that the Qur’ān we have is the complete Qur’ān even if it is not arranged exactly the way Imām Ali (‘a) had arranged it in accordance to the wishes of Rasullāh (s).

The Shi’ah do not have their ‘own Qur’ān’

There is a common misconception amongst Muslims that the Shi’ah have a different Qur’ān or that the Shi’ah believe the present Qur’ān is incomplete or that Imām Ali (‘a) had written a more complete Qur’ān. These are all false notions.

What the Shi’ah believe is that Imām Ali (‘a) had written some notes on the margins of his copy of the Qur’ān to explain the verses according to the teachings of Rasullāh (s). But these notes were not a part of the Qur’ān’s original revelation.

And in fact others also wrote notes in their copy of the Qur’ān. For example, consider the following verse of Qur’ān that was revealed at Ghadir Khum commanding Rasullāh (s) to announce the wilāyah of Imām Ali (‘a) as his successor:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الرَّسُولُ بَلِّغْ مَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ...﴾

O Apostle! Communicate that which has been sent down to you from your Lord...

- Surah al-Māidah, 5:67

In the Qur’ān copy of Abd Allāh b. Mas’ud, it is written as follows:¹

*O Apostle! Communicate that which has been sent down to you from your Lord **that Ali is the leader of the faithful (mu’mineen)**...*

¹ Sayyid Akhtar Rizvi, *Qur’ān and Hadith*, p. 37

This doesn't mean that Ibn Mas'ud's Qur'ān was 'different'. He just wrote it like this to clarify and preserve why the verse had been revealed and for whom.

The Seven Readings

The Sunni Muslims believe that the Qur'ān was revealed in seven different 'readings' (qira'āt). These variations are mostly changes in how a word is read in a verse and they make a singular to be plural or an active word to be passive or a word in the second person to be in the third person. The Sunni Muslims further believe that Rasulullāh (s) approved all these seven 'recitations' with their variations in the Qur'ān but that the Caliph Uthmān put a stop to it out of fear of confusing new Muslims and therefore only one remained as the official recitation. Today all copies of the Qur'ān are based on what is called "the recitation of Asim reported from Hafṣ" (Qirā'ah 'Asim 'an Hafṣ).

The Shi'ah however do not believe that Rasulullāh (s) approved of seven recitations of the Qur'ān. Rather the original Qur'ān was written without any vowels or marks (i.e. without dots or signs for fatha, kasra, damma, shadda and sukun). And this may have led to some variations in reading in different parts of the Muslim world. But Allāh (s.w.t.), as per His promise to preserve the Qur'ān, has preserved the original recitation and with time, all variations have dropped off and the present version is the original revelation and recitation of the Qur'ān.

In the words of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a), 'The Qur'ān is one and came down as one; the variation in the recitations came from the reciters, not from Allāh.'

It is therefore wrong to suggest that Rasulullāh (s) approved of or encouraged seven recitations, and so on. These were all later forgeries attributed to him.

Lesson 2

The History of Hadīth

The Definition of Hadith

The word 'hadith' literally means 'talk'. In Shi'ah understanding, the word 'hadith' refers to the words of a Ma'sum ('a) (i.e. one who is infallible). The plural of hadith is ahādith.

A lot of times people will argue in ignorance about something being halāl or harām by saying, 'where is it in the Qur'ān?' If a hadith is proven to be true and authentic, it is a hujjah (proof) and binding on a Muslim just like the Qur'ān.

This is proven by the Qur'ān:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَأُولِي الْأَمْرِ مِنْكُمْ ...﴾

O you who have faith! Obey Allāh and obey the Apostle and those vested with authority among you.

- Surah an-Nisā, 4:59

Hadith is therefore the second *nass* or 'primary source' of proof in Islām, after the Qur'ān. Even an Imām's actions are a form of hadith and binding (i.e. a *hujjah*) if proven to be authentic. If a person does an action in the presence of a ma'sum and the ma'sum does not object, then it means that action is permissible. Such a tacit approval is called a 'Taqrir'. Sometimes the words and actions of Rasulullāh (s) are collectively referred to as his 'sunnah'.

If something is reported from a companion of a ma'sum but does not go all the way back to the ma'sum and stops at the companion, then the Shi'ah do not regard it as 'hadith'. For example, a saying by Abu Dharr or Abd Allāh b. al-Abbās may be related as what a companion said but it is not hadith and therefore not binding.

Amongst the Sunni however, the words of the *sahāba* are also treated as hadith. So they derive laws and act upon what is related from Abu Hurayra or Ibn Mas'ud or A'isha, the wife of Rasulullāh (s) even if that report does not quote Rasulullāh (s) himself.

Other names for hadith are "khabar" (news), "athar" (trace) and "riwāya" (report or narration).

Sanad and Matn

Every hadith has two parts to it. The first part is called the **sanad** and the second **matn**. *Sanad* refers to the “chain of narrators” or “chain of transmission”. It is usually a series of names that links the hadith text to a ma’sum via everyone who reported it from another right down to the last person who is actually recording it. And *matn* is the actual text of the hadith i.e. what the ma’sum said.

Here is an example:

Hammād b. Sulmah reported from Muhammad b. Ishāq who reported from Amr b. Shu’ayb who reported from his father who reported from his father who said:

I asked, ‘O Messenger of Allāh, should I write down everything that I hear from you?’ He (the Prophet (s)) said, ‘Yes.’ I asked again, ‘(even what you say) in pleasure or in anger?’ And he replied, ‘Yes. For I do not say (even) in that (state) except the truth (*haqq*)’.

In the hadith above, the first paragraph is the sanad (chain) of the hadith and the second paragraph is the matn (text) of the hadith. Together they form one hadith.

The sanad is extremely important to scholars. They study the lives of each of the individuals in every hadith to see if they were trustworthy or not and if we can rely on what they reported. This science of studying the reporters and narrators of hadith is called ‘Ilm ar-Rijāl (The Science of Men) and goes hand-in-hand with the study of hadith. Every mujtahid must be an expert in this science because the value of any hadith depends on how strong the sanad is i.e. the trustworthiness of the narrators.

Each narrator in the sanad is called a **Rāwi** and the plural is **Ruwwāt** (Narrators).

One of the reasons the Ulama don’t just trust anyone who reports a hadith is because it is a well known fact that during the reign of the Banu Umayya and Banu Abbās, thousands of ‘ahādith’ were forged to suit the convenience of the rulers, either to flatter themselves and their predecessors or to malign the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) and so on.

Allāh has also told us in the Qur’ān not to trust a sinful person:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِن جَاءَكُمْ فَاسِقٌ بِنَبَأٍ فَتَبَيَّنُوا أَن تُصِيبُوا قَوْمًا بِجَهَالَةٍ فَتُصْبِحُوا عَلَىٰ مَا فَعَلْتُمْ نَادِمِينَ﴾

O you who have faith! If a sinful (fāsiq) [person] should bring you some news, verify it, lest you should harm some people out of ignorance, and then become regretful for what you have done.

- Surah al-Hujurāt, 49:6

Qualifications of the Ruwwāt

As we have seen, the strength of a hadith greatly depends on its ruwwāt. Amongst the Shi'ah, a rāwi must be:

Bāligh (mature), sane, Shi'ah Ithna Ashari Muslim, 'ādil, and have good memory. In some cases, a rāwi who is not a Shi'ah Ithna Ashari is also accepted if his report supports and does not contradict other authentic ahādith.

'Adil means someone with integrity, who does not sin openly and is not known as a being sinful or a liar and whom we have no reason to doubt that he might have forged a hadith or sought to mislead others.

Categories and Types of Ahādith

The Ulama have divided and categorized ahādith into many different types. Allama Hilli and those who came after him divided ahādith into four major categories:

1. **Sahih (Correct, True)**. This is a hadith of the highest quality. All its narrators (ruwwāt) in its sanad are Shi'ah Ithna Ashari and have been praised for their trustworthiness by others, with words such as 'he is thiqah' (meaning very trustworthy).
2. **Hasan (Good)**. This is a hadith all of whose narrators are Shi'ah Ithna Ashari but not all of them have been praised with words like 'thiqah' (trustworthy). Instead some have been praised with words of lesser strength like 'he is mustahsin' (virtuous) or 'he is hāfidh' (one with good memory), and so on.
3. **Muwaththaq (Dependable)**. This is a hadith not all of whose narrators are Shi'ah Ithna Ashari but they have all being praised as being trustworthy.
4. **Da'if (Weak)**. This is a hadith that is neither Sahih, nor Hasan or Muwaththaq.

Of course with time, the Ulama and experts of hadith have created numerous other subcategories to these broad categories. A da'if hadith is not accepted as proof that is binding especially in matters of shari'ah and fiqh. As opposed to a dā'if hadith – whose sanad is weak – a forged hadith is called a *mawd'u* hadith.

Mutawātir and Wāhid

If a hadith has been quoted in many different sources, its sanad may be the same or it may have different asnād (pl. of sanad) in every original source. Depending on how many varieties of asnād (plural of sanad) exist for a particular hadith, a hadith is given weight and labelled as mutawātir or wāhid.

A mutawātir hadith is one that is narrated by so many people through so many different, unique chains of transmission (asnād) that the very number of narrators is enough to convince us of the truth of that hadith even without analyzing the matn (text of hadith).

Any hadith that is not mutawātir is called hadith wāhid. And sometimes a hadith that is authentic but has only one chain of narrators is called Hadith Ahad.

A sahih hadith that is also mutawātir is obviously a lot stronger and reliable than a sahih hadith that is not mutawātir.

The Hadith of Ghadir for example, (that Rasulullāh (s) said, '*whoever's master I am, this Ali is his master*' (*man kuntu mawlāhu fa hādha Aliyyun mawlāhu*)) is sahih **and** highly mutawātir. It is reported by 110 Sahāba (companions) of Rasulullāh (s) in both Sunni and Shi'ah books of hadith and 84 Tābi'un (the companions of the Sahāba). Thereafter over 360 Shi'ah and Sunni scholars have reported it throughout the centuries.

The Recording of Hadith & Reasons for Its Forgery

As we saw in the sample hadith earlier (when defining sanad and matn), Rasulullāh (s) always encouraged his companions to record and write down whatever he taught and all his sayings and actions. Many of the sahāba such as Abd Allāh b. Al-Abbās, Salmān al-Fārisi, Abu Dharr, Abu Rāf'i, Bilāl and others wrote down ahādith from Rasulullāh (s).

It is reported from Abd Allāh b. 'Amr b. al-As that he said, 'I was writing down everything that I heard Rasulullāh (s) saying but the Quraysh were forbidding me to do so, saying, "You are writing everything that the Prophet (s) is saying, while he is just a mortal who speaks in anger as well as in pleasure", so I stopped writing, and mentioned this incident to Rasulullāh (s) who pointed to his mouth with his finger, saying, "Write! For by the One who has power over my soul, nothing but the truth comes out of it."'”²

After the wafāt of Rasulullāh (s) the early caliphs prohibited people from writing hadith. The 2nd Caliph Umar b. al-Khattāb is particularly famous for banning the writing of hadith. His reason was that he didn't want people to 'forget the Qur'ān'. The real reason however was that a lot of the hadith were in praise of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) and if they were promoted then Imām Ali ('a)'s right to the khilāfah would also become apparent. This was similar to why Umar also stopped Rasulullāh (s) from writing his last will and shouted, 'the Book of Allāh is enough for us!'

In one report we are told that after the Caliph Umar made his decision to prohibit the writing of hadith, he gathered all the written ahādith that the Sahāba (Companions) had in their possession for a month, then he burnt it all, saying,

² Abd al-Hādi Fadli, *Introduction to Hadith*, p. 68-9 (ICAS Press 1st Edition).

“*mishna like the mishna of the People of the Book*”.³ The *mishna* is a Jewish collection of oral traditions.

It is also reported that when Ubay b. Ka’b narrated about Jerusalem and its features, Umar b. al-Khattāb scolded him and was about to beat him, when Ubay called on a group of the Ansār to bear witness that they had heard the hadith from Rasulullāh (s). And when they bore witness, he left him. Then Ubay b. Ka’b said to Umar, ‘Are you accusing me with regard to the hadith of the Prophet of Allāh (s)?’ and Umar replied, ‘O Abu Mundhir (the epithet (kunya) of Ubay), by Allāh I was not accusing you, but I hated to think that the hadith of the Prophet was becoming manifest.’⁴

The banning of hadith in the early years after the wafāt of Rasulullāh (s) proved to be a disaster. A lot of authentic ahādith were lost or destroyed and by the time Uthmān became the 3rd Caliph, it was a scramble to preserve the original ahādith. Many of those who had been loyal to Rasulullāh (s) also changed their stance and attitude towards the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) and were influenced by the ideas of the early Caliphs.

One such companion was Anas b. Mālik who later came to be known as the founder of the Maliki madhhab. When Imām Ali (‘a) became the Caliph, he asked the Sahāba to bear witness that they had heard the hadith of Rasulullāh (s) declaring him (Imām Ali (‘a)) as his successor at Ghadir Khumm and Anas b. Mālik was one of those who refused to bear witness and made excuses that he had grown old and was now forgetting. Imām Ali (‘a) cursed him and he was struck with a form of leprosy.⁵

Another one of such Rasulullāh (s)’s companions was Abd Allāh b. Mas’ud. After the wafāt of Rasulullāh (s) he turned away from Imām Ali (‘a) and was known to oppose him.

Abd ar-Rahmān b. al-Aswad reported on the authority of his father that Alqamah brought some books from Yemen or Makkah that included a collection of hadith on the virtues (fadāil) of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a). So he went to the house of Abd Allāh b. Mas’ud and handed him the books. Abd Allāh b. Mas’ud called the servant girl and sent for a basin with water in it. Alqamah and those with him said to him, ‘O Abd Allāh, have a look at them as there are authentic ahādith among them’ but he did not pay attention, and started to dissipate them in the water, reciting, ‘*We narrate to you the best of narrations, by Our revealing to you this Qur’ān*’ (Qur’ān, 12:3). Then he (Ibn Mas’ud) said, ‘the hearts are vessels, so fill them up with the Qur’ān!’⁶

After the year 40 AH, when the Banu Umayya began to reign with full force under Mu’āwiya, the destruction to hadith was even more serious. Mu’āwiya was notorious and infamous for hiring people and paying them large sums to forge ahādith in his favour.

³ Ibid., p. 71.

⁴ Ibid., p. 71-2

⁵ Shaykh Mufid, *Kitāb al-Irshād*, p. 265-6.

⁶ Abd al-Hādi Fadli, *Introduction to Hadith*, p. 72

And of course once the idea of forging ahādith in the name of Rasulullāh (s) lost its seriousness, others began indulging in it. Those who held extremist views about the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) and regarded them as incarnations of God (*wal 'iyādhu billāh!*) forged ahādith to give praise to them that was blasphemous. Those concerned that people were not reciting the Qur'ān enough forged ahādith about the virtues of reciting different surahs of the Qur'ān. Anyone who felt a need to promote a cause - good or bad – created hadith to help his cause.

Furthermore, as Jews and Christians converted to Islām, many of them brought stories from their traditions, especially regarding the early prophets like Nabi Musa ('a) and these stories captured the imagination of the story-tellers and forgers. Such forged ahādith that resemble Biblical narrations and often cast doubt on the *'ismah* (infallibility) of the past anbiyā (prophets) are called **Isrāiliyāt**.

One of those individuals infamous for forging ahādith was Abu Hurayra. Unfortunately however he is held in high regard by the Sunni Muslims and in comparison to all other companions of Rasulullāh (s), the Sunnis have quoted hadith from him the most. Abu Hurayra is said to have seen Rasulullāh (s) for less than 3 years but the Sunni books of hadith have reported 5,374 ahādith from him. In comparison, the ahādith reported from the first four caliphs all put together are only 1,411 even though they lived with Rasulullāh (s) all his life.

The Shi'ah regard Abu Hurayra to be unreliable and do not accept any traditions from him. He was known to even make up hadith for profit and on the spur of the moment. As an example, an onion seller from Akka (a seaport in Palestine) was once having a hard time selling his product and he asked Abu Hurayra for help. Abu Hurayra began telling people that the Prophet (s) had said, 'whoever eats the onions of Akka will have the reward of pilgrimage to Makkah!' When the Caliph Mu'āwiya quizzed Abu Hurayra and asked him when he heard Rasulullāh (s) saying this 'hadith', Abu Hurayra flattered him saying, 'At the same time when I heard him saying, "Mu'āwiya is the maternal uncle of the faithful (khāl al-mu'mineen)".'⁷

In another example of how unscrupulous individuals forged hadith in an instance, just to win favours from the ruler of the time, a man named Ghiyāth b. Ibrāhim was once visiting the Abbāsīd caliph al-Mansur and saw him playing with pigeons. Immediately, he fabricated a 'hadith' for the Caliph's good pleasure saying: The Prophet (s) said, "No racing is better than that of hoofs and feathers (i.e. horses and birds)!"⁸

As for the story-tellers, according to the famous Sunni scholar Ibn al-Jawzi, once Ahmad b. Hanbal (the founder of the Hanbali madhhab) and Yahya b. Ma'in were in the mosque of al-Rasifah (in Baghdad) for prayers. In the meanwhile, a story-teller gathered around himself some people and began to recite a 'hadith', citing as his sources Ahmad b. Hanbal and Yahya b. Ma'in, that the Prophet (s) said, 'whoever

⁷ Dr. Mustafa Awliyā'i, *Science of Hadith*, Al-Tawhid Journal, v. 1, No. 2.

⁸ Ibid.

says, “*La ilāha ilallāh*”, God will reward him with a bird whose beak is of gold and feathers of coral.’ Then he proceeded to describe the bird and the reward of the recipient in such a detail as cannot be contained even in twenty pages. On hearing him, Yahya and Ibn Hanbal looked at each other while the “*muhaddith*” started collecting tips from the people. Yahya approached the man and asked him as to who had told him this hadith. ‘Ahmad b. Hanbal and Yahya b. Ma`in,’ was his reply. ‘I am Yahya and this is Ahmad b. Hanbal’, said Yahya pointing to Ibn Hanbal, ‘we ourselves have never heard of such a hadith.’ The story-teller replied, ‘I had heard that Yahya b. Ma`in is an idiot I didn't believe it. You talk as if you two are the only Yahya and Ibn Hanbal in the whole world! I have written traditions from seventeen Yahya b. Ma`ins and Ahmad b. Hanbal's!’ Then he promptly slipped out of the mosque.⁹

To counter such forgeries and to preserve the ahādith of Rasulullāh (s) that are crucial to understanding Islām, the Shi’ah therefore insisted that they would not take hadith from anyone except the Ma’sumeen (‘a). Whereas the Sunni Muslims depend on the hadith of Rasulullāh (s) who passed away in 11 AH, the Shi’ah have the benefit of having the Imāms present to verify hadith as true or false until 260 AH when Imām Hasan al-Askari (‘a) was martyred and even thereafter for almost 70 years during the minor occultation (ghaybah al-sughra) of Imām al-Mahdi (‘atfs).

The Imāms from the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) themselves wrote hadith as well and we shall study more about the most famous Shi’ah who reported hadith from them, in the next lesson inshā Allāh.

⁹ Ibid.

Lesson 3

The History of Hadīth (cont'd)

Major Sources of Shi'ah Hadith and their History

Phase 1 – The Usul Arba' Mi'a (400 Usul)

In the last lesson we concluded that the Shi'ah of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) did not allow themselves to be influenced by the ban on the writing of hadith by the Caliph Umar and that to counter the later forgeries by the Banu Umayya and Banu Abbās, they took all the hadith of Rasulullāh (s) from his Household, the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) only.

Amongst the ashāb (companions) of Imām Ali b. Ali Tālib ('a), Maytham at-Tammār, Asbagh b. Nubāta and others were known to record hadith from the Imām. And from Imām Ali Zayn al-Abidin ('a)'s time, there were ashāb such as Abu Hamza ath-Thumālī and Jabir b. Abd Allāh al-Ansāri.

During the times of Imām Muhammad al-Bāqir ('a) and Imām Ja'far as-Sādiq ('a) the opportunity to teach was greater and therefore the Shi'ah wrote in greater number.

Famous amongst the ashāb of Imām al-Bāqir ('a) and Imām as-Sādiq ('a) were Zurārah b. A'yūn, Abu Basir al-Asadi, Fudayl b. Yasār, Hammād b. Uthmān and Hammād b. 'Isa. Others who reported hadith from them included Abān b. Taghlib, Muhammad b. Qays, Hishām b. al-Hakam, Ali b. Yaqteen, Ali b. Mahziyār, Fadhl b. Shādhān and very many others.

Imām al-Kādhim ('a) and Imām ar-Rida ('a) also had many ashāb who related ahādith from them including Safwān b. Yahya, Hasan b. Mahbub, Yunus b. Abd ar-Rahmān, and so on.

Some of the earliest books of hadith that we still have today were from the ashāb of the later Imāms such as the Kitāb al-Mu'min by Hasan b. Sa'id al-Kufi, a companion of Imām al-Jawād ('a) and Imām al-Hādi ('a). Or for example, the hadith collection Kitāb at-Tamhees by Muhammad b. Himām al-Iskāfi, a companion of the ambassadors (sufara) of Imām al-Hujjah ('atfs) during the Ghaybat as-Sughra.

It is believed that from the time of Imām Ali b. Abi Tālib ('a) to the time of Imām Hasan al-Askari ('a), the Shi'ah wrote some 6600 books of hadith from Rasulullāh (s) and the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) though many of these were lost in time.¹⁰ Some of these books were actually small booklets. By the time of the martyrdom of Imām Hasan al-Askari ('a), the most famous Shi'ah books of hadith were 400 books that came to be known as the **Usul Arba' Mi'a**. "Usul" is the plural of 'asl', which means 'foundation'. And "Arba' Mi'a" is Arabic for '400'. In other words these books – **The 400 Usul** -

¹⁰ Sayyid Akhtar Rizvi, *Qur'ān and Hadith*, p. 69.

were the primary and earliest books of hadith for the Shi'ah, many of which were written in the lifetime of the Aimmah ('a).

Phase 2 – The Compilation of Kutub al-Arba'a

With the martyrdom of Imām Hasan al-Askari ('a) and the ghaybah of the Imām of our time ('atfs), these 400 books became very precious. There were no printing presses in those days and these books could not be shared or given to others who were not trustworthy.

The Shi'ah Ulama decided that if all the ahādith in the Usul Arba' Mi'a were collected as one book and then divided subjectwise into chapters and subchapters, it would fulfil a great need at the time and would also ensure the wealth of knowledge is not lost because it would be easier to preserve one book rather than 400. This was not going to be easy however. Someone would have to collect all the books and then verify whether all the ahādith that exist in multiple versions are unique or duplicates, and so on.

The first scholar to take on this challenge and responsibility during the ghaybah of Imām al-Mahdi ('atfs) was Shaykh Abu Ja'far Muhammad b. Ya'qub al-Kulayni (260-329 AH). He lived in Baghdad and was held in high regard even by the ambassadors (sufara) of the twelve Imām ('atfs) [also in Baghdād].

After twenty years of hard work and research, Shaykh al-Kulayni produced **Al-Kāfi**. This book alone contains more ahādith than all the six authentic (sihāh sitta) books of the Sunnis.¹¹

Thereafter, another famous Shi'ah scholar Shaykh Abu Ja'far Muhammad b. Ali b. Babwayh al-Qummi (well known as Shaykh as-Saduq) (d. 381 AH) compiled another collection of hadith and named it '**Man La Yahdhuru al-Faqih**'.

And much later, yet another famous Shi'ah scholar, Shaykh Abu Ja'far Muhammad b. Hasan b. Ali at-Tusi (well known as Shaykh at-Tusi or Shaykh at-Tāifa) (385-466 AH) compiled two more collections of hadith named '**Tahdhib al-Ahkām**' and '**Al-Istibsār**'.

These last two books opened the way for a critical study of hadith and therefore paved the way for the need for ijtihād. It is interesting that the compilers of all these four famous collections of hadith were named Muhammad and their title (kunya) was Abu Ja'far.

In the year 448 AH, the Sunnis of Baghdad attacked the Shi'ah and burnt down the library and home of Shaykh at-Tusi. Shaykh at-Tusi was then forced to migrate south

¹¹ Ibid., p. 71

to Najaf and he established the Hawza ‘Ilmiyya there that went to produce mujtahideen for 1000 years.

Let us summarize the facts regarding these four famous books of hadith that are used to this day by Shi’ah scholars to derive Islāmic laws:

1. **Al-Kāfi** compiled by Shaykh al-Kulayni (16,199 ahādith)
2. **Man La Yahdhuru al-Faqih** compiled by Shaykh as-Saduq (5,998 ahādith)
3. **At-Tahdhib** (or Tahdhib al-Ahkām) compiled by Shaykh at-Tusi (1,359 ahādith)
4. **Al-Istibsār** compiled by Shaykh at-Tusi (5,511 ahādith)

These four books are collectively known as ‘**Kutub al-Arba’a**’ (The Four Books).

It is important to note that many Sunnis assume that the Shi’ah regard every hadith in these four books (or at least in al-Kāfi) to be ‘sahih’ similar to how they regard some of their books of hadith to be completely authentic like the Sahih Bukhāri and Sahih Muslim.

For the Shi’ah however, every hadith is open to inspection at all times by the scholars of every generation. Just because a hadith exists in al-Kāfi does not mean it is sahih and unquestionable. Similarly, a hadith may exist in another Shi’ah book that is not as famous as these four collections and still be sahih if its sanad and matn are trustworthy and sound.

Phase 3 – Three Later Books

You should also be aware of the following three large collections of Shi’ah hadith that were compiled after the Kutub al-Arba’a:

1. **Bihār al-Anwār** compiled by Allamah Muhammad Majlisi (d. 1011 AH). It contains all the Kutub al-Arba’a as well as many other sources of hadith, all sorted subjectwise together. This is perhaps the most voluminous collection of Shi’ah hadith that is usually printed in 110 volumes.
2. **Kitāb al-Wāfi** compiled by Mulla Muhammad Muhsin Fayd al-Kāshāni (d. 1091 AH). It is a collection of 50,000 ahādith largely from the Kutub al-Arba’a but with explanations and better classification.
3. **Wasāil ash-Shi’ah** compiled by Shaykh Muhammad Hurr al-Amili (d. 1104 AH). This contains 35,850 ahādith. Like al-Kāfi, it also took 20 years to compile. It is the most comprehensive collection of hadith on legal (fiqh) matters. And its classification (which includes ahādith from the Kutub al-Arba’a) is said to be better than Bihar al-Anwar and Kitāb al-Wāfi. Shaykh Hurr al-Amili is buried in one of the courtyards (sahan) of Imām Ali ar-Rida (‘a) in Mashhad (Iran).

It is interesting that just like the compilers of the Kutub al-Arba'a, these three later compilers were also all named Muhammad.

We should also mention:

4. **Mustadrak al-Wasāil** compiled by Allama Husayn Nuri (d. 1320 AH). This was actually an amendment to the Wasāil as-Shi'ah and it contains 23,000 ahādith and is now also a classic resource that goes hand-in-hand with the Wasāil as-Shi'ah.

Major Sources of Sunni Hadith

Sunni Muslims rely on the following six books of hadith as primary sources to derive their laws and understanding of Islām. They regard these books as being 'sihāh' (pl. of sahih) meaning 'Authentic'.

1. **Sahih Bukhāri** of Muhammad b. Ismail Bukhāri (d. 256 AH)
2. **Sahih Muslim** of Muslim b. Hajjāj Nisāburi (d. 261 AH)
3. **Muwatta** of Malik b. Anas (the founder of the Maliki madhhab) (d. 175 AH)
4. **Sahih Tirmidhi** of Muhammad b. Isa Tirmidhi (d. 279 AH)
5. **Sunan Abu Dāwud** of Abu Dāwud as-Sijistāni (d. 275 AH)
6. **Sunan an-Nasāi** of Ibn Shu'ayb an-Nasāi (d. 303 AH)

Other books of hadith that are held in high regard among Sunni scholars are:

7. **Sunan Ibn Māja** by Ibn Māja Qāzwini (d. 264 AH). Some scholars regard this book as part of the Sihāh Sitta instead of the Muwatta of Malik b. Anas.
8. **Musnad Ahmad b. Hanbal**. This was actually compiled by the son of Ahmad b. Hanbal (d. 241 AH), the founder of the Hanbali madhhab. Many Sunnis believe this to be as authentic as the Sihāh Sitta.
9. **Mu'jam al-Kabir** of Tabarani (d. 360 AH)
10. **Mustadrak 'ala as-Sahihayn** by al-Hākim an-Nisāburi (d. 405 AH)
11. **Jami' al-Jawām'i** of Suyuti (d. 911 AH)
12. **Kanz al-'Ummāl**. This is actually an edit of Suyuti's compilation by Shaykh Husamuddin al-Muttaqi al-Hindi (d. 975 AH). The Kanz al-'Ummāl contains many ahādith in praise of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a).

Modern Sunni scholars today also acknowledge that the Sihāh Sitta have many ahādith that are da'if (weak) or even mawd'u (forged). The Shi'ah and Sunni scholars do not rely on each other's sources of hadith for legal (fiqh) matters but some

scholars do quote from each other in matters of history, tafsir, akhlāq, etc. if it does not contradict their own understanding of Qur'ān and hadith.

The Shi'ah have always expressed concern that the Sunni books of hadith show a strong bias towards the rulers of the time and against the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) because they (the books) seem to intentionally leave out the virtues of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) or even quoting ahādith from them. For example, the most famous collections of Sahih Bukhāri and Sahih Muslim do not quote ahādith from Imām Muhammad al-Bāqir ('a) and Imām Ja'far as-Sādiq ('a) at all despite their high rank amongst the Ulama of Madina but they quote traditions from the murderers of Imām Husayn ('a) like Umar b. Sa'd and Shimr Dhill Jawshan, (may Allāh curse them forever).

Lesson 4

Tawassul in Islām

In Book 8 we discussed Intercession (shafā'ah) and we said: "Shafā'ah is the Islāmic belief that on the Day of Judgement, Allāh will permit His special servants and the angels to intercede on behalf of sinful believers and ask Allāh to forgive their sins to save them from the fire of Hell." And this is not because Allāh cannot forgive people directly but because Allāh wishes to honour His chosen servants and to reveal their status before others.

We also proved the validity of shafā'ah in Islām from Qur'ān and hadith and discussed who will intercede on the Day of Judgment and for whom. In this lesson we wish to study a similar concept called Tawassul.

The Concept of Tawassul

Tawassul is to ask Allāh and pray to Him through His chosen servants instead of asking Allāh directly. The chosen servants through whom a person prays to Allāh must be authorized by Allāh as a 'wasila' (intermediary or 'means').

Muslims and Tawassul

All Shi'ah Muslims and most Sunni Muslims believe in Tawassul especially in asking Allāh through His Messenger Muhammad al-Mustafa (s). This, they believe, is not only permissible but highly recommended. The exception however are the Wahnābi Muslims who are found mostly in Saudi Arabia.

The Wahnābi follow the teachings of Ibn Taymiya (1263-1328), who was a Hanbali scholar with extremist views. He was very opposed to the belief in Shafā'ah, tawassul or even visiting the graves of Rasulullāh (s) or any Imām. When the Wahnābi looted Makkah and Madina and formed the Saudi government in 1925, they demolished all the shrines in Jannat al-Baqi (Madina) where Imām al-Hasan ('a), Imām Zayn al-Abidin ('a), Imām al-Bāqir ('a), Imām as-Sādiq ('a) as well as many members of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) are buried. To this day, there are Wahnābi scholars who believe that the dome on the grave of Rasulullāh (s) should also be demolished and his grave should be 'taken out of Masjid an-Nabawi'; but they are prevented from doing this out of fear of their government being overthrown by the rest of the Muslim world.

Tawassul in Qur'ān

The Wahnābi believe that tawassul is a form of polytheism (*shirk*). To "prove" this, they quote āyāt of Qur'ān such as the following:

﴿وَيَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لَا يَضُرُّهُمْ وَلَا يَنْفَعُهُمْ وَيَقُولُونَ هَؤُلَاءِ شُفَعَاؤُنَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ...﴾

They worship besides Allāh that which neither causes them any harm, nor brings them any benefit, and they say, 'These are our intercessors with Allāh' ...

- Surah Yunus, 10:18

﴿... وَالَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِن دُونِهِ مَا يَمْلِكُونَ مِن قِطْمِيرٍ. إِن تَدْعُوهُمْ لَا يَسْمَعُوا دُعَاءَكُمْ وَلَوْ سَمِعُوا مَا اسْتَجَابُوا لَكُمْ...﴾

...As for those whom you call besides Him, they do not control so much as the husk of a date stone. If you call them they will not hear your supplication, and even if they heard they cannot respond to you...

- Surah Fātir, 35:13-14

Does this then prove that tawassul is harām? Not at all.

Where is the problem then? The problem lies in the fact that the Wahhābi often read verses of Qur'ān in isolation and interpret them literally, trying to apply them in every situation without considering the context of the revelation (i.e. why the verses were revealed and for whom).

There are other verses of Qur'ān that support tawassul and if we read them together with the above verses, what will become very clear is that what is harām is to set up *one's own* wasila, such as an idol or even a saintly (Sufi) personality and then to pray to Allāh by bowing before the idol or asking through the saint who is not authorized by Allāh to be a wasila.

Allāh Himself has asked us to go to Him through a wasila **but only through those whom He has authorized.**

The verse where Allāh asks us to use a wasila is:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَابْتَغُوا إِلَيْهِ الْوَسِيلَةَ...﴾

O you who have faith! Be conscious of Allāh, and seek a means of nearness to Him...

- Surah al-Māidah, 5:35

The Wahhābi argue that this 'wasila' is our faith and good deeds. But that is not what the verse is saying. It is specifically ordering, 'seek'. If it was our prayers and fasting then the āyah would not command in this manner.

Here is another verse of Qur'ān to prove tawassul:

﴿إِنَّمَا وَلِيُّكُمُ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا الَّذِينَ يُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَهُمْ رَاكِعُونَ. وَمَنْ يَتَوَلَّ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا فَإِنَّ حِزْبَ اللَّهِ هُمُ الْغَالِبُونَ. وَمَنْ يَتَوَلَّ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا فَإِنَّ حِزْبَ اللَّهِ هُمُ الْغَالِبُونَ﴾

Your guardian is only Allāh, His Messenger, and the faithful who maintain the prayer and give the zakāh while bowing down. Whoever takes for his guardians Allāh, His Messenger and the faithful [should know that] the party of Allāh are indeed the victorious.

- Surah al-Māidah, 5:55-56

If asking help from anyone besides Allāh was *shirk*, then Allāh would not Himself tell us that along with Himself, 'His Messenger' and 'those who believe, those who keep up prayers and give alms in ruku' are also our guardians.

And all Muslim scholars agree that it was only Imām Ali ('a) who once gave alms to a beggar while he was in ruku' (by extending his fingers to the beggar and letting him pull his ring out) and it was regarding Imām Ali ('a) that this āyah of Qur'ān was revealed.¹²

Tawassul in Sunni Hadith and Tārikh (Islāmic History)

The Shi'ah Muslims believe in tawassul without exception. They even recite supplications such as the Dua at-Tawassul in which they ask Rasulullāh (s) and the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) to intercede for them before Allāh (s.w.t.) because of their lofty rank with Allāh.

Amongst the Sunni, because the Wahhābi reject tawassul, we therefore quote some hadith and historical narrations from Sunni sources to prove tawassul.

1. The Abbāsīd caliph, Mansur al-Dawāniqi, once asked Imām Malik ibn Anas (the founder of the Sunni Maliki School) whether he should turn towards the grave of the Prophet (s) or face the qibla for supplication (du'a)? Imām Malik replied him, 'why do you want to turn away from the Prophet (s) when he is the wasila (means) for you and for your father Adam, towards Allāh on the Day of Resurrection? Turn to him (the Prophet) and seek his intercession (shafā'ah)!'¹³
2. Tirmidhi¹⁴ relates a hadith from 'Uthmān b. Hunayf that a blind man came to Rasulullāh (s) said, 'I've been afflicted in my eyesight, so please pray to Allāh for me.' The Prophet (s) said to the blind man, 'Go and do wudu, pray 2 rak'ahs and

¹² Ahmad b. Hanbal, *Musnad*, v. 5, p. 38; Zamakhshari, *Tafsir al-Kashshāf*; Tabari, *Tafsir al-Bayān*.

¹³ *Al-Mughni Ma'al Sharh*, v. 3, p. 588; *al-Sharh al-Kabir ma' al-Mughni*, v. 3, p. 494; al-Qādi 'Iyād, *al-Shifa*, 2:92-93.

¹⁴ The *Sunan* of Tirmidhi is one of the six collections of hadith regarded by the Sunnis to be the Six Authentic Sources (as-sihāh as-sitta).

then say: “O’ Allāh, I ask You and turn to You through my Prophet Muhammad, the Prophet of mercy; **O Muhammad, I seek your intercession** with my Lord for the return of my eyesight.””

The man did this and his eyesight was restored. The Prophet (s) then added, ‘and if there is some [other] need, do the same.’

This narration is widely quoted by Sunni scholars (besides the Wāḥḥābi) and Tirmidhi has said it is highly authentic. Other famous Sunni hadith masters (muhaddithun) like Hākīm, Bayhaqī, Ibn Mājāh, Bukhāri (in his *Tārikh al-Kabir*), Nasāi (in his *‘Amāl al-Yaum wa al-Layla*) have also said this a sahih hadith, absolutely beyond doubt. The most amazing fact is that Ibn Taymiya (whom the Wāḥḥābi take their teachings from) has also agreed this hadith is authentic.

3. Now some people may argue that tawassul was only valid when Rasūlullāh (s) was physically present. So Tabarāni and other Sunni scholars have narrated that during the caliphate of Uthmān b. Affān (the 3rd Caliph), long after Rasūlullāh (s) had passed away, a man repeatedly went to the Caliph Uthmān for something he needed, but the Caliph paid no attention to him or his need. The man met Uthmān b. Hunayf and complained to him about the matter so Uthmān b. Hunayf, who was one of the Companions who collected ahādith and was learned in the religion of Allāh, said: ‘Go do wudu, then come to the mosque, perform two rak’ah, and say: “O Allāh, I ask You and turn to You through our Prophet Muhammad, the Prophet of mercy; **O Muhammad! I turn through you to my Lord**, that He may fulfill my need,” and mention your need.’

‘Then come to me,’ continued Ibn Hunayf, ‘so that I can go with you [to the Caliph Uthmān].’ So the man left and did as he had been told, then he went to the door of the Caliph Uthmān b. Affān, and the doorman came, took him by the hand, brought him to the Caliph who seated him next to him on a cushion. ‘What do you need?’ asked the Caliph and the man mentioned what he wanted, and the Caliph Uthmān accomplished it for him, then he said, ‘I hadn’t remembered your need until now,’ adding, ‘whenever you need something, just mention it.’

Then, the man departed, met Uthmān b. Hunayf, and said to him, ‘May Allāh reward you! He didn’t see to my need or pay any attention to me until you spoke with him.’ And Uthmān b. Hunayf replied, ‘By Allāh, I didn’t speak to him, but I have seen a blind man come to the Messenger of Allāh and complain to him of the loss of his eyesight...’ and he narrated the previous incident to him.

4. Imām Bukhāri in his ‘Kitāb al-Adāb al-Mufrad’ as well as other scholars have recorded that Abd Allāh b. ‘Umar (the son of the 2nd Caliph) once suffered from a cramp in his leg. Someone advised him to remember the person whom he

loved the most. The great companion then proclaimed loudly, “Yā Muhammadah” and it is recorded that he was immediately relieved.¹⁵

5. Another Sunni scholar of repute, Allama Shahāb Khafāji al-Misri writes in his work ‘Naseem ar-Riyād’ (a commentary of the “Shifa” by Imām Qādi Iyād) that it was an established practice of the people of Madina to call out “Yā Muhammadah” in times of difficulty and anxiety.
6. A famous companion Bilāl b. al-Hārith al-Muzani narrates that a terrible drought occurred during the caliphate of ‘Umar (the 2nd Caliph) and that year was known as ‘The Dry Year’ (Aam ar-Ramadah). The tribe of Bilāl b. al-Hārith (the Banu Muzaina) approached the Caliph and complained of starvation. Some sheep were slaughtered for them but they were only bones and hardly any meat on them. Seeing this, Bilāl called out loudly, “Yā Muhammadah,” in grief and concern. He was then blessed with seeing the Prophet (s) in his dream, who gave him the good news of the end of the drought very soon.

In a slightly different version related by Malik ad-Dār, the Caliph ‘Umar’s treasurer, when the people suffered the drought, a man (possibly Bilāl b. al-Hārith) came to the grave of the Prophet (s) and said: "O Messenger of Allāh, ask for rain for your Community, for indeed they have almost perished," after which the Prophet (s) appeared to him in a dream...¹⁶

The famous Sunni scholars Ibn Hajar and Ibn Kathir have also reported these incidents and said they are good (jayyid) and strong (qawwi) narrations in their authenticity. One Sunni scholar has commented on this and said, ‘Let the pseudo-Salafiyya (i.e. the Wahhābi) take note - that it is the ruling of Ibn Kathir in two places (that this narration is authentic), and he (Ibn Kathir) was associated with Ibn Taymiya.’

7. Shaykh Mansur as-Sabbagh in his book ‘The Perfections’ (ash-Shamā’il) narrates a well-known tradition from a man called ‘Utbi who said, ‘I was sitting by the grave of the Prophet (s) when a Bedouin came and said: “Peace be on you, O Prophet of Allāh! I have heard Allāh say (in the Qur’ān): *And if they had come to thee when they had wronged their souls, and asked forgiveness of Allāh, and if the Messenger had also asked forgiveness for them, they would have surely found Allāh All-forgiving, All-Merciful.*¹⁷ And so I have come to you asking forgiveness for my sin, taking you as intercessor to my Lord.”

Then he (the Bedouin) started reciting poetry in praise of the Prophet (s) saying, ‘O you best of those whose bones are buried in al-Qa’a from the sweet scents of those bones the whole area of al-Qa’a and Akamu became perfumed. I sacrifice myself to the grave that you live in – it is purity and in it is incredible generosity.’

¹⁵ Also reported by Imām an-Nawāwi in his commentary of Sahih Muslim.

¹⁶ Imām Bayhaqi with a sound (sahih) chain of transmission.

¹⁷ Surah an-Nisā, 4:64

Then the Bedouin departed and sleep overcame me (i.e. Utbi). And I saw the Prophet (s) in my sleep and he said: "O 'Utbi, follow the Bedouin and give him the glad tidings that Allāh has forgiven him."¹⁸

Reading the Qur'ān Holistically

Reading the Qur'ān 'holistically' means reading it as a whole and seeing how its different parts are interdependent. We said earlier that the reason why the Wahhābi reject many Islāmic concepts is because they read only one part of the Qur'ān and ignore other parts of it.

Let us look at some examples from the Qur'ān so that we understand the dangers of reading only some verses of the Qur'ān and assuming matters. [Your class teacher may read only one example and ask you to read the rest yourself as homework.]

1. Who Causes Death?

In one verse of the Qur'ān, Allāh (s.w.t.) says:

﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ تَوَفَّاهُمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ...﴾

Indeed, those whom the angels cause to die...

- Surah an-Nisā, 4:97

Then in another verse He says:

﴿قُلْ يَتَوَفَّاكُم مَلَكُ الْمَوْتِ...﴾

Say, 'You will be taken away by the angel of death...

- Surah as-Sajdah, 32:11

And yet in another He says:

﴿اللَّهُ يَتَوَفَّى الْأَنْفُسَ حِينَ مَوْتِهَا...﴾

Allāh takes the souls at the time of their death...

- Surah az-Zumar, 39:42

Does that mean there is a contradiction in the Qur'ān? Not at all. The angels do not have their own independent power. They only carry out Allāh's orders. And because they are authorized by Allāh, it makes no difference when we say the angels cause death or the Angel of Death causes death, it is one and the same as saying Allāh causes death.

¹⁸ *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, 4:64.

2. Who is our Guardian?

In one verse Allāh says:

﴿... وَلَا يَجِدُ لَهُ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَلِيًّا وَلَا نَصِيرًا﴾

...and he will not find for himself any guardian or helper besides Allāh.

- Surah an-Nisā, 4:123

And He also says:

﴿وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِأَعْدَائِكُمْ وَكَفَى بِاللَّهِ وَلِيًّا وَكَفَى بِاللَّهِ نَصِيرًا﴾

But Allāh knows your enemies better, and Allāh suffices as guardian, and Allāh suffices as helper.

- Surah an-Nisā, 4:45

﴿قُلْ مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يَعْصِمُكُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ إِنْ أَرَادَ بِكُمْ سُوءًا أَوْ أَرَادَ بِكُمْ رَحْمَةً وَلَا

يَجِدُونَ لَهُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَلِيًّا وَلَا نَصِيرًا﴾

Say, 'Who is it that can protect you from Allāh should He desire to cause you ill, or desire to grant you mercy?' **They will not find for themselves any protector or helper besides Allāh.**

- Surah al-Ahzāb, 33:17

Then in a verse we have looked at earlier, He says:

﴿إِنَّمَا وَلِيُّكُمُ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا الَّذِينَ يُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَهُمْ

رَاكِعُونَ. وَمَنْ يَتَوَلَّ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا فَإِنَّ حِزْبَ اللَّهِ هُمُ الْغَالِبُونَ﴾

Your guardian is only Allāh, **His Messenger, and the faithful** who maintain the prayer and give the zakāh while bowing down. **Whoever takes for his guardians Allāh, His Messenger and the faithful** [should know that] the party of Allāh are indeed the victorious.

- Surah al-Māidah, 5:55-56

Is this a contradiction? Not at all. It simply means that Allāh is the only independent guardian and helper. No one has the power to help except Him. But those who are authorized by Him *can* help and their help is the same as Allāh's help. This is not polytheism (*shirk*).

In another verse, Allāh mentions others as helpers besides Himself and He says to the two disobedient wives of Rasullāh (s):

﴿... وَإِنْ تَظَاهَرَا عَلَيْهِ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ مَوْلَاهُ وَجِبْرِيلُ وَصَالِحُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ ظَهِيرٌ﴾

...and if you¹⁹ back each other against him [the Prophet (s)], then [know that] **Allāh is indeed his guardian, and Jibrāil, and the righteous among the faithful, and, thereafter, the angels are his supporters.**

- Surah at-Tahrim, 66:4

3. Who Gives us Bounties and Blessings?

The following āyah of Qur'ān makes it clear that all grace (blessings) are in the hands of Allāh alone and He alone gives it to whomever He pleases:

﴿لَا يَلْمُ يَعْلَمُ أَهْلُ الْكِتَابِ أَلَّا يَقْدِرُونَ عَلَى شَيْءٍ مِنْ فَضْلِ اللَّهِ وَأَنَّ الْفَضْلَ بِيَدِ اللَّهِ يُؤْتِيهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ...﴾

So that the People of the Book may know that **they have no power over anything of Allāh's grace, and that all grace is in Allāh's hand** which He grants to whomever He wishes...

- Surah al-Hadid, 57:29

Now look at the following two verses:

﴿وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ رَضُوا مَا آتَاهُمُ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَقَالُوا حَسْبُنَا اللَّهُ سَيُؤْتِينَا اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ وَرَسُولُهُ...﴾

[It would have been better] if they had been pleased with what Allāh **and His Messenger** gave them, and had said, 'Allāh is sufficient for us; Allāh will give to us out of His grace, **and His Messenger [will give us]**.'...

- Surah at-Tawbah, 9:59

﴿...إِلَّا أَنْ أَغْنَاهُمْ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ...﴾

... only because Allāh and His Messenger had enriched them out of His grace...

- Surah at-Tawbah, 9:74

¹⁹ That is, Hafsa and 'Aisha, two of the Prophet's wives.

Does it mean it is *shirk* to believe that besides Allāh, one receives blessings from Rasullāh (s) as well? No it isn't. Why not? Because Rasullāh (s) and his successors are not independent givers of grace besides Allāh. They do not give out of their own accord. Rather they are a *means* (wasila) through which Allāh gives of His grace. In other words, there is no difference whether we say Allāh gives or the Messenger of Allāh gives or the Proof (Hujjah) of Allāh gives.

4. Can anyone intercede (i.e. do shafā'ah) for another?

In the following āyah, Allāh makes it clear that no one can intercede for another person:

﴿أَمْ اتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ شُفَعَاءَ قُلُوبًا أُولَئِكَ كَانُوا لَا يَمْلِكُونَ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَعْقِلُونَ. قُلْ لِلَّهِ الشَّفَاعَةُ جَمِيعًا...﴾

Have they taken intercessors besides Allāh? Say, 'What! Even though they have no control over anything and cannot apply reason?!' Say, 'All intercession rests with Allāh.

- Surah az-Zumar, 39:43-44

But then Allāh (s.w.t.) also says elsewhere:

﴿وَلَا يَمْلِكُ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ الشَّفَاعَةَ إِلَّا مَنْ شَهِدَ بِالْحَقِّ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ﴾

*Those whom they invoke besides Him have no power of intercession, **except those who are witness to the truth and who know [for whom to intercede].***

- Surah az-Zukhruf, 43:86

﴿لَا يَمْلِكُونَ الشَّفَاعَةَ إِلَّا مَنْ اتَّخَذَ عِنْدَ الرَّحْمَنِ عَهْدًا﴾

*No one will have the power to intercede [with Allāh], **except for him who has taken a pledge with the All-beneficent (Lord).***

- Surah Maryam, 19:87

There is no contradiction. If we understand the matter holistically, we realize that what the Qur'ān is trying to say is that those who believe they can set up their own helpers and intercessors, whether it is other rich and powerful people or imaginary powers and idols, are mistaken. No one can intercede before Allāh unless He permits it. But those whom *He authorizes* can intercede because they are simply acting on Allāh's behalf with His permission. The verses that oppose intercession were revealed when the idol worshippers used to say:

﴿... مَا نَعْبُدُهُمْ إِلَّا لِيُقَرِّبُونَا إِلَى اللَّهِ زُلْفَى...﴾

... 'We only worship them so that they may bring us near to Allāh,'...

- Surah az-Zumar, 39:3

So the problem is not 'having an intercessor' but 'having an intercessor who is not appointed and authorized by Allāh'.

5. How does Allāh forgive sins?

In some verses of the Qur'ān, Allāh makes it clear that no one forgives sins except Him:

﴿... وَمَنْ يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ...﴾

...and who forgives sins except Allāh?...

- Surah Aal-i Imrān, 3:135

So we would assume that we should only ask Allāh directly to forgive us our sins. But then in another verse, Allāh tells us:

﴿... وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ إِذْ ظَلَمُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ جَاءُوكَ فَاسْتَغْفَرُوا اللَّهَ وَاسْتَغْفَرَ لَهُمُ الرَّسُولُ

لَوَجَدُوا اللَّهَ تَوَّابًا رَحِيمًا﴾

...Had they, when they wronged themselves, **come to you** and pleaded to Allāh for forgiveness, **and the Messenger had pleaded for forgiveness for them**, they would have surely found Allāh All-Forgiving, All-Merciful.

- Surah an-Nisā, 4:64

Similarly, when the brothers of Nabi Yusuf ('a) realize they have been unjust to Nabi Yusuf ('a) and displeased Allāh (s.w.t.), instead of asking Allāh for the forgiveness of their sins directly, they asked their father, Nabi Ya'qub ('a):

﴿قَالُوا يَا أَبَانَا اسْتَغْفِرْ لَنَا ذُنُوبَنَا إِنَّا كُنَّا خَاطِئِينَ. قَالَ سَوْفَ أَسْتَغْفِرُ لَكُمْ رَبِّي إِنَّهُ هُوَ

الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ﴾

They said, 'Father! Plead [with Allāh] for forgiveness of our sins! We have indeed been at fault.' He said, 'I shall plead with my Lord to forgive you; indeed He is the All-forgiving, the All-merciful.'

- Surah Yusuf, 12:97-98

The fact that Nabi Ya'qub ('a) responds and agrees to do so shows us that there is nothing wrong with asking Allāh's representatives to pray on our behalf to Allāh (s.w.t.) to forgive us.

The Wahhābi say that these are examples when Rasulullāh (s) and Nabi Ya'qub ('a) were alive but now that they are dead, it is wrong to pray for them.

But the Wahhābi are wrong. Rasulullāh (s) and the other Ma'sumeen ('a) are not dead. We have seen examples of people asking Rasulullāh (s) directly at his grave even during the times of the early Caliphs.

Allāh says about those ordinary Muslims who die during jihad:

﴿وَلَا تَقُولُوا لِمَنْ يُقْتَلُ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَمْوَاتٌ بَلْ أَحْيَاءٌ وَلَكِنْ لَا تَشْعُرُونَ﴾

And do not call those who were killed in Allāh's way 'dead.' Rather, they are living, but you are not aware.

- Surah al-Baqarah, 2:154

If Allāh tells us not to say or assume the ordinary martyrs are dead, how can we say that about Rasulullāh (s) just because he is not physically present with us, when he is the best of Allāh's creation and the leader of all the prophets and messengers and martyrs?

Also, all Muslims including the Wahhābi complete their daily salāh by saying "as-salāmu 'alaykum ayyuhan Nabiyyu wa rahmatullāhi wa barakātuh" (peace be on you, O Prophet and the mercy and blessings of Allāh). This salām is not in the 3rd person or referring to Rasulullāh (s) indirectly. It is addressing him directly. What meaning would it have if Rasulullāh (s) was simply 'dead'?

Therefore reciting duas like Dua at-Tawassul, in which we ask Rasulullāh (s) and the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) to intercede for us is not *shirk* or *harām*.

Conclusion:

In all the five examples we gave above: who causes death? Who is our guardian? Who gives us bounties and blessings? Can anyone besides Allāh intercede for us? And using Rasulullāh (s) and the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) as a wasila for the forgiveness of our sins, we have seen that the Qur'ān is not opposed to tawassul – as long as the wasila is someone authorized and recognized by Allāh.

It is in fact the practice of Allāh to always use a wasila and that is why He tells us:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَابْتَغُوا إِلَيْهِ الْوَسِيلَةَ...﴾

O you who have faith! Be conscious of Allāh, and seek a means of nearness to Him...

- Surah al-Māidah, 5:35

Allāh has created and used a wasila for everything. He could have created each one of us directly and fed us directly but He created us through the 'wasila' of our parents and He feeds us through the 'wasila' of another human being (an employer). From duas and hadith we know that Allāh uses angels for everything: to control the weather, to bring or remove blessings, to cause life and death and so on.

Allāh also sent us guidance through the 'wasila' of prophets and messengers and He preserves the truth and the Qur'ān through the 'wasila' of the Imāms. If Allāh had wished, He could have spoken to all of us directly like He did with Nabi Musa ('a). But in His own wisdom He uses a wasila.

It is not that we cannot ask Allāh directly. We certainly can. But Allāh has also shown us the more respectful and faster way to reach Him is through His wasila. By going through Rasulullāh (s) and the Imāms ('a) we also get to know Allāh better because they teach us how to pray to Allāh and how to call upon Him.

When Nabi Yusuf ('a) became the King of Egypt and he found out that his father Nabi Ya'qub ('a) had turned blind, he told his brothers:

﴿اذْهَبُوا بِقَمِيصِي هَذَا فَالْقُوهُ عَلَىٰ وَجْهِ أَبِي يَأْتِ بَصِيرًا وَأْتُونِي بِأَهْلِكُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ﴾

Take this shirt of mine, and cast it upon my father's face; he will regain his sight...

- Surah Yusuf, 12:93

Both Nabi Ya'qub ('a) and Nabi Yusuf ('a) are Prophets of Allāh. Why didn't they pray to Allāh directly? Why did Nabi Yusuf ('a) use the wasila of his shirt to restore his father's eyesight?

Why do all Muslims believe their sins are forgiven when they touch the Black Stone (Hajar al-Aswad) lodged in the side of the Ka'bah or when they hold on to the door of the Ka'bah and ask for forgiveness? It is because this is found in the ahādith of Rasulullāh (s). If non-living objects can become a means to Allāh then certainly the most eminent of Allāh's creation are the best means (wasila) of communicating with Allāh (s.w.t.)

Lesson 5

Tawassul in Islām (cont'd)

Only Muhammad and Aali Muhammad as Wasila

We have seen in the previous lesson that the Qur'ān orders us to seek a means of nearness to Allāh. We also know from the Hadith ath-Thaqalayn that the Prophet (s) left two things behind to keep us from going astray: the Qur'ān and his Household (Ahl al-Bayt).

It is therefore important to remember that our wasila can only be the Qur'ān, Rasulullāh (s) and his Ahl al-Bayt ('a). It is wrong for us to make our own wasila who are not authorized by Allāh.

Amongst the Sunni Muslims who do not follow the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) some mystics and saintly personalities are used as a wasila. In places like India and Pakistan it is common to see the Sunni Muslims and those who practice Sufism to visit the shrines of these Sufis and pray to Allāh through them as a wasila. But none of these are appointed by Allāh or His Messenger.

Rasulullāh (s) for example, said, 'my Ahl al-Bayt is like the Ark of Nuh. Whoever boards it will be saved and whoever turns away from them will perish.' Such authentic ahādith are enough proof for us that we shouldn't treat anyone as a wasila – regardless of how learned and knowledgeable they may be – when we have the Qur'ān and the Ahl al-Bayt ('a).

Visiting (Ziyārah) of the Infallibles ('a)

As we have seen in the previous lesson from the examples in the section on Tawassul in Hadith, there is nothing wrong with visiting the graves of Rasulullāh (s) and the Ahl al-Bayt ('a). In fact it is highly recommended and a duty upon us as a sign of our loyalty to them.

The ahādith of the Imāms tell us that in the Hereafter, they will visit and help us with Allāh's permission, especially if we visit them at their graves in this world and offer salām to them.

However we should follow the etiquette (ādāb) of ziyārah as taught to us by the Imāms themselves and we should be careful not to create our own innovative practices that can become *shirk*. Practices that are wrong include prostrating before the graves of the Imāms or praying salāh towards them instead of the qibla.

Marking Wilādāt & Shahādāt Events

The Wahhābi believe that celebrating the birth (milād) of Rasulullāh (s) or of anyone else is harām just as commemorating their martyrdom is harām because it is an innovation (bid'ah) in Islām that was not practised by Rasulullāh (s) or his early companions.

The problem is that the Wahhābi assume everything in religion is harām unless proven otherwise. Islām is not opposed to culture or the practice of something good unless it opposes something in the Qur'ān or the authentic ahādith. We know from the practice of the Imāms of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) that they commemorated the shahādah of Imām Husayn ('a) every year by remembering him and weeping for him, especially on the Day of Ashura.

Authentic Sunni hadith also say that Rasulullāh (s) used to fast every Monday because that was the day he was born. In other words Rasulullāh (s) celebrated his birthday every week!

As long as we ensure that how we mark the birth and martyrdom of Rasulullāh (s) and the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) do not involve any harām practices, it is not only permissible but highly recommended because it serves as an opportunity to be inspired from their lives and to remember their contributions to humanity and their teachings. The events of wilādāt and shahādāt are great opportunities of learning more about the teachings of Islām.

Some Common Misconceptions about Tawassul and the Shi'ah

Question: Some Muslims accuse the Shi'ah of 'worshipping' their Imāms and praying towards their graves and prostrating themselves before the graves of their Imāms. They even call the Shi'ah "grave-worshippers".

Answer: It is not true that the Shi'ah worship their Imāms or even believe the Imāms have any power independent of Allāh. The Shi'ah firmly believe in the Qur'ān's teaching:

﴿إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ﴾

You [alone] do we worship, and to You [alone] do we turn for help.

- Surah al-Fātiha, 1:5

But seeking wasila is not worshipping. We the Shi'ah do not ask our Imāms with the thinking that they are the source of the blessing. We either ask Allāh "for the sake of Muhammad and Aali Muhammad", or we ask Rasulullāh (s) and his sacred Household (Ahl al-Bayt) to pray to Allāh on our behalf. When we do ask them directly, the intention is the same: that they should intercede for us before Allāh and not that they are a replacement or alternative to Allāh.

It is unfortunate that some ignorant Muslims prostrate before the graves of the Imāms and even pray salāh towards it (away from the qibla) but this is not permissible even in the Shi'ah faith. All respected marāj'i agree that it is harām to do sajdah before an Imām or his grave or to pray in his direction instead of the qibla.

Question: The Shi'ah call out to their Imāms for help with words like "Yā Ali", "Yā Husayn" and so on. Is this not shirk?

Answer: No it isn't. Firstly because we have seen in the previous lesson that even the companions of Rasulullāh (s) used to call out 'Yā Muhammad' at the grave of Rasulullāh (s). Secondly, as we have said earlier, we are calling them to intercede for us, not as an alternative to Allāh. And thirdly, sometimes the call is only to boost our morale or give us courage. For example, a person moved by the suffering of Imām Husayn ('a) or visiting Karbala may shout 'Yā Husayn!' That is only an expression of how he feels. Similarly, because of the valour of Imām Ali ('a), a person fighting in battle might shout 'Yā Ali!' to boost his courage.

A person who is drowning may call out to a person on the shore, 'Help me!' It would be foolish to insist he should only ask Allāh while he is drowning or that it is *shirk* to ask anyone besides Allāh for help. This simple example teaches us that using a means to get help is not the same as believing the means to be the source of help.

We must therefore separate the idea of worship ('ibādah) and supplication (du'a) from tawassul. The Shi'ah do not call their Imāms partners to Allāh. They do not ask them for their sustenance or the forgiveness of their sins. They only ask Allāh. The Shi'ah believe that the Imāms are creatures of Allāh and His humble servants but they are chosen by Allāh to be teachers and guides for mankind and because of their status, their du'ās to Allāh are never rejected. Therefore the Shi'ah, with Allāh's pleasure and authorization, ask the Imāms to be intercede for them in this world just as every person entering Paradise on the Day of Judgement will be in need of the intercession (shafā'ah) of Rasulullāh (s) and the Ahl al-Bayt ('a). No one will be able to enter Paradise on their own merit and deeds.

Question: Is there any more evidence that we can address those who have died and are not physically present with us?

Answer: Al-Muttaqi al-Hindi, a very famous and well-known Sunni muhaddith, in his equally famous work, "Kanz al-'Ummal" narrates that when Rasulullāh (s) used to visit the Muslim cemetery, he would address the dead and say, 'Peace be on you, the house of the believing people, and indeed we, inshā Allāh, will join you.'²⁰ Peace be unto you, O people of the graves from the believers and Muslims, may Allāh forgive us and you.'²¹

²⁰ *Sahih Muslim*, Kitāb at-Tahārah, hadith 249.

²¹ *Kanz al-'Ummāl*, v. 15, hadith 42561.

This proves that the dead can hear us. It should not therefore be difficult to accept that Rasulullāh (s) and the Imāms ('a) can also respond and pray for us.

All Muslim historians narrate that after the Battle of Badr, Rasulullāh (s) addressed the dead bodies of the enemies and said to them, '...you called me a liar.. have you found it to be true what your Lord promised you? I have found it to be true what my Lord promised me.' Some of his companions heard Rasulullāh (s) speaking to these dead bodies and said to him, 'are you speaking to those who are dead?' and Rasulullāh (s) replied, 'they can hear me even better than you can, but they cannot answer me!'²²

How is it possible then that the dead polytheists can hear when they are talked to but Rasulullāh (s) and the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) cannot?!

We also have many ahādith from Rasulullāh (s) that he said he will reply the salām of anyone who comes to visit him even after he has passed away.

When Rasulullāh (s) had passed away and before he was buried, Abu Bakr (the 1st Caliph of the Muslims) entered the room where the body of Rasulullāh (s) lay, he unveiled his face and kissed it and then addressing him he said, 'May my father and mother be your ransom; **You** were pleasant both when alive and now after your demise; **remember us near Your Lord.**'²³

This also proves that the early Muslims regarded Rasulullāh (s) to be aware and listening to their words, both when physically alive and even after his demise.

²² *Tārikh Ibn Ishāq*, p. 454; Martin Lings, *Muhammad*, p. 155.

²³ Ash-Shāfi'i, *Kashf al-Irtiyāb*, p. 65.

Lesson 6

Tajassum al-A'amāl

The Arabic word 'tajassum' means 'physical embodiment' i.e. when something takes on a physical form. And the word A'amāl is the plural of 'Amal, which means 'action' or 'deed'. Tajassum al-A'amāl therefore refers to the belief in Islām that whatever actions we perform in this world – good or evil – will come to us in a physical form in the next world and in fact come into existence even now, as soon as we create them through our actions, though they are not visible to us until we die.²⁴

Actions (A'amāl) vs. Recompense (Jazā)

Muslim scholars have three opinions on the relationship between a human being's actions and the recompense for them.

The first opinion is that there is no relation whatsoever between what we do and how Allāh will repay us on the Day of Judgement. This is the opinion of the Ash'aris, who are the Sunni Muslims today. They believe we must obey Allāh and keep away from disobedience only because Allāh has said so. Whether He rewards us with Paradise or punishes us with Hellfire has nothing to do with our obedience or disobedience. They have even gone as far as saying that if Allāh wishes, He may cause all the evil doers like Fir'aun and Yazid to enter Jannah and all the righteous and virtuous like the prophets (anbiyā) and martyrs (shuhadā) to enter Hellfire.

The reason why the Ash'aris (Sunnis) believe this is because they say that Allāh cannot be 'forced' to do anything. He does not *have to* reward or punish anyone. And as proof, they quote the following verse in the Qur'ān:

﴿لَا يُسْأَلُ عَمَّا يَفْعَلُ وَهُمْ يُسْأَلُونَ﴾

He is not questioned concerning what He does, but they are questioned.

- Surah al-Anbiyā, 21:23

The Shi'ah scholars respond to this theory by saying: Of course Allāh can do as He pleases, but that does not mean He will do so even if it means acting unjustly. Furthermore, if we believe this, then it would not encourage anyone to do good or keep away from evil. It would also mean that Allāh was lying to His prophets and messengers when He promised to reward the good and punish the evil.

²⁴ Tajassum al-A'amāl is also called Tajassud al-A'amāl. It means the same thing though. Tajassum comes from the word al-Jism and Tajassud comes from al-Jasad. Both words (al-Jism and al-Jasad) mean 'physical body'.

And Allāh says in the Qur'ān:

﴿... إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُخْلِفُ الْمِيعَادَ﴾

Indeed Allāh does not break His promise.

- Surah Aali Imrān, 3:9

﴿... إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَظْلِمُ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ...﴾

Indeed Allāh does not wrong [anyone] [even to the extent of] an atom's weight.

- Surah an-Nisā, 4:40

﴿... وَمَنْ أَوْفَى بِعَهْدِهِ مِنَ اللَّهِ...﴾

And who is truer to his promise than Allāh?

- Surah at-Tawbah, 9:111

The second opinion amongst the Muslim scholars regarding deeds and their recompense (jazā) is that there *is* a relationship between action and recompense but they are not one and the same. Just like in this world where you work and you get paid but the payment is different from the work, similarly, the recompense on the Day of Judgement is different from the actions we perform in this world even if it is given in exchange for them. Another example they give is that of a judge in the court who passes a sentence of punishment for a crime but the crime and the punishment are not one and the same. Many Shi'ah Muslims believe this to be the relationship of our actions and the reward or punishment we will receive on the Day of Judgement. There is, however, a third opinion...

The third opinion is that, not only are actions and their recompense (reward or punishment) related to each other but they are in fact *one and the same*. As human beings act in this world, they are also creating a reality for themselves in the Real World (which is the Hereafter). We can therefore think of the Hereafter as a parallel world that exists even right now but in a different plane of existence. The inner forms of our actions in this world are the outer, physical realities in that World.

In other words, human beings do not get 'paid' for their good deeds or sins in the next world - they actually create their own paradise or hell. This concept of our actions transforming into a physical form is called Tajassum al-A'amāl or Tajassud al-A'amāl. The good that we create for ourselves in the next world can be multiplied and strengthened through persistence in good work here and the evil realities that we have created for ourselves in the next world can be neutralized or dissolved through repentance (istighfār and tawbah).

Muslim philosophers and mystics like Ibn 'Arabi have explained this phenomenon of actions taking a physical form in the Hereafter, as follows:

Everything that a human being does or says has an effect on his soul and he carves and sculpts his soul with it. When he repeats those actions or words again and again the carving and chiselling becomes a firm trait and disposition of his soul. But the human being is occupied with the whims of his self and his sensual desires and thoughts. He does not free himself of them until his soul leaves his body and there is nothing left to occupy himself with and to carve. Then he finds the result of his actions before him – good or evil. And if it is evil, then the soul will wish there were a far distance between it and itself because of how it will torment it. Those whims and desires will come to life and take a real form once they have become firm and solid (through repeated unrepentant actions). And if it is good, then the soul will find its rewards accordingly.

We must now prove the concept of Tajassum al-A'amāl from the Qur'ān and ahādith.

Evidence for Tajassum al-A'amāl from the Qur'ān

﴿يَوْمَ تَجِدُ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّا عَمِلَتْ مِنْ خَيْرٍ مُّحْضَرًا وَمَا عَمِلَتْ مِنْ سُوءٍ تَوَدُّ لَوْ أَنَّ بَيْنَهَا
وَبَيْنَهُ أَمَدًا بَعِيدًا وَيُحَذِّرُكُمُ اللَّهُ نَفْسَهُ وَاللَّهُ رَءُوفٌ بِالْعِبَادِ﴾

The day when every soul will find present whatever good it has done; and as to whatever evil it has done it will wish there were a far distance between it and itself.

- Surah Aal-i Imrān, 3:30

According to the Qur'ān mufassir (exegete), Allamah Tabatabai:

The Arabic word in this verse for 'will find present' is **muhdaran**, which means 'brought in' or 'presented', instead of simply being present. And this suggests that good and evil already exist now and are preserved from extinction because only what already exists is 'brought in' and presented at judgement. And the words 'will find' (**tajidu**) also suggest finding something physical.

Again, look at the following verse:

﴿وَوُضِعَ الْكِتَابُ فَتَرَى الْمُجْرِمِينَ مُشْفِقِينَ مِمَّا فِيهِ وَيَقُولُونَ يَا وَيْلَتَنَا مَا لِ هَذَا
الْكِتَابِ لَا يُغَادِرُ صَغِيرَةً وَلَا كَبِيرَةً إِلَّا أَحْصَاهَا وَوَجَدُوا مَا عَمِلُوا حَاضِرًا وَلَا يَظْلِمُ
رَبُّكَ أَحَدًا﴾

The Book will be set up. Then you will see the guilty apprehensive of what is in it. They will say, 'Woe to us! What a book is this! It omits nothing, big or small, without enumerating it.' They will find present whatever they had done, and your Lord does not wrong anyone.

- Surah al-Kahf, 18:49

We can see clearly from the above verse that it is not the recompense of what they had done that they will receive but rather 'they will find present whatever they had done'. And therefore Allāh will not be the one punishing people. Rather people punish their own selves because of their evil actions.

﴿يَسْتَعْجِلُونَكَ بِالْعَذَابِ وَإِنَّ جَهَنَّمَ لَمُحِيطَةٌ بِالْكَافِرِينَ يَوْمَ يَغْشَاهُمْ الْعَذَابُ مِنْ فَوْقِهِمْ وَمِنْ تَحْتِ أَرْجُلِهِمْ وَيَقُولُ ذُوقُوا مَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ﴾

*On the Day when the punishment envelopes them, from above them and from under their feet, and He will say, 'Taste **what** you used to do!'*

- Surah al-Ankabut, 29:54-55

The verse above does not say 'Taste *in exchange* for what you used to do'. It says, 'Taste **what** you used to do.'

Here is another verse:

﴿وَأَنْ لَيْسَ لِلْإِنْسَانِ إِلَّا مَا سَعَى وَأَنْ سَعِيهِ سَوْفَ يُرَى﴾

*And that nothing belongs to man except what he strives for, and as for what he strove for, soon shall he **see** it.*

- Surah an-Najm, 53:39-40

Again, the verse above does not say that man shall see the reward of what he strove for. Rather it is says, 'what he strove for, soon shall he see it' means he will see the actions themselves.

And in the following verse, again we are told, whatever good or evil you do, even an atom's weight, you will 'see it':

﴿يَوْمَئِذٍ يَصْدُرُ النَّاسُ أَشْتَاتًا لِيُرَوْا أَعْمَالَهُمْ فَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ خَيْرًا يَرَهُ وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ شَرًّا يَرَهُ﴾

*On that day, mankind will issue forth in separate groups **to be shown** their deeds. So whoever does an atom's weight of good **will see it**, and whoever does an atom's weight of evil **will see it**.*

- Surah az-Zilzāl, 99:6-8

The proof that Paradise and Hell already exist even today and that we are building our Jannah or lighting our own fire in Hell even today is given in the following verse:

﴿كَلَّا لَوْ تَعْلَمُونَ عِلْمَ الْيَقِينِ لَتَرَوُنَّ الْجَحِيمَ ثُمَّ لَتَرَوُنَّهَا عَيْنَ الْيَقِينِ﴾

*Nay! if you had known with a certain knowledge, You would most certainly have **seen** the hell.*

- Surah at-Takāthur, 102:5-7

The above verse is telling us that with true conviction (yaqin), we could see Hellfire even now.

As an example of how our actions immediately transform into good or evil, Allāh tells us in the Qur'ān:

﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَكْتُمُونَ مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَيَشْتَرُونَ بِهِ ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا أُولَٰئِكَ مَا

يَأْكُلُونَ فِي بُطُونِهِمْ إِلَّا النَّارَ...﴾

Surely those who conceal any part of the Book that Allāh has revealed and take for it a small price, they eat nothing but fire into their bellies...

- Surah al-Baqarah, 2:174

In other words, a person may think they are only doing this or that, but in fact they could be eating fire into their bellies and even burning in Hell right now but they are not aware of it.

To put this differently, we may think we are only praying or helping others or just disobeying Allāh with a 'small' sin but actually we are creating our rewards and our punishments with our own actions. As soon as we die, it is as if we wake up from a dream and we see the Real World and what we have actually produced for our eternal life. And then we realize that the whole of this world's life was just like a passing breeze but we wasted it in playing games and meaningless pursuits when we could have done so much to build our eternal abode.

If a person always keeps this in mind, it is very easy to perform good deeds and to keep away from sins.

Lesson 7

Tajassum al-A'amāl (cont'd)

Evidence for Tajassum al-A'amāl from Hadith

The number of *ahādith* that prove Tajassum al-A'amāl are too numerous to list as well. But here we quote a sample:

Rasulullāh (s) was once sitting with his companions when they heard a loud noise. The angel Jibrāil came to Rasulullāh (s) and said that a rock that had fallen into Hell 70 years ago had just landed at the bottom of Hell and hence the loud noise. Just then Rasulullāh (s) and his companions were informed that a hypocrite in Madina had died at the age of 70. And Rasulullāh (s) exclaimed, 'Allāhu Akbar!' This means the hypocrite was already going through hell but only 'landed' in there when he died.

Many hadith say that when a person is buried, his good deeds are buried with him. His prayers protect him from one side, his fasts from other, his hajj and zakāt and even his love for the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) come in the form of beings that protect him from the fire of Hell.

In one hadith Rasulullāh (s) is reported to have said, 'the world is the farmland of the hereafter'²⁵ which suggests that with action, a man plants seeds in his life in this world which will bear fruit in the Hereafter.

Rasulullāh (s) said to a man called Qays who asked him for advice: 'You have no escaping, O Qays, from a companion who will be buried with you whilst he will be alive and you will be buried with him whilst you will be dead. If he is noble, he will honour you and if he is cursed, he will betray you. He will only be resurrected with you and you only with him. You will not be questioned except about him nor will you be raised except with him. Therefore make sure he is no less than righteous. For if he is righteous, you will not find a comforter (necessary) besides him but if he is abominable, nothing will frighten you more than him. And "he" is your actions!'

Rasulullāh (s) also said, 'when I ascended to the heavens (for Mi'rāj), I entered paradise and saw in it an open plain and I saw angels constructing (mansions with) bricks of gold and bricks of silver; and sometimes they would stop. I said them, "why have you stopped (constructing)?" and they replied, "(we wait) until our payment comes to us". I asked, "And what is your payment?" They said, "The words of the faithful: glory be to Allāh (*subhānallāh*), and praise be to Allāh (*wa al-hamdulillāh*), and there is no god by Allāh (*wa lā ilāha illallāh*), and Allāh is the greatest (*wa Allāhu Akbar*). When he recites, we build. When he is quiet, we stop."

²⁵ *Awāli al-Laāli*, v. 1, p. 267 Hadith 66.

In another hadith, Rasūlullāh (s) is reported to have said, ‘One who says “*subhānallāh* (glory be to Allāh!)” Allāh plants a tree for him in paradise by it; and one who says “*al-hamdulillāh* (praise be to Allāh!)” Allāh plants a tree for him in paradise by it; and one who says “*lā ilāha illallāh*” (there is no god but Allāh!)” Allāh plants a tree for him in paradise by it; and one who says “*Allāhu Akbar* (Allāh is the greatest!)” Allāh plants a tree for him in paradise.’ So a man from the Quraysh said, ‘Messenger of Allāh! Our trees in paradise are plenty then?!’ He replied, ‘Yes. But beware of not setting them on fire lest you burn them all down. And that is because Allāh, the Mighty and Sublime, says

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَلَا تُبْطِلُوا أَعْمَالَكُمْ﴾

*O you who have faith! Obey Allāh and obey the Messenger **and do not make your actions void.***

- Surah Muhammad, 47:33

The following narration regard “The Inn of Sa’ālik” is another example of the proof of Tajassum al-A’amāl and proof that one who is virtuous is in Paradise-like gardens even if he appears to be suffering and in pitiful conditions and one who is evil is burning in a Hell-like fire even if he appears to be living in a palace and enjoy the pleasures and comforts of this world.

The Inn of Sa’ālik

When the Abbāsi Khalifa al-Mutawakkil felt threatened by our 10th Imām, Imām Ali b. Muhammad al-Hādi an-Naqi (‘a), he sent his commander Yahya b. Harthama to Madina to arrest the Imām and bring him to Samarra by force.

When the Imām (‘a) arrived in Samarra, al-Mutawakkil first had him put down at a rundown place called the Inn of Sa’ālik.

Sālih b. Sa’id reports:

I visited Abu al-Hasan (Imām al-Hādi) (‘a) on the day he arrived in Samarra. I said to him, ‘May I be sacrificed for you! In every matter, they are only concerned to extinguish your light and to diminish you so that they have put you to stay in this hideous inn – the Inn of Sa’ālik.’

‘Here you are Ibn Sa’id,’ said the Imām (‘a), and he indicated with his hand. Suddenly I was amid pleasant gardens and flowing rivers and gardens in which were perfumed plants and beautiful maidens like veiled pearls. My sight became confused and my amazement was great. He (the Imām (‘a)) said to me, ‘This is where we are. This belongs to us, Ibn Sa’id. We are not in the Inn of Sa’ālik!’²⁶

²⁶ Shaykh Mufid, *Kitāb al-Irshād*, chp. 9, p. 505-6.

Something to Think About:

What are the implications of Tajassum al-A'amāl? How does a person's life, goals, ambitions and aspirations change if they firmly believe in this concept?



Fiqh **(Laws)**

Lesson 1

Jabíra Wudu, Ghusl and Tayammum

Rules Regarding Wudu with a Bandage (Jabira)

Jabira is any bandage, plaster, medicine or ointment on any injury. *Jabira* is also any splint or cast used for supporting any broken part of the body.

When a person has *jabira* and they need to do wudu, ghusl or tayammum, there are special rules for these and they need to do what is called wudu al-jabira, ghusl al-jabira or tayammum al-jabira. *Wudu al-Jabira* therefore means wudu on a bandage or splint. Similarly, *ghusl al-jabira* means ghusl with a bandage or splint.

Before we look at *how* to do Jabira wudu, ghusl or tayammum, let us discuss *when* to do what.

When to Do Jabira Wudu, Ghusl and Tayammum

Jabira Wudu, Ghusl or Tayammum is only permissible when one of the following conditions is true:

- The jabira (e.g. bandage) cannot be removed.
- Water is harmful to the wound.
- There is an unbandaged wound.
- There is an unbandaged fracture.

If the body part that is covered with jabira is...

- a) Not fractured, and
- b) Only partly covered in bandage

...then we must do Wudu al-Jabira.

If the body part that is covered with jabira is...

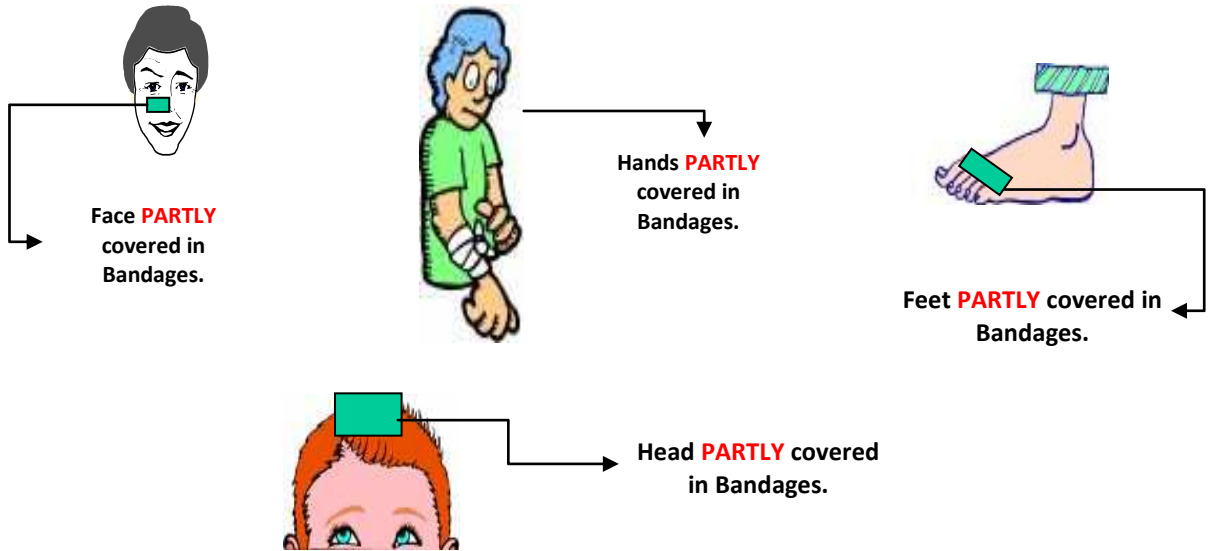
- a) Fractured, or
- b) Completely covered in bandage

...then we must do both, Wudu al-Jabira and Tayammum al-Jabira.

When ghusl is wājib and a part of the body is covered in Jabira then Ghusl al-Jabira is done. If water is harmful to all parts of the body or one part but it would be hard to avoid getting it wet with ghusl to the rest of the body parts, then tayammum is done instead of ghusl. And if the part of the body with Jabira involves the parts of the body wiped in tayammum then the rules of Tayammum al-Jabira will apply.

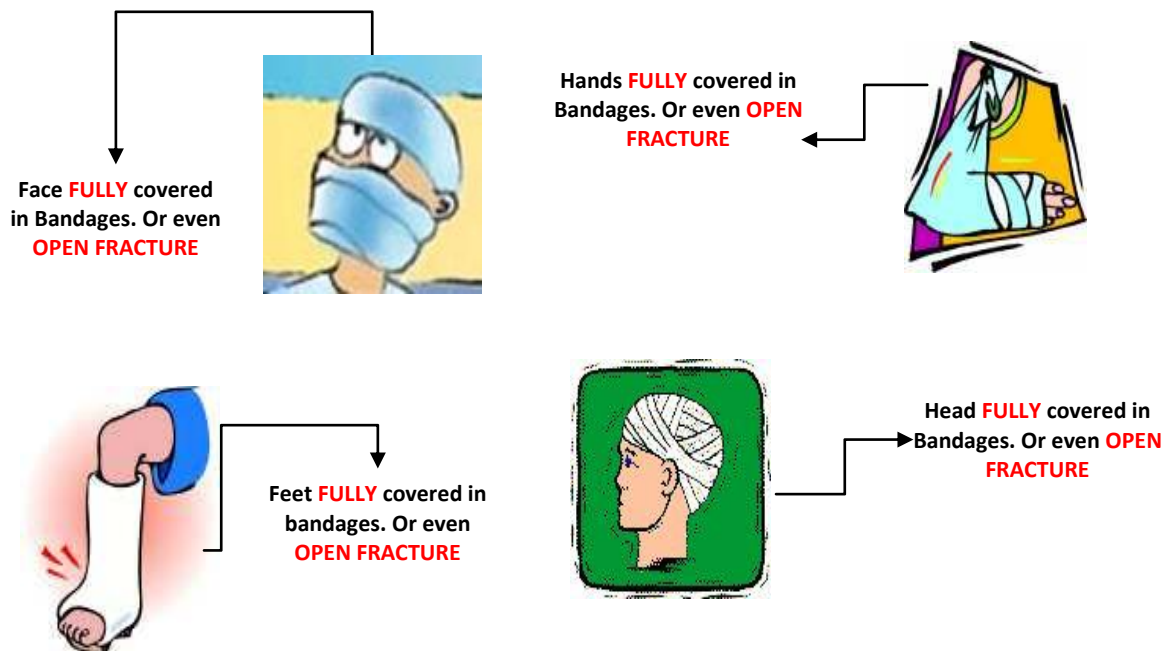
When To Do Wudu al-Jabira Only

Bandage on cut or torn skin on the body parts where Wudu is normally done. Does not Cover Completely.



When To Do Both Wudu al-Jabira & Tayammum al-Jabira

Bandage covers major part of wudu completely. Open fracture with no splint.



How to Perform Jabira Wudu

When a person has a wound, cut, burn or broken limb, if water can be brought to the skin and is not harmful, then wudu should be done in the normal manner. If water is harmless and the bandage can be opened, or if the water can be taken underneath the plaster or bandage, provided that it is clean (tāhir), that should be done (i.e. pour enough water to go through the jabira).

If water is harmful, or the part of the body is covered with a bandage that cannot be removed, a wet hand should be wiped over that bandage, plaster or splint if it is tāhir.

If the bandage is najis and cannot be removed, a clean piece of cloth should be placed over the affected part of the body and the wet hand should be wiped over the clean cloth.

The surrounding uncovered and unaffected areas should be washed or wiped (*mas-h*) in the normal manner.

If there is no place left to wipe on the head or the feet (for *mas-h*), as a measure of precaution, tayammum should also be done. Likewise if the bandage also covers other parts besides those affected (injured, broken, or bound), and it is not possible to open or take water underneath it, tayammum should be performed, along with the jabira wudu.

If, on the parts of the body that are to be washed or wiped in wudu, there is no injury, but water is harmful for some other reason, then tayammum alone should be performed.

How to Perform Jabira Tayammum

If a person does not have water or needs to do tayammum instead of wudu or ghusl but also has a sore, injury or burn on the forehead or on the back of the hand (i.e. parts on which tayammum is usually done), and it is not possible to remove the bandage, then he or she should strike the palm on the ground as is usually done in tayammum but then rub the palm over the bandage (instead of the skin).

Similarly, if there is a bandage on the palm of the hand that cannot be removed, one should strike the hands on the ground with that bandage.

If someone is sick and it is not possible for him to practise tayammum himself, he can find a helper who should first of all try to strike the patient's hand on the ground and give him tayammum. If this is not possible either, the helper can strike his own hands on the ground and rub them on the patient's forehead and the backs of his hands.

When a person is not sure whether they need to perform Jabira Wudu or Jabira Tayammum, they should perform both, Jabira Wudu and Tayammum.

How to Perform Jabira Ghusl

Ghusl with jabira follows the same logic as wudu and tayammum. Islam does not impose hardship or ask unreasonably of a person. When it is possible to wash as ghusl the unaffected parts of the body and wipe only with water the injured and bandaged parts, then that should be done. If even that is not possible and ghusl becomes wājib, then tayammum can be done in place of the ghusl. If the parts of the body involved in tayammum are also in jabira, then Jabira Tayammum should be done (i.e. tayammum with the bandage on).

How to Pray Salāh when Injured

If a person cannot stand in salāh, they can sit and pray and keep a table before them with turbah for sujud. It is wrong to keep the turbah on the palm of the hand and do sajdah on it because the turbah must be on a steady surface during sujud. If a person cannot keep a table, they can merely bend as a gesture for ruku' and bend even further for sujud.

If a person cannot even sit due to illness or injury, they must pray lying down and use their hands and head to bend a little and gesture for ruku' and sujud to the best of their ability.

If a Muslim is conscious but paralysed and cannot even move their hands and head, they must use their eyelids to indicate ruku' and sujud.

If a person is floating in water and thinks he may drown if he is not rescued and realizes he has not said his salāh, he must offer his entire salāh with a single takbir.

But in all cases, salāh is wājib. Salāh is the cord that connects us to Allāh. It must be the most valuable act to us. And the most precious moments of our lives must be the times when we are fortunate enough to worship our Creator.

Rasulullāh (s) has said about salāh:

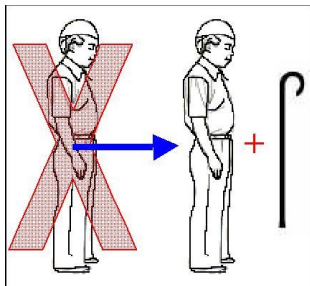
الصَّلَاةُ عَمُودُ الدِّينِ . إِنْ قُبِلَتْ قُبِلَ مَا سِوَاهَا وَإِنْ رُدَّتْ رُدَّ مَا سِوَاهَا

Salāh is a pillar of religion. If it is accepted all else will be accepted. And if it is rejected, all else will be rejected.

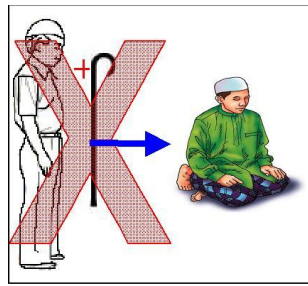
That is why we must give utmost importance to tahārah, wudu and all aspects related to salāh in order to perfect our standing before Allāh five times a day.

SUBSTITUTES FOR QIYAM

AS AN EXAMPLE OF DOING THE BEST YOU CAN WHEN INJURED



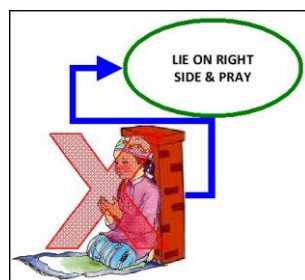
If you can't stand freely, use a cane to support yourself during qiyām



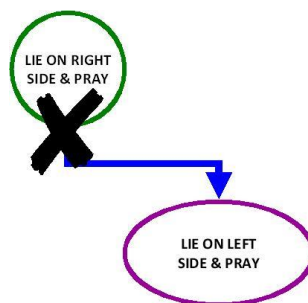
If you can't stand even with a cane, sit and pray



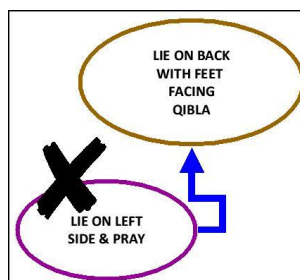
If you can't sit freely, use a pillow or cushion to support your back



If you cannot sit and pray even with a back support, lie on the right side and pray



If you cannot lie on your right side to pray, lie on your left side



If you cannot lie on your side, lie on your back with feet towards qibla.

If you can't move your hands, use your eyelids to indicate ruku' and sujud, and so on.

IF A PERSON CAN STAND FOR A PART OF THE SALAH, THEN HE/SHE SHOULD STAND FOR AS LONG AS HE/SHE CAN & THEN SIT DOWN & CONTINUE THE SALAH

Rules for the Sick and Injured

If someone is suffering from incontinence but there are brief moments when they can control themselves they should perform wudu and salāh during those moments of respite.

If there is no respite but it is possible for the person to keep a container of water nearby and repeat wudu without turning away from qibla when the wudu is broken in the midst of salāh, then they should do so (e.g. when bedridden).

If this is not possible, one wudu will suffice for one salāh. It is preferable to repeat the wudu for the other salāh. The same rule applies to one with a medical condition that makes him or her unable to control the passing of gas (flatulence).

Those who suffer from involuntary urinary or faecal discharge should wear an extra protection of clothing or padding to protect najāsah from reaching other places. If the illness is curable, the person must, if possible, use all resources at his disposal to have it cured. And if he recovers, it is not necessary for him to repeat (as qadā) the salāh performed during illness.

Rules Regarding Doubt in Wudu

One who doubts whether he has performed wudu should perform it again. If one doubts during salāh whether one has performed wudu, the salāh will be bātil (void) and must be performed again. But if one doubts *after* salāh is complete, the salāh is valid and wudu should be performed for subsequent prayers only.

One who knows that he has performed wudu and also that something that invalidates wudu has also taken place, but does not remember which one took place first, must perform the wudu if he has not yet prayed. If the doubt occurs while he is praying, his salāh is bātil. If it occurs *after* salāh then his salāh is valid and he should repeat wudu for subsequent prayers only.

If after completing wudu a person doubts whether the right conditions existed or not (for example whether the water was tāhir or mubāh (i.e. not ghasbi)), then he should not care about these doubts, and his wudu is valid, provided it is only a doubt. If he is sure then of course the wudu is not valid.

Similarly, all the doubts about wudu during salāh must be valid **doubts**. If a person is **sure** he did not perform wudu or his wudu was broken or it wasn't done correctly, then the wudu and salāh is bātil and must be repeated.

If anyone doubts excessively (*kathir ash-shak*) to the extent of becoming whimsical (or has a doubting habit that would be clinically acknowledged as a psychological condition) then he or she should not pay attention to the doubts and should ignore them.

You may also want to review the rules of **Shak in Salāh** taught in Book 8 (Fiqh Lessons 2-4).

Lesson 2

Tawalla and Tabarra

Tawalla is loosely defined as ‘To love Rasulullāh (s), the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) and their friends (i.e. those who love them)’ and Tabarra, the opposite, is usually defined as ‘To show dislike and keep away from the enemies of Rasulullāh (s) and the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a).’

However, such basic definitions can easily be misunderstood and misused unless explained further.

The Qur’ān, in āyāt such as the following, upholds Tawalla:

﴿قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللَّهُ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ﴾

Say: If you love Allāh, follow me, Allāh will love you and forgive you your sins. For Allāh is Forgiving and Merciful.

- Surah Aal Imrān, 3:31

And Tabarra is also mentioned in the Qur’ān in āyāt such as:

﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُؤْذُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ لَعَنَهُمُ اللَّهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَأَعَدَّ لَهُمْ عَذَابًا مُهِينًا﴾

Those who annoy Allāh and His Apostle - Allāh has cursed them in this world and in the hereafter; and has prepared for them a humiliating punishment.

- Surah al-Ahzāb, 33:57

In hadith and the teachings of Rasulullāh (s) and the Imāms (‘a) as well we are taught that not only should we support good and abstain from evil but we must also support those who support good and keep away from those who do evil.

‘Sitting on the fence’, being indifferent and impartial, and remaining silent over a wrongful act is not acceptable in Islam. A person who does that is a partner-in-crime with the wrongdoer. This is because a tyrant or wrongdoer is encouraged when he knows no one cares and/or no will speak against him or stop him in his sinful act or oppression of others.

For example, the first civil war in Islam (when Muslims fought other Muslims) was during the caliphate of Imām Ali (‘a) in the Battle of Jamal. Some companions of Rasulullāh (s) decided they would not take sides with either party – neither Imām Ali (‘a)’s side nor the side of Talha, Zubayr and Aisha. They decided to stay in their

homes and worship Allāh. Yet Imām Ali (‘a) condemned them for their silence and lack of courage to stand up for the truth and the weakness of their intellect in not seeing who was right and who was wrong.

It is therefore not sufficient to recognize the truth. One must also recognize falsehood so that we are not confused when falsehood pretends and disguises itself as truth. Rasulullāh (s) left the Muslims saying, ‘*I leave behind the Book of Allāh and my family – these two will never separate until the Day of Judgement. If you hold on to them, you will never go astray.*’²⁷ Rasulullāh (s) also said, ‘Ali is with the truth and the truth is with Ali.’ Then he prayed to Allāh and said, ‘O Allāh, turn truth wherever Ali turns!’

All Muslims – Shi’ah and Sunni - acknowledge these ahādith. These ahādith amongst others give us a yardstick of measure – the truth is always with the Qur’ān and the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a). Even when two parties of Muslims dispute on the interpretation of the āyāt of the Qur’ān, we can refer back to the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) for clarification.

So far, we can therefore conclude two things: Tawalla and Tabarra is not for the benefit of Rasulullāh (s) or the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a). It is for our own good. And secondly, the reason Tawalla and Tabarra are part of Furu’ ad-Din and not Usul ad-Din is because they are not beliefs or ideas that we carry in our hearts. Rather they are acts of worship that must manifest themselves in our actions (of course based on what is in our hearts). In other words, to praise Rasulullāh (s) and the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) for their knowledge and character or to weep for their suffering is neither enough nor is it a sign of true love. There are lots of non-Shi’ahs and even non-Muslims in some parts of the world who do that. Tawalla and Tabarra means our actions in emulating Rasulullāh (s) and the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) and own character must show and prove that those whom we follow were truly the most learned and noble.

If a non-Shi’ah sees a Shi’ah praising the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) but does not see any of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a)’s characteristics of piety, honesty, generosity, kindness, integrity, etc. in the Shi’ah, why would he or she want to follow the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a)? In his or her mind, if one who already knows so much about the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) and claims so much love for them is not affected by their character, why would anyone who is a stranger to them benefit from following them?

This reveals the multiple aspects of Tawalla and Tabarra. Not only do we show courage to stand for truth and oppose wrong when we practice Tawalla and Tabarra, but it is also a form of preaching (*tabligh*) that invites others to get to know Rasulullāh (s) and the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) better.

Tabarra needs to be discussed in greater detail, as it is easier to misunderstand.

²⁷ This is famously known as the *Hadith at-Thaqalayn* (The Hadith of Two Weighty Matters).

It is true that Islam does not want us to support the enemies of Rasulullāh (s) and the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) and wants us to even keep away from those who love their enemies or are pleased with and support their actions.

In the Qur'ān for example, Allāh condemns the Jews who killed the prophets of Allāh (3:181, 4:155) and when Rasulullāh (s) and the Imāms ('a) were asked why the Jews at the time of Rasulullāh (s) were being condemned when those who killed the prophets lived much earlier, they said, 'It is because they were pleased with the actions of their forefathers and did not condemn it.'

Similarly, Imām Ali ('a) is reported to have said:

O People, certainly what gathers people together is (their) agreement (to good or bad) and (their) disagreement, for only one individual killed the camel of Thamud but Allāh held all of them in punishment because all of them joined him in their consent. Thus Allāh said, *But **they** hamstrung her...so the punishment seized **them**...* (Qur'ān, 26:157-8).

- Nahj al-Balāgha, Sermon 201

In Ziyārat al-Wāriṭh, Imām Ja'far as-Sādiq ('a) has taught us to recite the following when addressing Imām Husayn ('a):

فَلَعَنَ اللَّهُ أُمَّةً قَتَلَتْكَ، وَلَعَنَ اللَّهُ أُمَّةً ظَلَمَتْكَ، وَلَعَنَ اللَّهُ أُمَّةً سَمِعَتْ بِذَلِكَ فَارْضِيَتْ بِهِ

*So may Allāh curse the people who killed you. And may Allāh curse the people who oppressed you. And may Allāh curse the people **who heard of that and were pleased with it.***

So it is very clear then that Tabarra, in the same sense as al-Amr bil ma'ruf and an-Nahi 'anil Munkar, requires us to distance ourselves clearly from the wrongdoers, the tyrants and the enemies of Islām, Rasulullāh (s), the Qur'ān, and the Ahl al-Bayt ('a).

But what is important to realize is that Tabarra is to ensure that we do not lose our souls and become part of those who are cursed in the Hereafter and to also encourage us to stand up and support the truth.

Unfortunately many Muslims and Shi'ahs think Tawalla and Tabarra is only about showing a lot of passion and emotion, promoting polemics amongst the Muslim sects, and inciting others who disagree with us by openly cursing those who hurt the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) even if it offends others.

Yes, even the Qur'ān mentions the curse of Allāh and the angels and the whole world on the evildoers (āyah 2:161 and 3:87 for example). However cursing is a prayer to Allāh – to remove His mercy from those who do not deserve it. Cursing is not about shouting and throwing fists in the air and inciting others and behaving in an unruly manner that is not becoming of a Shi'ah of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a).

The first thing we must learn to do is to distinguish between people who are *ignorant* about the right of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) and the crimes that were committed against them versus those who *know* the truth and are still hateful to the Ahl al-Bayt ('a).

Those who are ignorant must not be approached with hate and curses. That is not the meaning of Tabarra. Even if they do follow the enemies of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a), remember they are ignorant. How do you guide someone who is sincere but ignorant? Will he listen to the truth if you offend him and curse those he looks up to? How did Rasulullāh (s) and the Imāms ('a) deal with those who were ignorant of their right? How did Imām Hasan ('a) deal with the rude man from Syria who followed Mu'āwiya? How did Imām Ali Zayn al-Abidin ('a) speak to the old man in the streets of Kufa who was cursing him and not aware of who he was?

It is one thing to practice Tabarra against the original enemies of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) or even those who hate the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) today despite knowing the truth. And it is another thing to practice Tabarra against the vast majority of people who simply are ignorant of the truth.

Always remember, Islam does not like hate when an 'enemy' can be overcome with love. Islam does not like confrontation if a dispute can be resolved with dialogue. Islam does not like war if peace can achieve the same goal. Rasulullāh (s) and Imām Ali ('a) always hesitated to start a battle and never threw 'the first arrow' until they had no choice but to fight and defend themselves.

The Qur'ān tells us:

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

Good and evil [conduct] are not equal. Repel [evil] with what is best. [If you do so,] behold, he between whom and you was enmity, will be as though he were a sympathetic friend.

- Surah al-Fussilat, 41:34

Those who pretend to love the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) excessively and in doing so curse others openly, and are offensive and rude in their speech and behaviour, are neither true Shi'ahs nor are they practising Tawalla and Tabarra. And those who believe there should be no Tabarra at all and no cursing of any form in Islam are also wrong because they are naïve.

The truth is that there *are* individuals – in history and even today – who truly hate Rasulullāh (s) and the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) and their Shi'ah. And they would love to kill and destroy them. These – we must practice Tabarra against them. And there are those who simply follow others in ignorance. These we must try and reach out to and guide through polite speech, dialogue and the best of manners and character. And even

when we practice tabarra, it can be through propagating the truth, creating awareness, and decent behaviour. We don't have to be rude and shout and abuse. Certainly that is not the behaviour of a Shi'ah. Of course even when we wish to curse those who deserve it, we can do so as taught to us in duas. We shouldn't swear and curse using crude and vulgar language.

The cursing (*la'n*) in duas and ziyārah are not wrong. We *should* recite them but bearing in mind that cursing is also a form of du'a asking Allāh to remove His mercy and favours from these who do not deserve it.

Finally, when practising Tawalla and Tabarra, always ask yourself: Do I possess the qualities that I love in the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) that I am praising them for? How do I start possessing some of those qualities? That is true Tawalla. And ask yourself: Do I possess any of the qualities that I hate in the enemies of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) and if I were in their place, how would I have behaved? How do I ensure that I do not have any of those evil and sinful characteristics? That is true Tabarra.

And before doing something in public as an act of Tawalla or Tabarra, always ask yourself: Is this action going to help the cause of Islam, Rasulullāh (s) and the Ahl al-Bayt ('a)? Or is it going to turn people off and away from them?

If it will attract people towards Rasulullāh (s) and the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) then it is for their sake and true tawalla and tabarra. But if it will turn people off and deny them the chance of knowing who these great personalities really were, then it is not for Rasulullāh (s) and the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) – it is for our own egos; and shaytān has disguised our own selfish needs as love for Rasulullāh (s) and the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) so that we think and believe it to be Tawalla and Tabarra.

Class Discussion 1:

What can we change in our practise of Tawalla and Tabarra and how we mark the wilādah and shahādah of Rasulullāh (s) and the Ahl al-Bayt ('a), especially in the months of Muharram and Safar so that non-Muslims and other non-Shi'ah Muslims are attracted to Islam and to get to know these great personalities better?

Can you list three ideas of Tawalla and Tabarra that we can practice as individuals and three ideas that we can practice as a community, and changes we can make in our masājid and community centres? (For example, quoting historic facts with full references from reliable sources.)

Class Discussion 2:

You have studied about al-Amr bil Ma'ruf, an-Nahi 'anil Munkar and Jihad in Book 10. These Furu' ad-Din acts were related to general matters of all kinds like encouraging people to doing good and following the Shari'ah and preventing them from evil. Tawalla and Tabarra are linked more closely to loving the good and disassociating from the evil. But can you see any similarities between all these concepts?

Class Discussion 3:

Talk about how you can love someone through your actions besides showing emotions and reciting poetry and words of praise. Now talk about how you can hate evil itself and disassociate from it without hating the person who practises it in ignorance? How can you tell apart a person who is wrong ignorantly (and should be dealt with in kindness) versus a person who is wrong knowingly and maliciously and should be truly cursed, kept away from and even fought against to stop his evil against Rasulullāh (s), the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) and their Shi’ah?

Your teacher will pick one of these discussions and allow you to share your understanding. This will give your teacher the opportunity to confirm if your understanding of these concepts is correct and to modify your understanding as necessary. So you are encouraged to share your thoughts and what you have understood in this lesson.

Lesson 3

Trade and Business (Tijarah) in Islam

Halāl Occupations

It is wājib for a Muslim to earn his livelihood through work and to participate in the productive activities of society. One should not be a burden on society but an asset to it, and anyone who is able-bodied should not live off the government or from private charity. According to Islam, since women have to take the heavy responsibility for raising and upbringing the new generation, it is the responsibility of their men to earn a living and meet the home's financial needs, even though it is not forbidden for women to work if it does not have any detrimental effect on their children.

All work that is productive for society and is not harām in shari'ah is considered dignified in Islam. Rasulullāh (s) once worked as a shepherd; Imām Ali ('a) worked as a simple labourer in order to prove this point. The Qur'ān says that Nabi Musa ('a) worked for ten years as a hired labourer (28:26). What is undignified is to beg and depend on others and to become a burden on society. All respect is due to one who earns his or her livelihood through effort and hard work.

Devoting one's life to studies and research, which may be religious studies, medical research, or any other such academic or scientific activity is highly praised in Islam. This is a shared responsibility (wājib kifāi), which means that there must be some people in every society who should do this.

Industry and agriculture are especially emphasized in hadith. It is through them that contributions are made to the material production and well being of society. The aim of every person should not simply be how to earn more but how to contribute more to the spiritual and moral, as well as the material, aspects of society. Agriculture is mentioned as a great favour from Allāh in the Qur'ān (56:64-8). Rasulullāh (s) said that when a Muslim cultivates a plant or a crop, whatever a man or a bird eats from it is counted as charity from him, and he will be rewarded for it.

One of the followers of Rasulullāh (s) was planting a tree when he was very old. A person asked him: 'Do you expect it to bear fruit in your life time?' He replied: 'The fruit might be eaten by people after me, but I will be rewarded for it.'

The reason that agriculture is emphasized is that no society can safeguard its independence unless it is self-sufficient in food.

In hadith, trade is also much emphasized, and the Qur'ān encourages Muslims to enter into business. Rasulullāh (s) said that 'An honest trade is like jihād in the way of Allāh.'

Office jobs are also permitted but Islam encourages self-employment and business, trade, industry or agriculture. Those communities whose members have an enterprising spirit and engage in business always flourish more because they are not limited by how much they earn and not being content with a fixed salary and secure income. They work harder and place their trust more in Allāh because they take a greater risk in what they will earn the next day.

That said, Muslims who engage in business are required to know the Islamic rules relating to commercial dealings and to avoid those earnings that are forbidden by Islam. So they must be aware of what is halāl and harām in business.

Harām Occupations and Businesses

1. Trading in *najis al-'ayn* substances. For example, buying or selling intoxicants (alcohol, drugs), pigs and dogs is absolutely harām without exception. Some matters that are najis al-'ayn can be traded in if there is some benefit in it that is not against Islamic law. For example, selling animal manure as fertilizer, selling blood to hospitals, trading in products made with animal hair or bone (except for dogs and pig).
2. Items that are najis but not *najis al-'ayn* are ok to sell and deal with even if they are mutanajjis. For example, food items that can become tāhir with washing are ok to trade in but the Muslim buyer should be informed about it.
3. Dealing in alcohol is absolutely harām (forbidden), directly or indirectly. As a precaution one should even avoid dealing in medicines that have alcohol in them. Selling grapes if it is known that it will be used for making wine is *harām*. But if it is not known and sold with the intention of selling it as a fruit, then it is ok. Although if one is doubtful of their use, it is better to keep away from such trades. When it comes to alcohol, Rasulullāh (s) has cursed a person who deals with it in any manner, directly or indirectly (selling, serving, transporting, advertising, packaging, sitting at the same table with the drinker, etc.)
4. Trade in the meat, skin or anything in the carcass of animals that are *harām* to eat or are halāl but were not slaughtered according to the laws of shari'ah (i.e. not dabiha (halāl meat)) is not permitted. The meat or skin or animal parts being offered for purchase by a non-Muslim or being imported from a non-Muslim country must be assumed to be najis and therefore harām. One has to be sure that the animal was lawfully slaughtered unless one is buying it from a Muslim and/or a Muslim country.
5. Buying or selling wild animals is harām.

6. Trading in instruments of harām activities. For example it is harām to buy or sell dice and cards that are used in gambling or any kind of musical instruments. However it is permissible to deal with things that can be used for both halāl and harām purposes if the intention is only to promote the halāl activities e.g. electronic devices like TVs, computers, etc.
7. Dealing in things that are used in time-wasting activities (called *lahw wa la'ib*) is also harām.
8. Any profession, research or work that strengthens the enemies of Islam, directly or indirectly and helps them against Muslims and Islam is harām. It is also harām to sell arms and weapons to persons or governments that you know will use them against Muslims.
9. Dealing, selling or purchasing usurped or stolen goods and/or property or wealth. By 'usurped' is meant any product(s) whose real owner is someone else or which has been obtained through illegitimate means. This includes property being sold without the permission of the real owner or even payment being made with money or goods that is known to be stolen or harām.
10. Fraud or trading in adulterated things. It is harām to sell something into which something else is mixed so as to cheat the buyer or make more profit, without the buyer knowing it. For example, selling milk diluted with some water, without the buyer knowing it. Or selling something as an 'original' when it is a fake, and so on.
11. Any transaction that involves usury or interest. Usury or Interest is called *Ribā* and is harām in Islam. This means for example, lending money to someone on the condition that it will be returned with an additional sum as *interest*. Or selling any commodity at a higher rate against the same commodity, for example, selling 3 tons of wheat for 5 tons of wheat. The same is true with gold or silver. However it is ok if you lend someone money and when they pay you back, they give you more out of their own freewill. Also, it is permitted to deposit money with non-Muslims (e.g. a non-Muslim Bank) and to take any interest they may offer, if they do so on their own free will.
12. Begging from others is harām. Even if a person is poor, he should preserve his honour and dignity as far as possible. On the other hand, Muslims are told not to turn beggars away because one who begs sells his dignity in exchange and must be in very great need to do so.
13. Trading in Endowments. An endowment is called *waqf* in Islam. It is usually something that someone has donated free for a specific purpose. E.g. a person gives a piece of land as *waqf* to be used as a cemetery, masjid or orphanage for Muslims. Or someone gives trees or a property as *waqf* so that the produce from the orchard or the rent from the property may be used to cover the expenses of maintaining a masjid or school. It is harām to buy or sell *waqf* property unless it is ruined and there is no alternative to selling it. In this case every effort should be made to see that the price obtained for it is used in the same or a similar place.

14. Hoarding essential goods is harām. No one is allowed to hoard anything e.g. to keep a product for longer than its usual period in order to sell it later for more than its usual price.
15. To take advantage of people's needs for essential goods is harām. For example, when one realizes there is a shortage of rice in the market, to bump up the price and sell it at double or triple the normal price in order to profit from people's need for the commodity.
16. To profit by gambling or playing the lottery (of any kind) or buying/selling lottery tickets.
17. Making the sculpture of humans or animals is harām.
18. To work in or help in the construction and/or building of an unislamic place of worship (e.g. a church, temple, etc.).
19. To buy/sell matters that are clearly harām such as selling or buying pornographic material.
20. Working at restaurants or food places where one will be forced to sell or serve pork or alcohol. Working at movie theatres if some of the movies shown promote immoral values or are detrimental to Islam and its values. In any case, it is best to avoid such jobs.

Makruh Occupations and Trades

1. To sell one's land unless you wish to purchase another land with the money.
2. To be a butcher and slaughtering animals as a full-time occupation unless there is no one else to provide halāl meat to Muslims.
3. To sell shrouds (*kafan*), unless it is a side business or providing a need for Muslims because no one else is providing it.
4. To deal in business with people of low character (thieves, smugglers, etc.).
5. To do business between the time of Fajr and sunrise.
6. To make one's primary business buying and selling wheat and barley and other such staple food items.
7. To interfere in a deal being made by a Muslim by making your own offer.
8. To swear in Allāh's name during a transaction, even when it is true.

Mustahab Acts in Business

1. Not to discriminate between Muslim buyers in the price of a commodity, selling it for more to some and less to others.

2. Not to be greedy in the price of a commodity and not to keep a high profit margin.
3. To always give a little more of the thing one sells, and take a little less of the thing one buys. For example, when measuring out the weight of something you are selling, always add a little more after measuring. When buying something and measuring it out yourself, always measure a little less if the seller is not going to measure it himself.
4. If a buyer regrets having purchased something and wishes to return it, even though you are not obliged to take it back, it is *mustahab* for you as the seller to take it back, especially if you can re-sell it again.

Cheating, Stealing, Adulteration of Goods, Embezzlement

These are all *harām* but can take many forms. For example, stealing is not just taking an object out of a shop without paying for it or the owner's consent. It can include:

- To hide the defect of a thing one sells to another person.
- To cheat during an exam.
- To borrow money off a person and then never pay it back.
- To collect money for a charity, and then spend it on yourself.
- To purchase a train or bus ticket to get from A to B and then use that same ticket to go to place C, even though knowing that is not allowed.
- Not to return money when a cashier accidentally gives you more change or undercharges you.

The End Does NOT Justify the Means

Some people may argue that 'the end justifies the means' meaning as long as the end result is good, how we go about getting to the end does not matter. In Islam it *does* matter. For example, cheating people to raise money for building a masjid is *harām*. The end is noble but the means does not justify it.

Some ignorant Muslims also believe that it is ok to cheat if it is not against Muslims. This is also wrong. Cheating is always *harām* because you gain at someone else's expense through tricking others, and you gain something without working for it and deserving it.

Most importantly, when we cheat, we don't hurt the person we cheat as much as we hurt our own souls.

Double-Role Professions

Some professions can have a harām and a halāl aspect. You must therefore think carefully before pursuing them as they could lead you to roles that would put you in an awkward situation. For example:

- When Ayatullah Khui and Ayatullah Sistāni were asked: Is it haram to work for a bank or charge a customer interest on behalf of a bank or financial institution? Their reply was: If the work involves direct dealing with interest then yes, it is harām. But if it is working for the bank but not dealing with interest e.g. computer technician, janitor, driver, guard, etc. then it is ok. Which means one has to be careful not to be promoted to a role that involves interest, when working for a financial institution.
- What if you take a summer job to serve burgers, fries, pop, etc. that are not halāl to non-Muslims but then you are asked to sell pork?
- What if you work at a convenience store or book/magazine store that also requires you to sell lottery tickets and pornographic magazines?

So any career you decide to undertake, ask yourself questions like:

- What opportunities and positions would I work in as a beginner in the field?
- What positions would I typically get promoted into?
- Will I be able to maintain my hijāb including avoiding the close interaction or physical contact with non-mahrams?
- Will I have to take up studies at the university that may affect my faith or cause me to speak/write against Islam?
- Will I be able to say my daily salāh and fast in the month of Ramadan in this profession?

Conclusion

In the end, remember, there is no profession or career where there won't be a challenge regarding halāl and harām. What is important is to:

- a) Know the shari'ah
- b) Listen to your conscience
- c) Be strong in faith and have the courage to say 'No' when you have to
- d) Be willing to quit your job or leave an opportunity if you have to, but never sell your faith and your eternal life in the hereafter for the temporary life of this world

Lesson 4

Tijārah in Islam (cont'd)

The Islamic Etiquette of Doing Business

1. No interest should be transacted.
2. No swearing in the name of Allāh even if one is speaking the truth.
3. Seller should not conceal defect of his own goods.
5. Seller should not falsely praise the quality of his goods.
6. Buyer should not find fault falsely in the goods he or she is buying.

Condition of the Buyer and Seller

1. Both the buyer and seller must be adults (**bāligh**).
2. Both must be sane.
3. Both should not be **safih** (prodigal, which means wasting money on useless, trivial, and/or meaningless things).
4. Both should have a proper **niyyah** (intention).
5. Both should be under no force or coercion to buy or sell.
6. Both should be the owners of the property/product and money involved in the transaction.

Interest and Usury

The basic element of *Interest* or *Usury* is the exchange of one commodity for the same commodity with an increase in payment. The Islamic law strictly prohibits *Usury* (the practice of lending money at a rate of Interest).

The practice of Usury is equal to acting with hostility against Allāh and Rasullāh (s). The Qur'ān says:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَذَرُوا مَا بَقِيَ مِنَ الرِّبَا إِن كُنتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ فَإِن لَّمْ تَفْعَلُوا فَأْذَنُوا بِحَرْبٍ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَإِن تُبْتُمْ فَلَكُمْ رُءُوسُ أَمْوَالِكُمْ لَا تَظْلِمُونَ وَلَا تُظْلَمُونَ﴾

O you have faith! Be conscious of Allāh and abandon what remains of usury, should you be faithful. And if you do not, then be aware of a war from Allāh and His Messenger....

- Surah al-Baqarah, 2:278-9

There are many reasons given in hadith as to why charging others interest is *harām*. Primarily it is a form of exploitation where a person who has more takes wrong advantage of another who has less and is in need. The person who charges interest expects to make profit without working for it. He or she only lends money to people and, taking advantage of their need, constantly makes more profit. This leads to a society of debt where the rich keep getting richer and the poor keeping sinking in debt and get poorer.

It is for this reason that banks and financial institutes encourage people to only pay off a minimum amount of their credit card bill, mortgage loan, car loan, etc. The more a person remains in debt, the more the financial institution can keep charging them an interest. Often a person ends up paying a significant amount of money in interest. People, for example, who take a loan with interest to pay off their home mortgages over 25 years, are really paying for the home's value for 20 years only. For the other 5 years they are only paying interest on the loan they borrowed.

Some of the ways to reduce the evil of usury that surrounds us are:

1. Always try and pay off your credit card bill in full every month. Never keep an outstanding amount that results in you having to pay the bank interest.
2. Try and pay off your mortgage and car loan as quickly as possible. This may mean delaying other expenditures like furnishing and decorating your home to your liking but it is still a wiser decision than living with debt all your life. If possible, purchase a smaller home or a home in a suburb where the cost of houses is lower, so as to avoid paying interest more than necessary. Once your home is paid for, you can always consider selling it at a higher rate and then moving into a bigger home.
3. If Allāh has blessed you with wealth, consider giving interest-free loans to relatives and Muslim brothers and sisters whom you trust. Such interest-free loans are called *qard al-hasanah*. Those who receive it should always keep to their promise and pay off the loans as agreed so that the *qard al-hasanah* system works and others can be helped by this as well. An example of this is student-sponsorship schemes where graduates are supposed to pay back their student loans after they start working. Those who do not keep their promises deny other students from benefiting from the student loans that is supposed to come from the repayments the first students were supposed to make.
4. Always live within your means. Do not try to compete with others or live above what you can afford.

Interest increases the gap between the rich and poor in society. A few rich people control the economy and the lives of the majority who have less.

Interest also encourages people to keep their money in banks that will pay them back higher earnings as investments. If this were not possible, the individuals would perhaps have invested their money in businesses and trades that would encourage employment for others. Instead the money kept in the bank is used by the bank to lend money to others and to make greater profit (through interest) whilst giving the investor only a small share of the profit.

When interest rates are higher on the borrowing of loans, the production cost of goods rises. That in turn results in higher prices of commodities. Furthermore, since the rich continue getting richer, they can afford to bid higher prices of goods especially those items whose availability is scarce. But the poor continue to suffer as they cannot afford the rising cost of essential commodities.

Taking Interest from Non-Muslims

According to Ayatullah Sistāni, a Muslim cannot take Interest from non-Muslims who live in Islamic countries under the protection of the Islamic state. It is *iẖtiyāt wājib* not to take Interest from all other non-Muslims as well and *harām* to take interest from a Muslim.

However, in case where a non-Muslim (in both cases above) agrees or offers to pay interest out of their own free will, then the amount may be accepted not as interest but with other intentions.

In summary: When dealing with individuals do not give or take interest. When dealing with institutions in a society where you cannot avoid this you may take the interest from a bank if it is offered to you freely and you should do your best to keep any payments of interest to a minimum (mortgages, student loans, car loans, credit card interest, etc.).

Homework: To understand the evils of interest and how banks take wrong advantage of individuals and profit from them, watch **Money as Debt** and **Money as Debt II** by Paul Grignon on Youtube. Your Diniyat teacher may also arrange to watch this in class if time permits.

Dealing with Lost Property

If you find lost property on the street or in a public place, try and find the owner by announcing it and asking around. If after a while you lose hope of finding the owner, give it away in charity with the intention that the real owner will be rewarded for giving it in charity. You too will be rewarded for your honesty and for spending it in charity on behalf of the owner.

If it is a large sum of money or an expensive item that someone may come looking for at the local police station and you trust that the police will act faithfully, then hand it over to the police.

If it is within a premise, give it to someone in charge. For example, at a masjid, give it to the masjid administrators; at a shopping mall, hand it over to the lost-and-found department; at a school, give it to the office; at a bank or commercial store, give it to the customer service department, bank manager, etc.

Remember: In Islam, just because you found something does not entitle you to keep it. The only exception is if you find hidden treasure and go looking for it (like diving in the sea, mining in a cave, etc.) And the rules for this are found in the risāla of the *marāj'i* under the rules of Zakāh and Khums.

Lesson 5

Dabiha (Laws of Slaughtering Animals)

Dabiha Conditions by Which Meat Becomes Halāl

An animal that dies naturally or is not slaughtered in the prescribed Islamic manner of *dabiha* cannot be eaten and its meat is considered unclean. But an animal, (a) whose flesh can be eaten, and (b) that is slaughtered in the prescribed Islamic way is considered clean and lawful (halāl) and can be eaten.

The person who slaughters an animal must be a sane, adult, Muslim, male or female; even a child may slaughter an animal as long as he or she is of an age to be able to distinguish good from evil.

Slaughtering should be performed with an instrument made from iron or steel, and it must be sharp. However, if iron or steel is not available, any sharp implement can be used to slaughter the animal.

The animal should be placed on its side (or held up on its rear) in such a manner that the front of its head, its four legs and belly face the qibla at the time of slaughter. It is not necessary that the animal should be exactly facing the qibla, but only facing such a direction that common speech would say that it was.

The slaughterer should also face the qibla. If the slaughterer, knowing this law deliberately does not turn the animal in this direction, the meat of that animal cannot be eaten; but if he or she does not know the law, does not know the direction of the qibla, or was unable to place the animal correctly, or keep it correctly positioned, the slaughter is valid.

After placing the knife on the throat of the animal, the slaughterer should say, with the niyyah of slaughtering the animal: bismillah ('In the name of Allāh'), preferably in Arabic. If the person deliberately omits to say this, the animal cannot be eaten, but if he or she accidentally forgets, the slaughter is valid.

The slaughterer should cut through the four main blood vessels of the animal's neck, cleanly and completely. It is also necessary that after the blood vessels have been cut the animal should move, even if it only moves its eyes or tail, in order to prove that it was not dead before being slaughtered.

Slaughtering an animal where other animals can look on, or slaughtering an animal one has bred and raised oneself are disapproved (makruh).

A Summary of the Laws of Dabiha

1. The one who carries out the slaughtering must be a Muslim
2. If possible, the instrument used to slaughter should be made of iron
3. The creature to be slaughtered must be made to face the Holy Ka'bah
4. The person performing the slaughter must mention the name of Allāh as he slaughters the animal
5. There must be a normal emission of blood from the animal after the slaughter
6. The animal must show some sign of movement after being slaughtered, especially if there was some doubt whether the animal was alive before being slaughtered

Hunting

In hunting it is not necessary to cut the throat of the animal in the manner of slaughtering. As long as the animal dies while being hunted in the manner described below and its flesh is permissible to eat, it will be *halāl* and *tāhir* to eat.

The animal or bird must be killed with a sharp-pointed weapon that pierces its body. If the animal or bird is shot, the bullet or shot must have pierced the animal's skin, and this must be the direct cause of death. If it is killed by beating with sticks or stones, or only by the pressure of the weapon and not by its sharpness, it cannot be eaten and is considered *najis*.

The hunter must be a Muslim, and should say *bismillah*, preferably in Arabic, at the time of shooting or using the weapon. However, if he accidentally forgets to say the *basmalah*, the hunt is still valid.

The animal must be hunted intentionally. If, for example, a person fires a shot, and by chance kills some animal, it cannot be eaten, nor is its carcass considered *halāl*.

If the hunter reaches the animal or bird while it is still alive and there is time to ritually slaughter it, then the animal must be slaughtered according to the rules of *dabiha*.

Halāl and Harām Food

The easiest way to understand what foods are *halāl* and what are *harām* in Islam is to divide all foods that human beings normally consume into two groups: Plants and Animals.

The Plant Family

Plants include vegetables, fruits, legumes, grains, and so on. These are all halāl unless:

- a) They are known to be harmful to human beings e.g. poisonous or narcotic substances.
- b) They are mixed with something najis or harām. For example, a drop of alcohol in a sauce or soup would make it harām to drink or eat it. Lard in a croissant would make the croissant harām. Animal fat from an animal that is not halāl or was not slaughtered Islamically, mixed with fries or chips would make it harām, even if only the same spoon was used to flip a harām burger and the fries. The fries are touched with najis oil and therefore cannot be eaten.

Animals

Animals can further be divided into three groups:

- Land Creatures
- Sea Creatures
- Birds

Halāl and Harām Land Creatures

The animals whose meat is halāl include cattle (cows and buffaloes), sheep and goat.

It is important to distinguish between an animal's meat being halāl/harām for consumption and being clean/unclean (tāhir/najis). An animal's meat can be harām but its carcass can still be tāhir. And conversely, if halāl meat becomes najis (e.g. with drops of alcohol) then it becomes harām to eat, not because it wasn't slaughtered properly or is not halāl but because it is najis. In other words, the meat we consume must be halāl but additionally, any food we consume must also be tāhir.

As a rule, the carcasses of all animals that have spurting blood (i.e. their blood spurts out when a blood vessel is cut) are *najis* unless the animal is hunted or slaughtered according to the rules of *dabiha*. Even if an animal whose flesh is harām to eat was hunted or slaughtered according to the Islamic law, its carcass will be clean (tāhir). However, the carcasses and bodies of pigs and dogs are unclean (*najis*) in all circumstances.

The carcasses of all animals that do not have spurting blood are considered tāhir regardless of how they died or were killed.

The Unlawful Parts of a Lawfully Slaughtered Animal

There are some parts of a halāl animal that are harām to eat regardless of how it was slaughtered or hunted. These are: the blood, the male or female generative (sexual) organs, the pineal gland (found in the brain), the spinal cord, the nerves at either side of the spine, the gall and urinary bladders, the glands, the spleen, excrement and the eyes. All those parts that are unattractive or off-putting should be avoided as well.

In summary:

- | | |
|--------------|--|
| Halāl | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Domestic animals that have a cleft hoof except for pig e.g. cow, goat, sheep, lamp, camel.▪ Certain wild animals (not kept in enclosures) e.g. mountain sheep and goats, wild buffaloes, gazelles and deer. |
| Harām | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Dog and Pig.▪ Animals with canine teeth or fangs (lions, tigers).▪ Most wild animals (monkeys, elephants, giraffes, hares).▪ Domestic animals without hooves or cleft hooves (e.g. rabbits, cats).▪ All reptiles.▪ Most insects.▪ Halāl animals that die naturally or are not slaughtered Islamically. |

Halāl and Harām Sea Creatures

As a rule, for any fish to be halāl, it must:

- Have scales.
- Be alive when it is removed from the water i.e. it should not be dead in the water when it is pulled out with a net, fishing line, or any other means. If a person knows for sure that a fish was dead in the water (e.g. it washes up the shore) then that fish is harām to eat even if it has scales. Its carcass however is clean (tāhir) when touched.

Examples of halāl fish are salmon, tilapia, tuna and snapper. Examples of harām sea creatures are shark, whale and eels. Crustaceans (who usually have an exoskeleton) like crabs and lobsters are harām except for shrimps and prawns that are halāl to eat.

Halāl and Harām Birds

The typical birds that are halāl to eat are what are referred to as poultry i.e. chicken, hen and roosters. Birds whose meat is halāl to eat (when slaughtered Islamically):

- Flap their wings and don't glide (like hawks and eagles). If this is not easy to determine, then if the back of the feet have a spur it is halāl otherwise it is harām.
- Have feathers covering their whole body.
- Are not considered to be 'Birds of Prey' (like vultures).

Creatures like bats are harām (whether we consider them to be a mammal or a bird).

Examples of Halāl Birds



Chicken



Turkey



Ostrich



Peacock



Pigeons

Examples of Harām Birds



Eagle



Hawk



Vulture



Crow



Raven

Note: In special cases where one is in danger of dying through starvation, anything - including haram and najis things - can be consumed to save life. In fact it is wājib to eat or drink it to save your life (e.g. pork, blood, dead carcass, etc.). However, this must be done as a last resort and only the absolute minimum must be eaten, just to stay alive.

Guidelines to Eating at Restaurants

When eating out, it is important to establish who owns the restaurant. If it is owned by a Muslim who apparently is mindful of religion then no further investigation is necessary and all food served is halāl.

If a Muslim who appears to be unmindful of the religious laws owns it, for instance he serves or allows alcohol on his premises, then he must be questioned about the source of his meat, the handlers of the food and its contents. You can eat there only if you are certain that it is halāl. But even if it is halāl you should try to avoid eating there because you are supporting the business of a restaurant that serves or allows alcohol.

If a restaurant is owned by a non-Muslim or the ownership is unknown, then the meat cannot be eaten, unless one becomes convinced that it is halāl and has been cooked by a Muslim.

For non-meat foods, the method of preparation has to be checked. For instance, when buying fries, one has to ask the owner whether the oil used for frying is vegetable oil or animal fat. And also whether the meat products are fried in the same oil or not. And also whether the instruments (spoon, containers, etc.) are shared or not.

Products that are advertised as suitable for vegetarians or fish based products like cod or salmon burgers are halāl, unless you are sure that the contents include animal products (e.g. fried in animal batter) or that they have been handled by people other than Muslims or Ahl al-Kitāb i.e. Christians and Jews.

It is harām to eat or drink out of containers made of real gold or silver, wherever you are (home, restaurant or elsewhere).

Common Harām Ingredients

Whenever you are shopping for food, always check the ingredients of what you are about to purchase. The following ingredients are harām to eat or drink and you should not buy or eat any product that contains them, even if it is a very small amount:

- 1 Pork - Also avoid anything with non-halāl meat in its ingredients e.g. In frozen pizzas.
- 2 Alcohol - May sometimes appear in ingredients as rum e.g. in cakes or candy.
- 3 Pepsin - Usually found in cheese and cheese products. Rennet is ok according to Ayatullah Sistāni.
- 4 Gelatin - Usually found in marshmallows, cookies, candy.
- 5 Lard - Usually found in cookies and bakery products (muffins, donuts, croissants). If the bakery product does not mention lard then it is halāl to eat e.g. at a coffee shop.

Remember, for non-meat products, if it is not explicitly mentioned in the ingredients, you can assume it is halāl (e.g. when buying bakery products). But for meat and meat products, you need to verify and be sure - you should not *assume* it is halāl.

Lesson 6

Burial Rites

﴿كُلُّ نَفْسٍ ذَائِقَةُ الْمَوْتِ وَإِنَّمَا تُوَفَّقُونَ أُجُورَكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ فَمَنْ زُحْزِحَ عَنِ النَّارِ وَأُدْخِلَ الْجَنَّةَ فَقَدْ فَازَ وَمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا مَتَاعُ الْغُرُورِ﴾

Every soul shall taste death, and you will indeed be paid your full rewards on the Day of Resurrection. Whoever is delivered from the Fire and admitted to paradise has certainly succeeded. The life of this world is nothing but the wares of delusion.

- Surah Al-i Imrān, 3:185

In Book 10, we learnt some of the wājib rites in Islam that must be performed on a Muslim's body when he or she dies. In particular we learnt how to wash a Muslim's corpse (*ghusl al-mayyit*), how to shroud it (*takfin*), and how to pray *salāt al-mayyit* over it. We also learnt about *ghusl mass al-mayyit* that is wājib on a person who touches a dead body after it has grown cold and before it has been given *ghusl al-mayyit*.

In this Book we will study the wājib rules regarding the burial of a Muslim but we will also review some of the recommended (*mustahab*) rites to perform when you are near a Muslim who is dying and even after he or she passes away.

At the Time of Dying

When a person is about to die, this is called the time of *Ihtidhār* in Arabic. And the pangs and anguish they may feel are referred to as *sakarāt al-mawt* (the pangs of death).

What a Dying Person Needs To Do

1. He or she should ensure they have left a will behind. They should inform those around where to find the will and it should be read before the funeral rite and burial for any specific instructions.
2. If he or she has their own *kafan*, they should inform those around where to find the *kafan*.
3. If it is a man, he should inform his eldest son or nearest of kin about any missed *salāh* and *fasts* and if *Hajj* was wājib but not done as well as any outstanding *khums* and *zakāh*. He should ask for all this to be settled as soon as possible and before inheritance is distributed. A woman can also ask her next of kin to fulfil any missed wājibāt and in particular if she has any debts that need to be settled.

4. He or she should ask for forgiveness from all around and especially from those who they know may be upset with them. They should also ask Allāh for forgiveness of sins and for the intercession of Rasūlullāh (s) and his Ahl al-Bayt ('a). Recite Kalima, istighfār, salawāt and any āyāt of Qur'ān they know, as much as possible.

Here are some things we can do for a dying Muslim, to help them as they prepare to leave this world:

Wājib Actions to Do For a Dying Person

Turn them or lay them down on their back (if not already on their back), whether adult or child, male or female, with their feet facing towards qibla. The body should also be placed in this position after demise and during the washing (ghusl al-mayyit). But after ghusl al-mayyit, instead of the feet facing the qibla, the body is kept perpendicular to qibla, such that when people stand facing the qibla, the head of the body is to their right and the feet is to their left. (This was taught in the previous Book).

Mustahab Actions to Do For a Dying Person

1. If a person is struggling and facing difficulties and pain in the moment of death, it is recommended to place his or her body where he or she used to perform salāh. And to recite for them Dua al-'Adila.
2. Help the dying person to recite the shahadatayn and if they cannot, then it is recommended to pronounce the following shahadatayn over the dying person as follows:

نَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَنَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ

We bear witness that there is no god but Allāh.

And we bear witness that Muhammad is his servant and His Messenger.

3. There are several recommended supplications (du'as) that a dying person can recite or those near him or her can recite. These can be found in the books of du'as. It is also recommended that as many surahs of the Qur'ān as possible should be recited for the dying person's comfort, especially Surah Yāsin (36), Surah as-Saffāt (37), Surah al-Ahzāb (33), āyah 254 of Surah al-Baqarah (2), and āyah 54 of Surah al-'Arāf (7). If possible, these should be recited near the head of the person.

Makruh Actions to Do For a Dying Person

1. To leave a dying person all alone

2. To sit near the dying person in the state of *janābah* or *haid* (for women)
3. To place hands or any object (especially heavy objects) on the stomach or body of the dying person
4. To talk too much or cry too much in the presence of the dying person

What to Do Just After Death

1. Close his or her eyes and lips and straighten their arms and legs
2. Remove any jewellery, accessories on the body, etc. that may be difficult to remove later when the body grows cold
3. Cover the whole body with a cloth sheet
4. If it is during the night, do not leave the body in darkness
5. Inform people of the demise, especially the immediate relatives and local residents who can attend the funeral

It is strongly recommended that the last rites (ghusl, kafan, etc.) and the burial should not be delayed, unless there is some special reason.

A Word on Death

A Muslim should never be afraid of dying. A true faithful Muslim (a *mu'min*) believes death is not the end. It is only a bridge that takes one to another, more permanent and more beautiful world. Allāh also says this in the Qur'ān clearly:

﴿بَلْ تُؤْثِرُونَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ وَأَبْقَى﴾

Rather you prefer the life of this world, while the Hereafter is better and more lasting.
- Surah al-'Ala, 87:16-17

According to Imām Hasan al-Askari ('a), a *mu'min* has nothing to fear about death. It is like a bath after one has dirt on the body. It cleans him or her and after a brief suffering or pain, a true faithful never ever suffers again for eternity. This is of course provided he or she did their best to obey Allāh, always doing what is wājib, keeping away from harām and asking for forgiveness from Allāh and making up for any mistakes they made in life.

One of the marks of a *mu'min* is that they don't expect happiness and peace and comfort in this world. If they get moments of physical comfort, they are grateful to Allāh but they expect most of their reward and happiness to come in Paradise (Jannah), which is the true home and permanent place of stay for the faithful.

A Shi'ah once came from Kufa to Madina to see Imām Ja'far as-Sādiq ('a) and complained to him about his suffering. "Be patient," said the Imām, "for Allāh will give you relief." Then Imām al-Sādiq ('a) remained silent for a while. Then he turned towards the man and said, "Tell me about the prison of Kufa, how is it?"

"May Allāh protect you," the man replied, "It is confining in space, putrid in smell and its inmates are in the worst of conditions."

"But you are in a prison too," said the Imām ('a), "do you expect to (always) be at ease? Do you not know that the world is a prison for the faithful?"

And according to Imām Muhammad al-Bāqir ('a), the soul of a (dead) faithful (*mu'min*) is asked – when it is being washed: "Would it please you to be returned to the body that you resided in?" And it replies: "What am I to do with (more) suffering, loss and grief?!!"

This means the next world is far more beautiful and comforting for a *mu'min*. Rasullullāh (s) has said, "The world is a paradise for the faithless and a prison for the faithful (*mu'min*)."²⁸ And the opposite is true for the life after death.

Accompany a Funeral Procession

There are very many ahādith stressing the importance of attending funerals. Attending a funeral has very many benefits. It gives honour to the Muslim who has passed away. It comforts the family and loved ones of the deceased. It reminds us of the next world, our permanent and real home. It reminds us of our own mortality and how we too will one day be washed, shrouded, prayed over and buried by others. There is tremendous *thawāb* (spiritual reward) in attending a funeral.

It is not recommended to laugh, joke, talk too much or even smile at a funeral if it hurts the feelings of the relatives of the deceased Muslim. Instead a person should pray to Allāh constantly for forgiveness of the Muslim who has passed away and for his or her own forgiveness as well, whilst doing their best to comfort the relatives and loved ones of the deceased.

Amir al-Mu'minin Imām Ali ('a) was once accompanying a funeral when he heard someone laugh. He got angry and said, 'Is it that death is only for others? Is it that we will never die? Is it that those whom we see departing on their journey of death will come back to us? We lay them down in their graves and then enjoy their estate (as if we will live forever after them)!'

And Imām Ja'far as-Sādiq ('a) has said, 'Amongst the rights of a faithful (*mu'min*) is that when he sneezes, you should invoke Allāh's Name (to bless him)²⁸, and if he is in

²⁸ By saying 'yarhamukallāh' (May Allāh have mercy on you!) (or 'yarhamukillah' for women).

pain, you should try and relieve him of it; if he is sick, you should visit him, and if he dies, you should attend his funeral and accompany his body to the cemetery.'

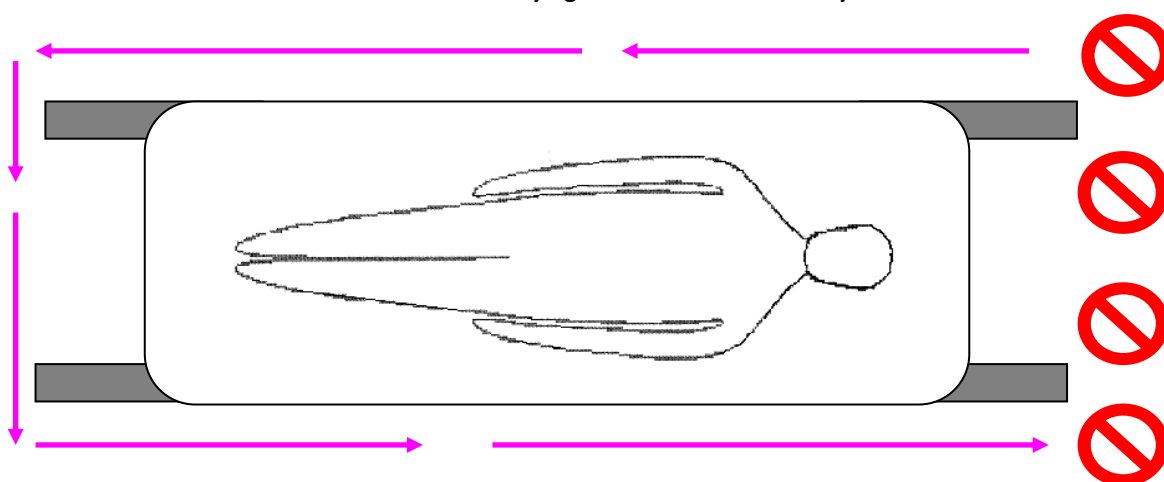
Carrying the Coffin

When the coffin is being carried to the hearse and also from the hearse to the grave at the cemetery, it is mustahab that at least four people (in each corner) should place and carry the coffin on their shoulders (not up in the air).

For the other Muslims who help with the coffin, it is mustahab to start from the side where the right shoulder of the corpse lies and then move anti-clockwise and carry it, helping one another. The bearers of the coffins should not pass under the coffin or in front of it.

CARRYING A DEAD BODY

Mustahab at all times for 4 people to place the four corners of the janāza (coffin) on their shoulders while carrying it towards the cemetery.



Also Mustahab to start bearing the janāza from the side where the right-hand shoulder of the corpse lies, and to continue in an anti-clockwise direction. The bearers should not move across the front of the janāza or underneath it.

Visiting the Cemetery (Ziyārat al-Qubur)

Those who have passed away should not be forgotten after their burial. Some people try and remember their loved ones who have passed away by erecting an expensive tombstone over their grave or placing flowers and incense on it all the time, and so on. While this is not *harām*, remember this is for the comfort of the relatives who are alive. It doesn't benefit the one who has passed away. The one who has passed away is most in need of prayers to help him or her in the other world.

It is makruh to build up a grave into a permanent structure (e.g. with a tombstone) unless it is the grave of a scholar (*'ālim*) and whose grave can inspire others to become religious, gain religious knowledge, and so forth.

Some of the ways in which we can help our loved ones who have passed away are:

1. If the deceased had any debts to settle, pay it off e.g. pay back any money they borrowed from anyone.
2. If the deceased had any missed wājibāt (such as lapsed salāh, fasts, khums, zakāh, hajj, etc.) to make up for the missed wājibāt and even pay someone to pray, fast and/or go for hajj on behalf of the deceased.
3. Reciting Surah Yāsin and other surahs of the Qur'ān and other du'as for the thawāb of the deceased. It is better to do this at the grave although it can be done from home as well.
4. To visit the cemetery, especially on Thursdays or Fridays and to pray for the dead there and remind ourselves of death.
5. To feed the poor, give charity and help others on behalf of the deceased. Their name does not have to be announced in public. The reward received by the deceased is the same and in fact there is greater reward for a good deed done in private than for the same deed done in public (with the announcement of the name of the donor or for whom it is done).
6. To remember the deceased in *salāt al-layl* (the midnight nāfila salāh).
7. To generally ask Allāh to forgive the sins of the deceased and to keep them in close proximity with Rasullāh (s) and the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) and to unite us with them in Jannah on the Day of Judgement.

Lesson 7

Burial Rites (cont'd)

﴿أَيْنَمَا تَكُونُوا يُدْرِكُكُمُ الْمَوْتُ وَلَوْ كُنْتُمْ فِي بُرُوجٍ مُّشِيدَةٍ﴾

Wherever you may be, death shall overtake you, even if you were in fortified towers.

- Surah an-Nisā, 4:78

Burial (Tadfin)

It is wājib on every Muslim to bury the corpse of a Muslim.

If it is not possible to bury a corpse in the ground, it can be placed and sealed in a coffin or room set aside for this purpose.

In two cases, the corpse can be buried at sea instead of in the ground:

- If a person dies at sea and there is no way to prevent the body from decomposing, or there is some obstacle to its being kept on board till land is reached.
- When it is feared that an enemy will break into the grave and disfigure the corpse.

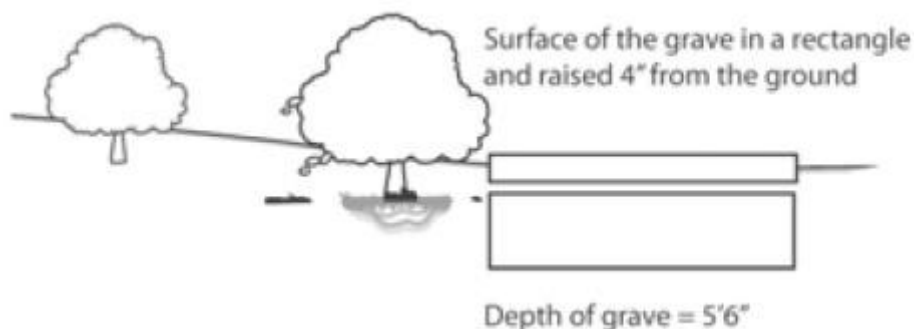
In these two cases, the corpse should be given ghusl al-mayyit, hunoot, shrouding and salāt al-mayyit; then, as a precaution, it should be covered with a rug and the rug tied at the end, and a stone or heavy object fastened to its feet; and then it should be lowered into the water. All possible precautions should be taken to prevent the corpse from becoming an immediate prey for the beasts of the sea.

It is harām to bury a Muslim in the graveyard of non-Muslims and vice versa. It is ok if a part of a large cemetery is reserved for Muslims only and there are other non-Muslims in the grounds as well.

A Muslim must also not be buried in usurped (*ghasbi*) ground. Nor is it permitted to bury a corpse in another grave, unless the previous corpse has completely decomposed. It is preferable to bury the dead in the nearest cemetery unless another cemetery has some special priority.

Digging the Grave

The grave should be dug in the ground sufficiently deep to prevent animals reaching the corpse or the odour of the corpse escaping.



Taking the Corpse to the Cemetery

It is mustahab that when the coffin is taken to the grave, it should be placed on the ground several metres away from the grave, then brought a few metres nearer to the grave, and for a second time placed on the ground, then brought nearer and placed by the side of the grave.

If the corpse is that of a man, it should be kept in line with the foot of the grave i.e. with his head at the foot of the grave; if it is that of a female, it should be placed beside the grave. When the corpse is finally raised prior to lowering it into the grave, there are several recommended du'as to recite. Here we give the English only to give you an idea of what is recited:

In the Name of Allāh and through Allāh, and by virtue of the community of the Prophet of Allāh, may Allāh bless him and his Progeny and grant them peace. O Allāh, to Your mercy, not to Your punishment. O Allāh, make wide his/her space in the grave, call him/her by his/her record, strengthen him/her with steadfast words, and spare him/her the torment of the grave.

O Allāh, appoint for him/her one of the gardens of Paradise, not one of the pits of the Fire.

O Allāh, Your slave, the son/daughter of your man and woman slave, rests with You; You are the best resting place for him/her.

Lowering the Body into the Grave

The corpse of a man should be lowered into the grave from the foot of the grave headfirst; the body of a woman should be lowered into the grave from the side of the grave. The corpse should be taken out of the coffin and lowered into the grave gently. If laws of the country do not allow the body to be buried without a coffin, then the coffin should be lowered into the grave.

As the body/coffin is being lowered, at this point it is recommended that the following du'a should be recited in a lowered tone:

O Allāh, hollow out the earth on his/her two sides, raise up his/her actions, and cause him/her to encounter the pleasures [of Paradise] from You.

It is recommended that those who lower the corpse into the grave should have a bare head and bare feet. If the body is that of a woman, those who enter the grave should be her close relatives; if they are not present or unable to enter the grave, her other relatives should do so. If the grave is too deep for anyone to go down and receive the coffin, a winch (pulley-like mechanical device) is used to lower the coffin.

Placing the Corpse in the Grave

When the corpse has been lowered into the grave, the pieces of cloth tied to the head and foot of the shroud should be opened. The corpse should be laid into the grave on its right side (shoulder) so that the face is towards the qibla and its back is not on ground but on the sidewall of the grave. The right cheek should be on the ground. A little mud or clod of earth should be placed against the back of the body so that it will not turn over. The head of the body should be placed on a pillow made of earth.

If the body is being buried with a coffin, it should be made to lie on its side inside the coffin and some earth can be placed under its head (as a pillow to support the head) inside the coffin. All this may have to be done before the coffin is lowered into the grave with a winch.

The Talqin

After placing the corpse in the described position, it is recommended to recite the talqin for it. The person in the grave (or near the coffin) should place his right hand on the right shoulder of the corpse, and the left hand on its left shoulder. Then that person, or someone else, should read out the talqin. The one who has placed his hands on the shoulders of the corpse should shake the corpse's shoulders firmly each time the name of the deceased is mentioned in the talqin. The person reciting it should try and recite it close to the ear of the dead person.

If the body is being lowered in a coffin into a deep grave using a winch, the talqin is recited *before* it is lowered so that someone can hold the shoulders of the corpse and shake it gently as necessary.

The talqin is recited in Arabic and can be found in the *risāla* of the marā'ij'i.

Filling the Grave

After the recital of the talqin, those who are in the grave should come out from the foot of it. All people present, except the near relatives of the deceased, should push soil into the grave. They should push the soil in with the back of their hands (palm facing down, shovelling the earth with the top part (back) of their hand and saying:

إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ

We are from Allāh, and to Him we shall return

They should also recite:

O Allāh, reduce his/her isolation, make his/her loneliness easy, remove his/her fear, settle upon him/her of Your Mercy that which will make him/her able to dispense with the mercy of anyone apart from You, for Your Mercy is for those who seek it.

If the grave is deep and the body was lowered in a coffin, the *mu'mineen* can push some soil with their hands and thereafter an excavating vehicle is used to pour the bulk of the soil back into the grave.

It is recommended that after the soil has been pushed in, the grave should be built as a square or rectangle, raised three inches above the ground. Some sign (a stone, a piece of wood, etc.) should be placed on the grave. Then some water should be poured upon the grave and those present should thrust their fingers in the grave (such that it leaves finger marks) and recite Surah al-Fātiha and Surah al-Ikhlās (*Qul Huwa Allāhu Ahad*), and also Surah al-Qadr (97) seven times. This is called *Tanzil*. They should seek Allāh's forgiveness for the deceased.



It is also recommended that after those attending the funeral have dispersed, the near relatives and the wali²⁹ of the deceased, or anyone nominated by them, should return and read the talqin again for the deceased.

Mourning and Condolence

Patience (*sabr*) on the death of near relatives especially that of one's child is highly recommended. When remembering the deceased, one should say *inna lil lāhi wa inna ilayhi rāji'un*. It is forbidden to scratch one's body or face through grief, or slap one's face or harm oneself in any other manner. If a man or a woman scratches his

²⁹ 'Wali' is the guardian. For an unmarried girl it is her father and of a married woman it is her husband. For a man, it is the eldest son. When such a *wali* is not present, it is the closest relative present (the one who inherits the most from the deceased).

or her face or tears their hair, etc, he or she should, as a recommended precaution, feed or clothe ten persons as a penalty and atonement (*kaffāra*).

Tearing at, or ripping one's clothes is not allowed under any circumstances; even in the case of the death of one's father or brother this should be avoided as an *ih̥tiyāt wujubi*. It is also *ih̥tiyāt wājib* not to weep too loudly at the death of a relative. Instead one should remember the deceased, recite the Qur'ān for them, and ask for Allāh's forgiveness for them.

The only exception for expressing grief loudly (such as crying loudly or slapping one's chest or head) is for the ma'sumeen ('a) (i.e. Prophets and Imāms) and members of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) close to them. This is especially encouraged for Imām Husayn ('a) and the martyrs of Karbala. It is highly recommended to weep for them loudly and to express grief. However one should still not harm oneself or behave in a manner that discourages people from Islam and the message of Imām Husayn ('a).

It is recommended that neighbours, friends and others should visit the relatives of the dead and express their condolences. It is also recommended that food should be sent to the house of the deceased for three days. However, it is disapproved to remind the near relatives of the deceased when some time has elapsed.

Salāt al-Wahsha and Salāt Hadiya al-Mayyit

It is recommended that on the first night after the burial, the *wali* or a near relative of the deceased should perform a two *rak'ah* salāh for the deceased called the *Prayer of Desolation (Salāt al-Wahsha)*. It can be performed at any time during the first night after the burial, but preferably in the early night after the 'Isha salāh. Salāt al-Wahsha is performed as follows.

In the first *rak'ah* Surah al-Fātiha should be recited followed by Ayāt al-Kursi (Verses of the Throne, 2:255-257). In the second *rak'ah*, after Surah al-Fātiha, Surah al-Qadr (97) should be recited ten times. After the conclusion of the prayer, one should recite salawāt and say: '*O Allāh assign the reward of these two rak'ahs to the grave of <so-and-so>... (name the deceased).*'

For the rest of the Muslims, unless the *wali* of the deceased has requested them to pray Salāt al-Wahsha, they should instead pray two *rak'ahs* like any *mustahab salāh* with the niyyah of *Salāt Hadiya al-Mayyit* (a salāh as a gift to the deceased).

TARIKH (History)

Lesson 1

Legacy of the Early Calíphs

In Book 10 (Tārikh) we completed our study of the life (sirah) of Rasulullāh (s) and all the major events of Islām during his lifetime. We also completed our review of the lives of the Imāms from the Ahl al-Bayt ('a).

Starting with this book, we wish to now study Islāmic History with a broader perspective and understand Islāmic events after Rasulullāh (s) and how they influenced the history of Muslims to our present day.

In this Book we will specifically review the history and legacy of the first three Calíphs as well as the Caliphate (khilāfah) of Imām Ali ('a). The Sunni Muslims regard the first four Calíphs as 'The Rightly-Guided Calíphs' (khulāfa ar-rāshidun). And in Book 12 inshā Allāh we will study the history of the Calíphs and the Muslim dynasties *after* Imām Ali ('a) until our present times.

After Rasulullāh (s)

Rasulullāh (s) passed away on 28th Safar 11 AH. As soon as the news of Rasulullāh (s)'s passing away spread throughout Madina, the Ansār (who were the original residents of Madina) got together at a place called Saqifa of Banu Sā'ida and began discussing their future and who should lead them. They ignored the various occasions on which Rasulullāh (s) declared Imām Ali ('a) as his successor, including the event of Ghadir just two months before, when Rasulullāh (s) was returning from Makkah and declared Imām Ali ('a) as his successor.

In the meantime, Imām Ali ('a) was busy attending to the burial of Rasulullāh (s). Prominent muhājirun (immigrants of Makkah) like Abu Bakr and Umar found out that a discussion on the future of Islāmic leadership was taking place at Saqifa and they immediately left the place where the body of Rasulullāh (s) lay and went to join the discussions at Saqifa. As a result, they never paid their last respects to Rasulullāh (s) nor did they assist in his funeral rites or witness his burial.

Saqifa

At Saqifa, the discussion soon became very heated. The Ansār were made up of two tribes: the Aws and the Khazraj. Each tribe wanted a leader from themselves. Abu Bakr and Umar argued with them that the successorship should belong to the Muhājirun because they were closer to Rasulullāh (s) by virtue of being from his tribe (of Quraysh) and that they were also the first to accept Islām. When the Ansār heard this, they argued back that they had given shelter to Rasulullāh (s) and the Muhājirun during the Hijrah. Abu Bakr argued with them that the rest of the Arabs in Makkah

and elsewhere will never accept any leader who is not from the Quraysh. To which the Ansār replied that the only muhājir they would accept as a leader would be Imām Ali (‘a) (even though he was not present at Saqifa).

Before Abu Bakr and Umar had arrived at Saqifa, the Ansār were leaning towards electing Sa’d b. Ubādah, the leader of the Khazraj tribe, who had played an important role in the years of Rasulullāh (s)’s life in Madina. So the heated debate at Saqifa soon became a showdown between Sa’d b. Ubādah and Umar. At one point Umar hit Sa’d physically and threatened to kill him. As each group began shouting at each other and there was total chaos, Umar jumped forward and said to Abu Bakr, ‘extend your hand!’ and he pledged allegiance to him as the 1st Caliph and successor to Rasulullāh (s). The leader of the Aws tribe of the Ansār, in rivalry to the Khazraj, did the same and soon the Khazraj had to do the same so as not to be isolated from the rest. Sa’d b. Ubādah was deeply angered by this and left Madina for good and retired in Syria expressing his disgust. Four years later, in 15 AH, he was murdered in Syria (during the rule of Umar).

What we learn from the event of Saqifa is as follows:

1. Imām Ali (‘a) and the Banu Hāshim were not present nor were they consulted because they were busy attending to the funeral of Rasulullāh (s).
2. The gathering at Saqifa was chaotic and violent. Much later when Umar became the Caliph, he called the election of Abu Bakr a “*falta*” (mistake) saying if anyone attempts to pull off anything like that again, he should be killed.
3. Abu Bakr argued that the muhājirun had greater right to being successors to Rasulullāh (s) by virtue of relationship to Rasulullāh (s) and being the first people to accept Islām. Based on this logic as well, Imām Ali (‘a) was the closest person to Rasulullāh (s) and the first to accept Islām.
4. In Arab custom, once the tribal leader had pledged allegiance to someone, his whole tribe did the same and never opposed the leader. Arabs also never broke a pledge of allegiance. That is why the muhājirun and Ansār were both keen to ensure the allegiance at Saqifa was in their favour.
5. Until Rasulullāh (s) was alive, all decisions and planning relating to the Muslim community were done in Masjid an-Nabawi. Saqifa was 3 kms outside Madina. The venue suggests this was a plot to usurp the leadership role in Islām.

The day after Saqifa, Abu Bakr came to the mosque of Rasulullāh (s) and everyone in Madina was forced to come and pay allegiance to him and accept him as the Caliph. Imām Ali (‘a) refused and some people took shelter in his home. Umar marched with a group of people to Imām Ali (‘a)’s home, set the door on fire, pushed it on Sayyida Fātima (‘a), who then had a miscarriage and lost her baby. Thereafter Imām Ali (‘a) was tied in ropes and taken to Masjid an-Nabawi. When Imām Ali (‘a) still refused to

pay allegiance to Abu Bakr, he was finally left alone by Abu Bakr but the others were forced to pay allegiance.

Abu Sufyān, the father of Mu'āwiya and the archenemy of Rasulullāh (s) saw this as an opportunity to divide the Muslims and weaken them forever. He came to Imām Ali ('a) and offered to "fill the alleys and streets of Madina" with horsemen to fight for Imām Ali ('a)'s right. Imām Ali ('a) could see through Abu Sufyān's intentions and told him to go away. It was to preserve Islām and the Muslim community that Imām Ali ('a) kept silent and did not use force to fight for his right. He did however always say his right was usurped, even 25 years later when he became the Caliph and would deliver sermons from the pulpit in Kufa.

Abu Bakr – The First Caliph

Abu Bakr's birth name was Abd al-Ka'ba or Atiq. When he converted to Islām at the age of 38, his name was changed to Abd Allāh. And when Rasulullāh (s) married Abu Bakr's daughter Aisha, he came to be known as Abu Bakr (Father of the Virgin) because Aisha was the only wife of Rasulullāh (s) in Madina who was not a widow or divorcee.

Abu Bakr's father was called Abu Quhāfa and they belonged to the branch of Taym in the tribe of Quraysh. At the time of his election as Caliph, Abu Bakr was 60 years old.

In his very first address to the Muslims, Abu Bakr ascended the pulpit of Rasulullāh (s) and said:

"I have been placed in this position of authority, though I am averse to it. By Allāh, I would have been pleased if any of you had taken it in my place. If you expect me to act like the Messenger of God, then I cannot do it. He was honoured and preserved from error by the Lord, while I am an ordinary man, no better than any of you. When you see me following the right path then obey me, and when you see me turning away from it then set me aright. I have a devil that seizes me sometimes, and when you see me enraged then avoid me because at that time you will not be able to reason with me."

This was a surprising speech. He admitted he was not the best person to lead yet he would not give it to one who was better than him i.e. Imām Ali ('a). Abu Bakr also expected the Muslims to determine if he was right or not and not to expect him to listen to them when his 'devil' seizes him. This was certainly not a speech that would inspire confidence in the Muslims.

By profession Abu Bakr used to trade in cloth and was also a genealogist i.e. he knew the family trees of the Arabs, especially the Quraysh. After his election, Umar saw him going to the market to open his shop and said, "Are you going to trade although you have been given the rule over the Muslims?"

“How else shall I feed my family?” asked Abu Bakr and so Umar then took him to Abu Ubaida, the treasurer of the Bayt al-Māl (Public Treasury), who assigned him a yearly allowance of 2000 dirhams. “Increase the sum for me, for I have a family and you have employed me on other work than my own traded,” said Abu Bakr. So they increased it by 500 dirhams, but it was not sufficient for the maintenance of himself and his family so an annual allowance of 6000 or 8000 dirhams was set for him.³⁰

³⁰ Sayyid S Husain, *The Early History of Islām*, p. 226; Also Jarrett’s trans. Of *Suyuti’s History*, p. 79.

Lesson 2

Legacy of the Early Calíphs (cont'd)

Events in the Caliphate of Abu Bakr

The Usurping of Fadak

One of the first things Abu Bakr did as a Caliph was to contest Sayyida Fatima's ('a) ownership to the land of Fadak, an action that she never forgave him for. According to her will, Abu Bakr and Umar were not allowed to attend her funeral and she would not even reply their salām.

The Land of Fadak has a lengthy history but in brief, it was given to Rasulullāh (s) after the Battle of Khaybar and because it did not involve any battle, it belonged to Rasulullāh (s) personally. On Allāh's command, Rasulullāh (s) gave Fadak to his daughter Sayyida Fātima ('a) during his own lifetime.

When Abu Bakr challenged this, Sayyida Fātima ('a) argued that even if Abu Bakr did not believe her words that Rasulullāh (s) had given it to her in his own lifetime, she was still entitled to it as his only heir. But Abu Bakr then said that he had heard Rasulullāh (s) say, "we, the community of prophets, neither inherit nor are we inherited". This was of course a 'hadith' that no one except Abu Bakr had ever heard of.

In later generations, the good calíphs amongst the Umayyads and Abbāsids, always returned Fadak to the descendants of Sayyida Fātima ('a) and then a later Calíph would usurp it again. This return of Fadak time and again shows that history always regarded it as having been usurped from Sayyida Fātima ('a).

Malik b. Nuwaira

When Abu Bakr was declared as the Calíph and successor to Rasulullāh (s), many tribes in Arabia outside Makkah and Madina refused to accept him and decided to stop paying their legal taxes (zakāh) to the Islāmic government.

Abu Bakr decided he would use force to ensure the zakāh was always paid. And in fact, the revenue from Fadak was crucial to fund the army that would be used to reclaim the distant provinces. And so, various commanders were sent out to ensure that the remote tribes were all complying with the payment of zakāh. Abu Bakr instructed his commanders to give the adhān to test the faith of the local people wherever they went. If they responded, they were to be asked to repent and submit to the Calíph, but if they resisted they were to be attacked and their women and children made prisoners. With these instructions, the various commanders left Madina. These military exercises are known in Islamic history as the *Ridda Wars*.

The man who commanded the largest division was a general named Khālid b. Walid. He was the same man who had caused the defeat of the Muslims at Uhud by attacking them from behind the mountain pass when the Muslim archers left their positions in greed for war booty. Despite his later conversion to Islām, Khālid was a cruel soldier with dubious faith. Abu Bakr sent Khālid b. Walid against Tulaiha, a man claiming to be a new prophet, in the north east. After Tulaiha ran away and the tribes of Bani Hawāzin surrendered, his task was over and his men advised him to return to Madina.

Khalid however wanted to continue fighting and he led his men southwards to the tribe of Bani Yarb. The chief of this tribe was Malik b. Nuwaira, a noble man who was famous for his generosity, horsemanship and poetry. He also had an extremely beautiful wife named Laila. When Malik heard that Khālid was approaching with an army of 4500 men, he did not resist him and responded to him when the call to adhān was given.

Khālid however had heard of Malik's beautiful wife. He therefore refused to accept that Malik was a Muslim and had him killed brutally and then forced his widow to marry him the same night, despite the fact that Islām requires a widow to observe a period of waiting (iddah).

Khālid's own men were shocked by this and complained to Abu Bakr. But Khālid was a Qurayshi and Abu Bakr favoured the Quraysh and believed he needed them to establish power so he only chided Khālid for marrying a widow under the circumstances without punishing him for murder of an innocent Muslim or taking the widow of Malik unlawfully.

Fujat Salmi

Fujat Salmi was a chief of the Banu Sulaym and a companion of Rasulullāh (s) who had taken part in Badr. Appearing before Abu Bakr, he offered his services to subdue his neighbouring disloyal tribes, and asked to be furnished with the necessary arms for his followers. Abu Bakr equipped him but Fujat Salmi is said to have abused the trust, by attacking tribes and plundering their villages indiscriminately.

Fujat Salmi was finally confronted and asked to appear before the Caliph to explain his actions. So he lay down his arms and proceeded to Madina. As soon as he appeared, Abu Bakr ordered him to be seized and burnt alive. He was immediately dragged away to Baqi where a large fire was kindled and he was thrown into the flames.

Rebellion in Hadramoot

In another example, Abu Bakr faced a rebellion in Hadramoot (Yemen) from Ash'ath b. Qays, chief of the Banu Kinda. When he finally got hold of Ash'ath, Abu Bakr not

only forgave the rebel (because of the pleading of friends) but he also allowed him to marry his sister Umm Farwa. Ash'ath and Umm Farwa had a daughter – Ja'dah – who married Imām Hasan ('a) and then poisoned him. And two of Ash'ath's sons – Muhammad and Ishāq – fought in the army of Yazid against Imām Husayn ('a) in Karbala.

Ash'ath himself was a man filled with doubt. He fought on Imām Ali ('a) side in the Battle of Siffin but was also the cause of stopping the battle in favour of Mu'āwiya, that later caused the rise of the Kharijites. (We shall study more of this in Lessons 5 and 6).

Like the case of Khālid b. Walid, this was therefore another instance where Abu Bakr should not have been lenient but he was and it had unfortunate consequences.

Foreign Conquests

Abu Bakr sent the Muslim army to conquer foreign territories and in 12-13 AH, a considerable part of Syria was taken by the Muslims as well as much of the land towards the Persian border. Abu Bakr sent Yazid, the son of Abu Sufyān and brother of Mu'āwiya, as a commander to Syria with a great amount of financial support. Along with him went many Umayyads and famous chiefs of Quraysh including Abu Sufyān himself and later Mu'āwiya b. Abu Sufyān. This was the start of the Umayyads entrenching themselves in Syria, building palaces for themselves, and claiming Syria to be their 'right'. When Umar became the Caliph, he appointed Mu'āwiya to be the governor of Syria. 25 years later, when Imām Ali ('a) became the Caliph, Mu'āwiya refused to step down as governor of Syria.

In a sense, Abu Bakr and Umar disregarded the fact that the Umayyads were always jealous of the Banu Hāshim and had caused a lot of suffering to Rasulullāh (s) and his ancestors. By the time Rasulullāh (s) had freed Makkah from polytheism; the Umayyads had been weakened and defeated. Abu Bakr and Umar turned all this around and returned the Umayyads to power. The Umayyads had represented the polytheist Quraysh of Makkah and fought Rasulullāh (s) all his life. Now they were able to fight the family of Rasulullāh (s) (the Ahl al-Bayt ('a)) but from within Islām as "God's Caliphs". This reached a climax with the brutal murder of Imām Husayn ('a) and his family and companions in Karbala and the imprisonment of the womenfolk of Rasulullāh (s) by the Umayyad Caliph Yazid b. Mu'āwiya b. Abu Sufyān.

Abu Bakr's Death

Abu Bakr died on Tuesday 22nd Jamādi al-Akhar, 13 AH (August 634 CE) at the age of 63. He had ruled as Caliph for 2 years and 3 months. Before dying he appointed Umar b. al-Khattāb as his successor. The prayers over his body was led by Umar and he was buried by the side of Rasulullāh (s)'s grave.

On his deathbed, Abu Bakr lamented three of his decisions during his caliphate saying, 'I wish I had never done them'. These were: (1) the attack of the house of Sayyida Fātima ('a), (2) the burning alive of Fūjat Salmi. He said he should have released him or killed him by sword but not burnt him alive; and (3) sparing the life of Ash'ath b. Qays and giving him his sister in marriage. The man, he said, was always forward in wickedness.

Conclusion

At the time of Rasullāh (s)'s passing away, Madina was the stronghold and base of Islām. Through Rasullāh (s), the Madinans had become the representatives of Islām and the old aristocracy of the Quraysh in Makkah (as the most powerful tribe in Arabia) was shattered. Rasullāh (s) had worked hard to promote the teaching that in Islām, Godwariness (taqwa) and not lineage mattered.

When Abu Bakr became the Caliph, he was faced with a lot of opposition from the tribes outside Madina. He felt the only way to gain stability and secure power was to take help from the old Makkan aristocracy i.e. the Quraysh. Instead of relying on the pious Madina Muhājirun and Ansār, he turned to the Quraysh and in particular to the Umayyads led by Abu Sufyān, who had become Muslims barely 1-2 years ago during the Conquest of Makkah and that, too, only to save their lives.

Abu Bakr appointed the Makkan Quraysh as army commanders to fight the *Ridda Wars* against the outlying Arabian tribes. These included men like Khālid b. Walid, Yazid b. Abi Sufyān, and Ikrima b. Abi Jahl. The Quraysh were obviously delighted to regain power after they thought their 'nobility' no longer mattered in Islām. They fully supported Abu Bakr and committed many atrocities wherever they led armies. These were men who had hardly spent time with Rasullāh (s) and knew little about *taqwa* and the values of Islām.

With the Muslim armies mostly under the command of members of the old Makkan aristocracy, Madina was virtually at the mercy of Rasullāh (s)'s recent enemies. Suddenly the Ansār felt isolated and unappreciated at once. After all their sacrifices and giving refuge to Rasullāh (s) and the Muhājirun, they did not matter anymore. The Banu Hāshim felt they were reliving the days of the Quraysh boycott when they were forced to living the Valley of Abu Tālib (Shi'b Abu Tālib) in hardship.

If Abu Bakr had placed his trust in Allāh and fought the rebellions against him using the Ansār of Madina and with the same pious army that Rasullāh (s) had used in all the battles of Islām, history would have unfolded very differently. But then again, if succession to Rasullāh (s) had been seen by Abu Bakr and Umar as primarily a religious authority rather than a political one, then Imām Ali ('a) would not have been denied his right in the first place.

The *Ridda Wars* that Abu Bakr fought were primary against those who refused to pay zakāh. Yet the Qur'ān did not sanction the shedding of blood of those who refused to

pay zakāh. But Abu Bakr felt this was necessary to run the affairs of the State (as in government taxes today). This radical change in policy (to kill anyone who did not pay their taxes) was to be upheld later by all the tyrannical caliphs especially the Umayyads and Abbāsids. Authentic Sunni narrations also say that at first Umar tried to reason with Abu Bakr not to fight those who did not pay zakāh but he refused.

Whilst restoring the power of the Makkan Quraysh, Abu Bakr discontinued the pay of *fay'* or *khums* to the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) and refused to acknowledge that the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) had any special privilege or status over the ordinary Muslims. Yet he recognized the widows of Rasulullāh (s) as having a special status and continued to provide for them generously including giving his daughter Aisha (the youngest widow of Rasulullāh (s)) some lands in Madina and in Bahrain.³¹ This, while, he took away the land of Fadak from Sayyida Fātima ('a).

Even though Abu Bakr was supposed to have been elected by the 'elders of Madina', he did not think it necessary to consult them regarding his successor. Instead, he simply appointed Umar as his successor. Historians have suggested that Abu Bakr's primary goal in appointing a successor was, above all, to prevent any discussion of the rights of the family of Rasulullāh (s) - knowing that Imām Ali ('a) was a candidate who could easily have been the best choice if people were consulted. He chose Umar knowing that under Umar's rule the Banu Hāshim will continue to be kept at bay. Some historians have suggested that the only other person Abu Bakr would have chosen besides Umar would have been Khālid b. Walid, but he was not in Madina at the time.³²

³¹ Madelung, *The Succession to Muhammad*, p. 51.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 56.

Lesson 3

Legacy of the Early Calíphs (cont'd)

Umar b. al-Khattāb – the Second Caliph

When Umar b. al-Khattāb took over the Caliphate, he was 52. In his first address to the people, he said, “O God! I am rough in temper, therefore soften me; and I am weak, therefore strengthen me; and I am miserly, therefore make me generous.”

With these poorly chosen words, Umar began his rule which was to last for 10 years and six months. Only one year after he came to power Umar introduced new religious laws that are regarded as innovations (bid’ah) in Islām:

1. He introduced a special prayer called Tarāwih, during the month of Ramadān. This prayer, which requires recitations of large portions of the Qur’ān, is still recited in congregation (jamā’ah) by Sunni Muslims today.
2. He made harām (forbidden) the minor Hajj (umra at-tamattu) and the fixed-term marriage (zawāj mut’a) that Rasulullāh (s) had permitted.
3. He reduced the number of takbirs in salāt al-mayyit from five to four.
4. He removed “*hayya ‘ala khayril ‘amal*” in the adhān and in the adhān for fajr salāh, he introduced the phrase, “*as-salātu khayrun min an-nawm*”.

During the reign of Umar, the boundaries of the Muslim territories were expanded greatly and many foreign lands were conquered. These included the rest of Syria, Jordan, Jerusalem, Egypt and Persia.

Umar placed ill-chosen governors in many of these new lands. In particular, he was responsible for the growth of power of Mu’āwiya b. Abu Sufyān in Syria. In a sense, this appointment was ultimately the cause of the massacre in Karbala and the rise to power of evil men like Yazid b. Mu’āwiya.

Umar was known to be quick tempered and impulsive in his rulings. Numerous incidents of wrong judgements are reported in his life and often he was about to punish someone wrongfully before Imām Ali (‘a) intervened to save the victim. Umar was known to say often, ‘If it was not for Ali, Umar would have perished!’

Abu Bakr used to call himself, ‘the Caliph of the Messenger (s)’ (Khalifat ar-Rasul) and at first Umar called himself, ‘the Caliph of the Caliph of the Messenger (s)’ but this title being too long and cumbersome, he adopted the title ‘Commander of the Faithful’ (Amir al-Mu’minin), which was a title given to Imām Ali (‘a) by Rasulullāh (s). Later Calíphs called themselves simply ‘the Caliph of God’ (khalifatullāh) or Amir al-Mu’minin.

The Conversion of Umar

How Umar converted to Islām in Makkah (before the Hijrah) at the age of 33 is often retold in books of history as a reminder of his temperamental nature. Before he became a Muslim, Umar was very hostile to Rasulullāh (s). His maternal uncle Abu Jahl had set a reward of 100 camels to anyone who kills Rasulullāh (s). Umar therefore set out one day to kill Rasulullāh (s).

On his way, Umar met Sa'd b. Abi Waqqās who advised him to first look after his own sister and her husband, who, he said, were already the followers of Rasulullāh (s). Enraged, Umar turned towards his sister's house and happened to overhear the Qur'ān being recited.

Barging into the house, Umar wrestled with his brother-in-law and threw him down, sitting on his chest ready to kill him. His sister tried to stop him but he slapped her hard until she was bleeding from her face. At this point, his sister cried in a fit of anger, "O son of Khattāb! Do what you want to do, but I have changed my faith" and then she professed that both she and her husband were Muslims.

Umar, feeling ashamed of have driven her to such anger and tears, stood aside and asked her to recite what she knew of Qur'ān. She recited the opening verses of Surah Tā Hā (20) that affected his heart. He therefore asked them both to take him to Rasulullāh (s) and when he came before his presence, he was awed.

Rasulullāh (s) said to him, "Will you not cease O' Umar! Until God sends upon you calamity and chastisement such as He sent upon Walid b. Mughira?" and he asked him to embrace Islām which he accepted. This occurred in the 6th year of Rasulullāh (s)'s mission (*bi'that*) in Makkah.

Umar's Death

Umar had a rule that non-Arabs were not allowed to enter Madina. However, he relaxed the rule for one man only at the request of his friend Mughira bin Shu'ba, the governor of Kufa.³³ The man in question was called Abu Lulu. He was not an Arab, but he was a good carpenter, blacksmith and engraver.

Abu Lulu was heavily taxed for the privilege of residing in Madina and asked Umar to increase his allowance. Umar refused and instead commissioned him to build a windmill for grinding grain. Abu Lulu promised that he would build him such a windmill that people would always talk about it. The way he said it made Umar wonder whether he was being threatened and his fears proved correct.

A few days later, On Wednesday the 26th of Dhul Hijjah 23 AH, Abu Lulu ambushed Umar in the early hours of the morning and stabbed him in the stomach three times

³³ Madelung, *Succession to Muhammad*, p. 74-5.

with a double-bladed dagger. One of these wounds was fatal and Umar died three days later at the age of 63. He was buried the next day on Sunday, 1st Muharram 24 AH, besides Abu Bakr.

The Shura

Abu Bakr's policy was to give preference to the Makkan aristocracy. During Umar's time, the Muslim Empire had spread widely and many non-Arabs were becoming Muslims. So Umar's policy was to give merit to the Arabs over the non-Arabs (*'ajam*). This was a policy that Imām Ali ('a) was severely opposed to and many knew that. This is why Imām Ali ('a) was not favoured by the Quraysh Arabs and was very popular amongst the non-Arabs, the slaves and the downtrodden.

When Umar realized he would not survive the wounds from Abu Lulu, he decided to appoint a council (*shura*) of six people that included: Imām Ali ('a), Uthmān b. Affān, Zubayr b. al-Awwām, Abd ar-Rahmān b. Awf, Sa'd b. Abi Waqqās and Talha b. Ubaydillah.

Umar then asked these six people to be kept in a place for 3 days and not to leave it until they had elected one amongst them as Caliph. He also said that if three of them vote for one person and the remaining two oppose them then these two should be killed. And if the group was equally divided into three each and there were two candidates then the candidate belonging to the group with Abd ar-Rahmān b. Awf should win the vote.

Later on, Imām Ali ('a) complained to Abd Allāh b. Abbās that this was a clever plot by Umar to ensure that he would not be given his right whilst making it look like a fair vote. The reason was because Abd ar-Rahmān b. Awf was married to Uthmān's sister. He was not popular enough to be accepted as Caliph himself but he would only vote for his brother-in-law Uthmān. Secondly, Sa'd b. Abi Waqqās hated Imām Ali ('a) and would never vote for him. Talha was not in Madina at the time but he also belonged to the tribe of Taym (same as Abu Bakr) – a tribe opposed to the Banu Hāshim in general. The only person who could vote for Imām Ali ('a) was Zubayr who was a maternal cousin of Imām Ali ('a). (Zubayr's mother and Imām Ali ('a)'s father were siblings).

Another ill-effect of this *shura* was that individuals like Zubayr and Talha who never expected to ever gain authority now felt they were possible candidates for the caliphate because Umar had included them in the *shura*. So when Imām Ali ('a) became the Caliph, Talha and Zubayr asked for positions of authority and when they were denied that, they fought Imām Ali ('a) in the Battle of Jamal. Zubayr, who was once very close to Imām Ali ('a), became an enemy in due course.

As the *shura* met to discuss, everyone present realized they were not knowledgeable enough or in possession of any merit even close to Imām Ali ('a). They were therefore willing to give the caliphate to Imām Ali ('a) on the condition that he

agrees to following the “Sirah of the Shaykhain” meaning the practices of the two previous “Shaykhs” i.e. Abu Bakr and Umar. This would mean given preference to the Umayyads and Quraysh as well as the Arabs over the non-Arabs. Imām Ali (‘a)’s policy was to give preference on piety and Godwariness (*taqwa*) only, based on the verse of the Qur’ān:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ﴾

*O humankind! We have created you of a male and a female, and then We made you (into different) races and tribes so that you may get to know each other. **Surely the most honourable of you with Allāh is the one who is most pious among you; surely Allāh is All-Knowing and Aware.***

- Surah al-Hujurāt, 49:13

Imām Ali (‘a) therefore refused and said he would rule according to the Qur’ān and the Sunnah of Rasulullāh (s) only. If the sirah of the shaykhain was according to the Qur’ān and the Sunnah of Rasulullāh (s) then it was covered and there was no need to mention it as a special condition; and if it was against the Qur’ān and Sunnah then he could not follow it. On the other hand, Uthmān b. Affān (an Umayyad himself), readily agreed to the condition and was thus appointed as the 3rd Caliph.

Conclusion

The idea that the successorship to Rasulullāh (s) and the caliphate was the right of the Quraysh only, with disregard to individual merit or whom Rasulullāh (s) had himself declared as his successor, was first conceived by Abu Bakr. He may have done so to allow himself to control the other Arab tribes but this was not legitimate from a Qur’ānic perspective. And yet it became an essential institution of Islām upheld by the Sunni creed.

Umar tried to ‘islamicize’ this institution by not favouring the Makkan aristocracy directly but rather by using the principles of consultation (*shura*). He also believed that those who became Muslims first, had greater rights in Islām. But these two principles of consultation (*shura*) and precedence (*sābiqa*) failed to islamicize the institution of the Caliphate and vanished almost immediately after his death, for two reasons: firstly because even though Umar preferred merit in Islām over Makkan aristocracy, he on the other hand still upheld that the Arabs must be given preference over non-Arabs. And secondly, Umar allowed the Umayyads to gain control and power, especially by appointing Mu’āwiya as his governor in Syria and arranging for Uthmān (who was an Umayyad) to succeed him.

It was now only a matter of time before succession to Rasulullāh (s) became a dynasty or monarchy with one family ruling until it was overthrown by another, regardless of the rulers’ personal qualities or relationship to Rasulullāh (s). The

institution of Imāmah that Allāh (s.w.t.) and Rasulullāh (s) had envisioned for the Muslim Ummah was ignored, neglected and forgotten except by those who remained attached to the Household (Ahl al-Bayt) of Rasulullāh (s) and called themselves their 'Shi'ah' (followers and supporters).

Lesson 4

Legacy of the Early Caliphs (cont'd)

Uthmān b. Affān – the Third Caliph

Of all the people in Umar's *shura*, perhaps no one was more surprised when Uthmān was declared the 3rd Caliph of the Muslims than Uthmān himself.

Uthmān had no leadership qualities whatsoever. He had a glaring lack of military prowess and was known to flee in battles, at times not returning home until 3 days later.³⁴ In the words of Wilfred Madelung, Uthmān was 'by nature averse to bloodshed'.³⁵ It is true that he was highly successful as a merchant; but at no time before his election at the *shura* had he displayed any qualities of public leadership.

Among the six members of the *shura* council, Uthmān was the only one who had never been entrusted with leading even a minor expedition or a small group of the Muslim army: neither by Rasullāh (s) himself nor by the first two caliphs. And before the election he had no political ambitions and can hardly even have thought of himself as a potential candidate for the supreme reign one day.

Despite his weaknesses as a leader (which was much manipulated by his family) he was put forward as a candidate only to counter and stop Imām Ali ('a) from getting the *khilāfah*.³⁶ What made him a good counter-candidate to Imām Ali ('a) was that he was an Umayyad and would therefore have a strong backing of the Makkan aristocracy. The Umayyads were descendants of Abd Manāf from Abd ash-Shams. And Imām Ali ('a) was also a descendant of Abd Manāf but from Hāshim (like Rasullāh (s)). Since none of the other candidates in the council were descendents of Abd Manāf, without Uthmān the Umayyads may have felt obliged to support Imām Ali ('a) since he was from the Abd Manāf even if not from the Abd ash-Shams line of descent.

When Uthmān became Caliph, he realized his unpreparedness but he also knew he was heavily backed by the Quraysh. He therefore took a passive approach and let his family run the show. In no Caliph's life is nepotism so widely acknowledged by historians as in the Caliphate of Uthmān.

In his first public speech, Uthmān made a poor effort and then lamely finished by apologizing, "O people! We have never been orators (*khutabā*). If we live, then inshā Allāh, the oration will come to you in proper shape!"³⁷

³⁴ As he did in the Battle of Uhud.

³⁵ Madelung, *Succession to Muhammad*, p. 78.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 80.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

Uthmān was also the first Caliph to refer to himself as ‘the Caliph of Allāh’ (khalifatullāh). From the first day of his rule, he began systematically replacing the governors of the major provinces with his own relatives from the Bani Umayya.

In Kufa he appointed his drunkard step-brother Walid b. Uqba to replace Sa'd b. Abi Waqqās. Walid was known to once vomit on the pulpit of Kufa because of being drunk. And on another occasion, because he was too drunk, he led the fajr salāh with four sujud instead of two. When the angry Muslims confronted him after the salāh, he said, ‘What a beautiful morning! I would like to extend it even further, if you allow me!’ The people of Kufa complained to Uthmān but he wouldn’t do anything about it. Finally Uthmān was forced to summon Walid to Madina and Imām Ali (‘a) saw to it that he was whipped 40 times for drinking. Uthmān then replaced the governor of Kufa with his cousin Sa’id b. al-Aas.

In Egypt Uthmān replaced Amr b. al-Aas with his foster brother Abd Allāh bin Abi Sarh, who has been cursed in the Qur’ān (Surah al-An’ām, 6:93) for inventing lies and saying that he had revelations from Allāh.

Uthmān also invited his uncle Hakam bin al-Aas back to Madina, after he had been exiled from Madina for life by Rasulullāh (s). Then he made his uncle Hakam's evil son Marwān his secretary and gave him huge gifts from the property of the Muslims. He also gave Marwān the property of Fadak and made him his son-in-law. Marwān played a role in the murder of Uthmān. He later incited Talha and Zubayr to fight Imām Ali (‘a) in Jamal but then had Talha killed so that he would not threaten his rise to power. He was responsible for the arrows shot at Imām Hasan (‘a)’s body before burial and he played a role in the murder of Imām Husayn (‘a). Shortly after Yazid, Marwān became the Umayyad Caliph and his sons ruled after him until the end of the Umayyad dynasty. (We shall study more about this in Book 12.)

During the Caliphate of Uthmān, conquests were extended in Africa from beyond Egypt in the east to as far as Morocco in the West, covering almost the whole territory along the sea-coast i.e. Libya, Tunisia, and Algeria. All the new territory brought in untold wealth to the Caliph.

Despite his open nepotism, the greatest grievances that the Muslims had against Uthmān were his ill-treatment of the *sahāba* and the squandering of the Muslim wealth. While they suffered in poverty, Uthmān’s relatives built palaces for themselves and treated the Muslim treasury as their personal property. Hundreds of thousands of dirhams were given by Uthmān to his family members.

On one occasion the great companion of Rasulullāh (s) – Ammār Yāsir – spoke out against Uthmān. Instead of heeding his words, Uthmān ordered for Ammār to be beaten up and a group of Umayyads attacked Ammār and kicking him down, beat him until he fainted. Some of his relatives were informed of this and rushed to save Ammār and carry him off to safety.

Another great companion of Rasulullāh (s) to oppose Uthmān was Abu Dhar. At first Abu Dhar was in Damascus where he preached against Mu'āwiya and his squandering of Muslim wealth. Mu'āwiya did not dare touch Abu Dhar because of his status. Instead he wrote to Uthmān and asked for Abu Dhar to be banished from Syria. Uthmān had Abu Dhar brought to Madina on an unsaddled camel. In Madina Abu Dhar continued preaching in public against Uthmān until the latter had him banished to a wilderness in the desert called Rabadha where Abu Dhar was forced to live alone and die in isolation.

Numerous other incidents took place where Uthmān was asked to act justly but he always allowed Marwān and other relatives to influence him and he would apologize to the Muslims and then revert back and defend his family.

Uthmān's Death

When the matter got completely out of hand, a group of almost 10,000 Muslims travelled from Egypt, Kufa and Basra and surrounded Uthmān's palace in Madina. This siege lasted for 40 days. Imām Ali ('a) tried his best to help diffuse the situation and even when the Muslims besieged the palace and denied Uthmān access to food and water, Imām Ali ('a) managed to convince the Muslims to allow Imām Hasan ('a) and Imām Husayn ('a) to take water to Uthmān.

In the end however, the Muslims broke into the palace. All of Uthmān's family fled. He was only left with his wife. As Uthmān sat in a corner clutching a rosary (tasbeeh) and staring at the Qur'ān, the people attacked him and cut him with their swords until he died. Thereafter they refused to have him buried next to Rasulullāh (s) and the previous two caliphs. Instead his body was taken to the other end of Baqi where the Jews buried their dead and he was buried there.

Uthmān was murdered at the age of 82 on the 18th of Dhul Hijjah 35 AH having reigned eleven years and eleven months.

Later that same year Salmān al-Fārisi, whom Rasulullāh (s) had counted as a member of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) and called "Salmān al-Muhammadi", passed away in Madāin. He was Imām Ali ('a)'s governor there and according to some historians he was 250 or 350 years old.

Conclusion

After the murder of Uthmān, the people unanimously pressured Imām Ali ('a) to take the leadership of the Muslim Ummah. What is most startling however is that the very same men who were behind the murder of Uthmān now began calling for revenge for Uthmān's blood and they found the perfect person to blame: Imām Ali ('a). Perfect because it would serve as a good excuse to remove Imām Ali ('a) from the khilāfah.

For example, one of the most active and outspoken opponents of Uthmān was Talha b. Ubaydillah. Uthmān tried to win Talha over by sending him lavish gifts and money, which Talha gladly took but did not stop criticizing the Caliph. In fact, he wrote letters to provinces outside Madina inciting revolt and encouraged the Egyptians during their siege of Uthmān's palace. And it was Talha who stopped water from getting to Uthmān during the siege.³⁸

Yet after Uthmān was murdered, Talha and Zubayr along with Aisha bint Abu Bakr, the widow of Rasulullāh (s), went to Basra and used the people there to raise an army to fight Imām Ali ('a) in the Battle of Jamal, as a revenge for Uthmān's murder.

Another example is Marwān, the son-in-law of Uthmān. He was foul-mouthed and every time the Muslim 'rebels' asked to speak to Uthmān, Marwān would abuse them and tell them off. His inciting them led to the palace doors being set on fire and the break into the palace to murder Uthmān. Yet Marwān himself fled and left Uthmān to face the protesters alone.

A third case is that of Aisha bint Abi Bakr. She had a grudge against Uthmān from the start of his Caliphate. Some historians say this was because Uthmān reduced her pension to that of the other widows of Rasulullāh (s) from the extra she was receiving during the caliphate of her father and then Umar. She was the first one to speak out against Uthmān in Masjid an-Nabawi. Every time she wanted to turn the people against Uthmān, she would bring to the Mosque a hair or garment or sandal of Rasulullāh (s) and cry out, 'how quickly you have forsaken the sunnah of the Messenger of God, the owner of this sandal!'³⁹ And seeing Rasulullāh (s)'s possession in her hand, the crowds of people would cry in rage and abuse Uthmān, forcing him to descend from the pulpit and rush back into his palace.

Aisha also wrote letters to other provinces to stir up rebellion against Uthmān. But later on, when she found out that Uthmān had been murdered and Imām Ali ('a) was the Caliph, she turned around completely in favour of the 'madhlum' (oppressed) Caliph who was murdered. This was because there was no one that Aisha hated more than Imām Ali ('a). The blood-stained shirt of the 'khalifat al-madhlum' became the standard of Aisha in the Battle of Jamal.

When Uthmān was besieged in his palace, he managed to send a note asking for help from his relative and governor in Syria – Mu'āwiya b. Abi Sufyān. Mu'āwiya of course had other plans and ambitions and was slow to respond. He held back to see what would happen next. Even after he found out that Uthmān had been murdered and Imām Ali ('a) was the Caliph, he did not react because in Arab custom, Uthmān had other closer male relatives such as Uthmān's son Abān and his step-brother Walid b. Uqba who would claim for any revenge. But after the attempt by Aisha, Talha and Zubayr failed to overthrow Imām Ali ('a) in the Battle of Jamal and Imām Ali ('a) now demanded that Mu'āwiya step down as governor of Syria, suddenly Mu'āwiya saw

³⁸ Ibid., p. 98.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 100-101

the need to claim he was the heir of Uthmān and could not step down until he had avenged the death of the 'khalifat al-madhlum'. The real aim was of course not to avenge Uthmān but to remove Imām Ali ('a) from power by framing him as the culprit.

And yet, no one had tried to help Uthmān (and even arranged for him to have food and water during the siege) more than Imām Ali ('a).

Lesson 5

The Khilāfah of Imām 'Alī ('a)

The Allegiance to Imām Ali ('a)

After the murder of Uthmān, there was great unrest in the city of Madina due to the absence of any government. The main citizens of the city called for the immediate election of a Caliph to end the danger of a civil war. Two men had ambitions to become Caliph. They were Talha and Zubayr, both brothers-in-law of Aisha, the widow of Rasulullāh (s). However, to the great disadvantage of these two candidates, she was in Makkah for pilgrimage at the time.

The people of Madina, however, wanted Imām Ali ('a) to be their Caliph. He was a man admired by his friends and enemies alike for his courage, piety, eloquence, wisdom and kinship to Rasulullāh (s). After having been ruled by weak men the people now turned to the man who had been nominated to lead them in the first place. However, Imām Ali ('a) refused their offer at first.

Imām Ali ('a) was in a very difficult position. On one hand, he knew he was the most rightful to lead. On the other hand he also knew there were many in positions of governorship or eager for power and will not be able to withstand his justice. Those in power (as governors) were corrupt and used to the support of the previous Caliphs. They would not tolerate a rule like that of Rasulullāh (s) again.

The people of Madina insisted that they would follow none but him and at last Imām Ali ('a) agreed. He declared he would only rule on the basis of the Qur'ān and Sunnah of Rasulullāh (s) and the people agreed. This was a unanimous vote and not in a small gathering like in Saqifa or an appointment by the previous Caliph or a *shura* (council) of electors. It took place at the end of Dhul Hijjah, 35 AH.

The next day in Masjid an-Nabawi, the Muslims gathered in large numbers to pay allegiance to Imām Ali ('a), amongst the first ones being Talha and Zubayr.

A few days later, Talha, Zubayr and a few others came to Imām Ali ('a) asking that the murder of Uthmān be avenged. Imām Ali ('a) knew full well that some of these same people had been responsible for the riots that led to Uthmān's death, and now they just wanted to stir up trouble. However, he called for Uthmān's wife Naila and his secretary Marwān to ask them if they could identify the culprits. Marwān did not come and in any case he had left Uthmān before the murder. Naila came and said that Uthmān was killed by two men who she did not recognize. Under the circumstances Imām Ali ('a) could do nothing more unless further evidence came to light.

Meanwhile, the members of the Banu Umayya slowly began to leave Madina. Imām Ali ('a) knew that they were up to no good and anticipated future trouble.

Nonetheless, following the policies of the Qur'ān and Rasulullāh (s), the first matter that Imām Ali ('a) attended to was replacing the worthless governors of Uthmān. Most of the governors took over their new posts but the governor to Kufa was stopped from entering that city while the governor to Syria was stopped by Mu'āwiya's men and both had to return to Madina.

When his governors returned from Kufa and Syria, Imām Ali ('a) wrote letters to Abu Musa Ash'ari in Kufa and Mu'āwiya in Syria demanding that they give way to the new governors.

Abu Musa conceded and wrote back from Kufa, stating that the Kufans were at the service of the new Caliph, but Mu'āwiya did not respond.

Meanwhile, Talha and Zubayr came to Imām Ali ('a) asking to be appointed as governors. Imām Ali ('a) refused to appoint them and in anger, they planned an excuse of going to Makkah for Umra and slipped out of Madina. There, in violation of their recent allegiance to Imām Ali ('a), they met with Aisha and together a plot was hatched to proceed to Basra and arouse the people there against Imām Ali ('a).

Thus, Imām Ali ('a) was faced with a double threat to the security of his government - from Aisha, Talha and Zubayr in Basra and from Mu'āwiya in Damascus (Syria).

The Battle of Jamal

The People of Basra were easy to sway when they saw the 'wife of Rasulullāh (s)' and 'Mother of the Faithful' (*umm al-mu'mineen*) had come to their city and was asking them to rise in arms against Imām Ali ('a).

Historians confirm that Aisha also asked Umm Salama to join her but she refused saying Rasulullāh (s) had asked his wives never to leave Madina and also that Imām Ali ('a) was the rightful successor to Rasulullāh (s). Umm Salama tried dissuading Aisha but Zubayr's son Abd Allāh who was Aisha's nephew (sister's son) managed to convince his aunt to continue with the war plans. Abd Allāh b. Zubayr was known for his hatred for Imām Ali ('a).

As the preparations of war were underway in Basra, Imām Ali ('a) came to know of this and he set out of Madina and asked Imām Hasan ('a) and some of his closest companions like Malik al-Ashtar to proceed to Kufa and ask the people there to join him.

The army of Aisha, Talha and Zubayr now set out of Basra, 30,000 men strong. On the way towards the battle, they stopped at a place called Hawab. There Aisha heard dogs barking all night. She asked what the place was called and when she was told 'Hwab' she began screaming and crying. When asked why, she said she had heard Rasulullāh (s) curse one of his wives once and say, 'woe to the one to whom the dogs of Hawab bark!'

When Talha and Zubayr came to know that Aisha would not move any further and they could not convince her otherwise, Abd Allāh b. Zubayr raised a false alarm that the army of Imām Ali (‘a) was approaching and everyone got up to leave in a hurry. Soon all was forgotten and the Basran army was on the move again.

When the two armies finally met, Imām Ali (‘a) had 20,000 men mostly from Kufa and Aisha had 30,000 men mostly from Basra. This was the first time that Muslims would fight one another. It was therefore the first civil war in Islām.

Before the battle began Imām Ali (‘a) tried very hard to reason with Aisha, Talha and Zubayr so as to prevent bloodshed but to no avail. Imām Ali (‘a) reminded Zubayr that Rasullullāh (s) had prophesized to him that one day he would fight against Imām Ali (‘a) but he Zubayr would be wrong. This shook Zubayr to the core.

Soon after the battle began, Zubayr left the battlefield and fled to another town where someone recognized him and killed him. Talha was shot with an arrow in the back and it is believed that Marwān shot him because he did not want Talha to have ambitions of power in case they won the battle. Marwān’s main aim was to start the battle with help from Talha and Zubayr and that had been accomplished.

Aisha was mounted on a red camel called al-Askar and from above she kept encouraging the men to fight. The Basra army rallied around her camel and hence the battle came to be known as the Battle of al-Jamal (the Camel). With Talha and Zubayr no more, the entire battle centred around Aisha’s camel. Thousands upon thousands of men died senselessly as she screaming unceasingly with her shrill voice, ‘slay the murderers of Uthmān’, urging the men to fight.

Finally Imām Ali (‘a) ordered his commander Malik al-Ashtar to ‘kill the red camel’. As soon as the camel fell, the battle came to an end. Aisha fell from the camel and Imām Ali (‘a) ensured she was carried away to safety and later returned to Madina. The Umayyads would have loved to see Aisha killed. That would have given them the added excuse that Imām Ali (‘a) had killed ‘the Mother of the Faithful’.

In total, 10,000 men on the side of Aisha and 5,000 men on the side of Imām Ali (‘a) were martyred in the Battle of Jamal due to Aisha’s hatred and jealousy for Imām Ali (‘a) and Talha and Zubayr’s greed for power. According to others almost 17,000 men died on Aisha’s side. The Battle of Jamal was fought on the morning of Friday, the 16th of Jamādi al-Akhar, 36 A.H. (November 656 CE).

The Change of Capital from Madina to Kufa

After the Battle of Jamal, Imām Ali (‘a) proceeded to Basra where he scolded the men for allowing themselves to be swayed by Aisha and for breaking their allegiance to him. Thereafter Imām Ali (‘a) decided to transfer the headquarters of the Islāmic government from Madina to Kufa. This was because the expansion of the Muslim empire made it difficult to manage it from Madina. This was Rajab 36 AH.

The people of Kufa welcomed Imām Ali (‘a) and offered him to stay at the governor’s palace but he refused and instead chose a humble house for his residence.

Imām Ali (‘a) also felt the need to be in Kufa because he knew his next challenge would be Mu’āwiya in Syria; and Kufa (being in Iraq) was closer to Damascus (Syria). Just as Rasulullāh (s) had to migrate from Makkah to Madina because of the animosity of Abu Sufyān, Imām Ali (‘a) (raised like a son by Rasulullāh (s)) now had to migrate from Madina to Kufa because of the animosity of Abu Sufyān’s son Mu’āwiya.

The Battle of Siffin

Before Imām Ali (‘a) engaged Mu’āwiya in battle, he tried to settle matters peacefully through letters that were sent back and forth by messengers. Many of these letters are found in Nahj al-Balāgha.

When several months had passed and it became obvious that Mu’āwiya was simply buying time to build an army, Imām Ali (‘a) managed to raise another army from Iraq and marched towards Syria in the month of Dhul Hijjah 36 AH. At a place called Siffin, they found Mu’āwiya’s army camped with 120,000 men. Imām Ali (‘a) had 90,000 men with him.

At first, Mu’āwiya’s men tried to stop Imām Ali (‘a)’s men from gaining access to water from the river. Mu’āwiya used the argument that Uthmān was denied water in his palace and therefore his murderers should also be kept thirsty! This was very ironic because it was Imām Ali (‘a) who had arranged for Uthmān to have access to water. Imām Ali (‘a)’s men fought the Syrians and took over the river. Thereafter Imām Ali (‘a) ordered that the Syrians too be given free access to water.

Imām Ali (‘a) tried to keep the battle limited to single combat initially or small divisions fighting each other. This was to minimize the loss of Muslim lives. The two armies stopped fighting in the month of Muharram, which was considered sacred and the fighting resumed again in Safar 37 AH.

Often Imām Ali (‘a) challenged Mu’āwiya in single combat so that innocent Muslims would not die but Mu’āwiya was too scared to come forward. And so week after week, thousands died in battle. Amongst the most eminent who were martyred on Imām Ali (‘a)’s side was Rasulullāh (s)’s companion Ammār Yāsir. Ammār was now 93 yrs old. Rasulullāh (s) had predicted that Ammār would be killed by a rebellious group. When Ammār fell, the Syrians were shaken in faith because they knew they were the rebels that Rasulullāh (s) had prophesized. To overcome their fears, Mu’āwiya’s crafty adviser Amr b. al-Aas told the men that Imām Ali (‘a) had brought Ammār to battle and therefore he had killed him! When Imām Ali (‘a) heard this, he remarked, ‘Subhānallāh! Then it means Rasulullāh (s) killed Hamza when he brought him to Uhud!’

At one point the battle was so fierce that the men fought each other even during the nights when there was a full moon (13-15 Safar 36 AH). Slowly but steadily, Imām Ali ('a)'s men were winning the battle. At one point Amr b. al-Aas ventured into the battlefield to show off. Imām Ali ('a) came forward too but with his face covered. As Amr got closer, Imām Ali ('a) uncovered his face. Amr was terrified. He tried fleeing but fell off his horse. As Imām Ali ('a) was about to strike him, the cunning but shameless man removed all his clothes and lifted his legs up, stark naked. Imām Ali ('a) turned away and Amr fled. Mu'āwiya forever teased Amr as 'the man who used his private parts to save his life' while Amr mocked Mu'āwiya as a coward who dared not accept the challenge of Imām Ali ('a) to single combat.

As well, Malik al-Ashtar, the brave commander of Imām Ali ('a), was making great strides at the battle forefront. He was feared by all and fought ferociously until he got very close to the tent of Mu'āwiya, determined to slay the evil man. As Mu'āwiya prepared to flee, just then, Amr b. al-Aas had another devilish plan. He ordered 500 men to raise pages of the Qur'ān on spears and start shouting, 'let the Qur'ān decide between us!' The plot worked. Suddenly the weak-minded cowards on Imām Ali ('a)'s side were confused. They too began shouting the same and came to Imām Ali ('a) asking him to stop the battle. Imām Ali ('a) warned them this was a trick and told them, "I am the speaking Qur'ān" (Qur'ān an-Nātiq) meaning he was more worth of being defended than the pages of the silent Qur'ān (Qur'ān as-Sāmit). But the hypocrites led by Ash'ath b. al-Qays would have nothing of it. They threatened Imām Ali ('a) and insisted he call Malik back from the battlefield and declare a truce. This was perhaps the saddest moment in Malik al-Ashtar's life. He was metres away from getting to Mu'āwiya and Amr b. al-Aas.

Then came the issue of appointing representatives to discuss the truce. Mu'āwiya naturally chose Amr b. al-Aas to represent him. Imām Ali ('a) wanted Malik al-Ashtar or Abd Allāh b. al-Abbās to represent his side but the hypocrites insisted they wanted Abu Musa al-Ash'ari. Abu Musa al-Ash'ari was a coward and a confused man who pretended to be very pious and had refused to take any side in the battle. He was once the governor of Kufa and now spent all his time at home in worship. Abu Musa was obviously delighted to know that the people of Kufa wanted him to represent them again.

In the months to come, meetings took place and finally in the month of Ramadān 37 AH (February 658 CE), Amr b. al-Aas managed to trick Abu Musa into confessing that Uthmān was killed wrongfully and that Mu'āwiya was his rightful heir. The damage was done. The Syrians now rejoiced and pledged allegiance to Mu'āwiya as their Caliph and the people of Hijāz (Madina and Makkah) as well as Irāq (Kufa and Basra) turned away in anger and remained with Imām Ali ('a).

With no conclusion to the Battle of Siffin, Mu'āwiya had lost 45,000 men and 25,000 men were martyred on the side of Imām Ali ('a).

Lesson 6

The Khilāfah of Imām ‘Alī (‘a) (cont’d)

Revolt of the Kharijites

After the truce at Siffin, as Imām Ali (‘a) led his men back to Kufa, a group of 12,000 men separated themselves from the main body and began murmuring and complaining about the truce and why they had accepted the compromise. They acknowledged that they were wrong to have forced Imām Ali (‘a) to stop the battle but now wanted Imām Ali (‘a) to also acknowledge he was wrong to have accepted their threats and they wanted him to ‘repent’ for his ‘sin’!! In the months to come, they were even more infuriated with how Amr b. al-Aas had tricked Abu Musa al-Ash’ari and now wanted Imām Ali (‘a) to ‘repent’ for allowing these two men to decide the fate of the Muslims.

Imām Ali (‘a) obviously did not accept their ridiculous requests and reminded them that it was not only they who stopped the battle when they were about to win but it was also they who insisted on having Abu Musa al-Ash’ari as their arbitrator. The group therefore broke away claiming that their ruler was neither Mu’āwiya nor Imām Ali (‘a) and that ‘no one has authority except Allāh’ (*lā hukma illa lillāh*). This became their motto and their battle-cry forever.

Imām Ali (‘a) used to say about this statement – *lā hukma illa lillāh* – that it is a true statement but they intend wrong with it. Meaning, even though it is true that ultimate authority belongs to Allāh, yet Allāh does not appear in physical form to govern and rule over people. He is represented by a human being that He chooses to rule over others.

This fanatic breakaway group came to be known as the Kharijites (Arabic, *Khawārij*), which means, ‘the outcasts’.

The Battle of Nahrawān

Ignoring the Kharijites, Imām Ali (‘a) put together another army to fight Mu’āwiya. In the meantime however the Kharijites began attacking innocent civilians. They would kidnap them and murder them in cold blood. They were truly representative of the kind of fanatics, extremists and terrorists today who kidnap people and behead them or engage in suicide bombing in the name of religion.

The people of Imām Ali (‘a) were very worried about their families and now refused to go towards Syria to fight Mu’āwiya while the Kharijites were running wild in their

own territories. Imām Ali (‘a) therefore had to divert the army towards a place called Nahrawān, where most of the Kharijites had camped.

At first Imām Ali (‘a) sent a messenger to them but they simply murdered him. A battle was therefore inevitable. The Kharijites were known to be ‘pious’ men who stood all night in prayer and memorized the Qur’ān. They had ‘lumps’ on their foreheads due to excessive prostrations in worship. Some of the people on Imām Ali (‘a)’s side were confused again. This shows the importance of obedience to an Imām vs. being fooled by the outer appearance and practices of hypocrites and weak-minded ‘pious ascetics’.

The Battle of Nahrawān took place in the month of Dhul Hijjah 37 AH (or according to some Safar 38 AH) and most of the Kharijites were killed. They numbered 1800 and only nine of them escaped. Imām Ali (‘a) on the other hand had 14,000 men of whom only a handful were martyred. One of the Kharijites who escaped from Nahrawān was Abd ar-Rahmān b. al-Muljam, the murderer of Imām Ali (‘a).

The Loss of Support

Having disposed off the Kharijites at Nahrawān, Imām Ali (‘a) resumed his march towards Syria. However the chiefs of his followers urged him to stop at Kufa to let the men rest before the long journey and to enable the army to repair their weapons and armours and to replenish their arrows. Imām Ali (‘a) agreed to this request and camped at Nukhayla outside Kufa. The soldiers were allowed to leave the camp for a day.

The next day, hardly any men returned and at length, Imām Ali (‘a) entered Kufa and gave a stern sermon to the people. However, nobody came forward and finally, Imām Ali (A) turned away from them in disappointment. The Syrian expedition was abandoned, never to be resumed. There onwards Imām Ali (‘a) complained of his people and the lame excuses they put forward to avoid jihād.

There are numerous sermons of Imām Ali (‘a) where he complained to the people of how strong Mu’āwiya’s men were in their wrongdoing and how weak they were in their following the right. He finally cursed them and prayed to Allāh to replace him and give the people the kind of leaders they deserved. Never again did the Muslims know a just and truly pious leader like Imām Ali (‘a). They were tyrannized by the Umayyads and Abbāsids, always regretting their forsaking the side of Imām Ali (‘a) who warned them of ‘kings’ after him who would oppress them. It is important to remember that after the martyrdom of Imām Ali (‘a), Imām Hasan (‘a) inherited these very same Kufan men of weak faith as followers and that is why it was easy for Mu’āwiya to bribe them and Imām Hasan (‘a) saw no point in fighting Mu’āwiya with such men and opted for the peace treaty.

Mu'āwiya's Activities

Mu'āwiya at first was apprehensive that Imām Ali ('a) would fight him with another army. He was delighted to know from his spies that there were now too many divisions in Imām Ali ('a)'s camp and it was highly unlikely that he would have to fight another battle.

To keep Imām Ali ('a) occupied with trouble and to destabilize his government further, Mu'āwiya now began stirring trouble in other parts of Arabia. He had people attack innocent civilians in Egypt and Hijāz, disguised as Imām Ali ('a)'s men.

In 38 AH, Imām Ali ('a) sent his most loyal command Malik al-Ashtar to be his governor in Egypt but Mu'āwiya arranged to have him poisoned through someone who pretended to be a Shi'ah and well-wisher of Malik. The martyrdom of Malik was a blow to Imām Ali ('a). Mu'āwiya himself rejoiced saying, 'Ali had two arms. I cut one off in Siffin (meaning Ammār Yāsir) and now I've cut the other.'

Imām Ali ('a) then sent his adopted son Muhammad b. Abi Bakr to Egypt. By then Mu'āwiya had sent Amr b. al-Aas with an army to Egypt. Muhammad b. Abi Bakr was left alone at one point and had to hide himself. He was found amidst some ruins, weak with thirst and hunger. Amr had him killed and then put his body in the carcass of a donkey and burnt it.

In the beginning of 40 AH, Mu'āwiya sent Busr b. Artah, a cruel commander, with 3000 horsemen to attack Madina and Makkah. Imām Ali ('a)'s governors in these cities fled to Kufa and Busr entered unopposed. He killed some of the people there cruelly and forced the rest to acknowledge Mu'āwiya as their Caliph. Having done this in Madina and Makkah, he went to Yemen and killed thousands of Imām Ali ('a)'s followers.

Imām Ali ('a) immediately sent an army of 4000 men towards Yemen but it was too late. By then Busr was already heading back to Syria. Imām Ali ('a)'s commander nonetheless went to Madina and Makkah and renewed the people's oath of allegiance to Imām Ali ('a) again.

The cowardly attacks by Mu'āwiya on innocent civilians continued while Imām Ali ('a) kept trying to encourage his men to respond to Mu'āwiya's evil ploys. He urged them to rise and fight, if not for Islām, then for the sake of the innocent civilians. But before anything materialized, Imām Ali ('a) was martyred.

Shahādah of Imām Ali ('a)

The Kharijites who escaped from Nahrawān regrouped and continued to think of ways to promote their cause. At one point they decided the only solution was to kill the three people whom they considered to be the cause of all their problems: Imām Ali ('a), Mu'āwiya and Amr b. al-Aas.

Three Kharijites volunteered to carry out one assassination each. They decided they would all carry out their deed on the 3rd Friday of the month of Ramadān at the time of fajr salāh. Having poisoned their swords, each one set out for his destination.

The Kharijite who attacked Mu'āwiya, managed to injure him but failed to kill him. He was put to death by Mu'āwiya. The Kharijite who wanted to kill Amr killed the wrong man because it so happened that Amr b. al-Aas did not lead the prayers that day and appointed someone else in his place. That Kharijite too was arrested and killed.

As for Ibn Muljam, his blow to Ali ('a)'s head while he was in sajdah proved fatal. Ibn Muljam was further encouraged to assassinate Imām Ali ('a) because when he arrived in Kufa, he met a beautiful woman who promised to marry him provided he killed Imām Ali ('a) as her dowry (*mahr*). Ibn Muljam too was caught and after Imām Ali ('a)'s martyrdom, Imām Hasan ('a) had him struck once with the sword and he died.

Imām Ali ('a) was wounded with the poisoned sword on Friday, the 19th of Ramadān 40 AH in Masjid Kufa. He left the world three days later on 21st Ramadān 40 AH at the age of 63. Because of his numerous enemies, the Banu Hāshim had to bury him in secret about 5 miles outside Kufa in a place today known as Najaf, where a beautiful shrine stands over his grave. The grave site of Imām Ali ('a) became public during the time of Imām Ja'far as-Sādiq ('a) and Najaf went on to become the highest centre of Shi'ah learning for 1000 years. Even to this day when most Shi'ah hawzas are in Qum (Iran), Najaf is still regarded as a place of religious learning and where great marā'j'i live.



The Haram of Amir al-Mu'minin, Imām Ali b. Abi Tālib ('a) in Najaf (Iraq), 2009.

Rise of the Umayyad Dynasty

After Imām Ali (‘a), Imām Hasan (‘a) was regarded as the Caliph for 6 months only. We studied about the life of Imām Hasan (‘a) and the peace treaty with Mu’āwiya in Book 9. Mu’āwiya’s Caliphate marks the start of the Umayyad Dynasty. From him onwards, the Sunni Muslims stopped referring to the Caliphs as ‘rightly-guided’ (rāshidun) and the Muslims were ruled by oppressive monarchs and kings. We will study about the Muslim dynasties (including the Umayyad Dynasty) in Book 12 inshā Allāh.

Lesson 7

Imām al-Mahdī (‘a)

In Book 10 we studied the history of the Aimmah (‘a) until the eleventh Imām Hasan al-Askari (‘a) and we mentioned briefly the history of the final and twelfth Imām al-Mahdi (‘atfs).

In this lesson we will study the life of Imām al-Mahdi (‘atfs) in greater detail including the signs foretold by Rasullāh (s) and the other Imāms (‘a) that prophesize the coming of Imām al-Mahdi (‘atfs).

Introduction & Titles

Our twelfth Imām is not usually referred to by his own name (Muhammad) but rather by titles such as Imām al-Hujjah (Proof of God), Imām Sahib al-‘Asr waz-Zamān (The Master of the present age and time), Imām al-Muntadhar (the Awaited Imām), and Imām al-Mahdi (the One Guided by God). After his return, he will most popularly be known as Baqiyatullah (the Remnant of Allāh).

Imām al-Mahdi (‘atfs) was born on 15th Sha‘bān 255 AH and when he was only 5 years old, his father Imām Hasan al-Askari (‘a) was poisoned and martyred. From 260 AH, the Imām was not accessible to the public but had an ambassador (safir) through whom the Shi‘ah could write letters and communicate with the Imām. This continued for 69 years (until 329 AH/939 CE) and is known as the period of Ghaybat as-Sughra (the minor occultation).

Thereafter, when the 4th Safir of Imām al-Mahdi (‘atfs) passed away, the Imām did not appoint a 5th Safir but instead asked the 4th Safir to tell people that after him the Ghaybat al-Kubra (major occultation) would begin and no one could claim direct access to the Imām until the end of times when Allāh would command Imām al-Mahdi (‘atfs) to reveal his identity and fill the earth with peace and justice.

The main reason for the ghayba was to protect the Imām. Every previous Imām was either poisoned or unjustly killed by the sword. Human beings must learn the value of an Imām even it is after they have been ruled over by tyrants and corrupt leaders and they realize that no one can truly establish a just society except one who is appointed by Allāh.

The Shi‘ah believe that Imām al-Mahdi (‘atfs) lives amongst people but they do not recognize him when they see him and he often helps them without their knowing. The ‘return’ of the Imām from ghayba is therefore the revealing of his true identity to people. He is able to hide his identity with help from Allāh for his safety and protection.

Many ahādith are reported from other Imāms that from the time of the creation of Nabi Adam (‘a) there has always been someone on the earth to represent Allāh’s affairs. And it is impossible for the earth to exist without a representative of Allāh.

When Imām al-Mahdi (‘atfs) was born, Imām Hasan al-Askari (‘a) showed the baby to several very close Shi’ah and asked them to inform others that the final Imām had been born. Since then, many Shi’ah ulama have had experiences of meeting with the Imām except that during the ghaybat al-kubra, no one can claim to know the whereabouts of the Imām. Often the ulama only realize they met the Imām after he has left them.

His Longevity

The Sunni Muslims also believe in Imām al-Mahdi (‘atfs) and that he is a descendant of Imām Ali (‘a) and Sayyida Fātima (‘a). They quote ahādith from Rasulullāh (s) that the world will never come to an end until the Mahdi comes forth and establishes peace and justice in the whole world. However the Sunni Muslims believe the Mahdi (‘atfs) is to be born in the future in time for his rising to power.

Naturally, many people ask: how is it possible for an Imām to live for so long and not age. In some ahādith we are told that when Imām al-Mahdi (‘atfs) returns, some people will deny him because of how ‘young’ he looks and he will have the appearance of a 40 year old man.

What is most strange is that no Muslim doubts that Shaytān, who lived for thousands of years even before Nabi Adam (‘a), is still alive to this day. If Allāh can keep an enemy alive to this day, can He not keep His Proof on the earth alive?

The Qur’ān mentions that Nabi Nuh (‘a) was 950 years old.⁴⁰ Many historians believe this was before the Flood but he lived thereafter until he was 2500 years old. Historians have also reported a long life for other prophets and people of Allāh:

Nabi Ādam (930 yrs), Luqmān (3800 yrs), Nabi Sheeth (900 yrs), Sayyida Hawwa (930 yrs), Nabi Sulaymān (‘a) (700 yrs), Nabi Hud (464 yrs).

Prophets still alive to this day: Nabi Idris (‘a) (over 900 yrs), Nabi Isa (‘a) (over 2000 yrs), Nabi Khidr (‘a) (over 4000 yrs) and Nabi Ilyās (‘a) (over 4000-5000 yrs).

In more recent history, Salmān al-Fārisi, the great companion of Rasulullāh (s) is said to have lived for 250 or 350 yrs.

From the above, we can easily conclude that Allāh is not bound by our understand of the laws of nature and science. To Allāh, keeping someone alive endlessly is as easy as creating the entire universe. He merely says, ‘Be!’ and it is! We also realize

⁴⁰ Surah al-Ankabut, 29:14.

through all this that we know very little of the mysteries of the universe and ultimately it runs on Allāh's Will and not how we predict or believe it should run.

Benefits of an Imām in Ghayba

A common question asked is: what is the use of having an Imām that is in ghayba? Why would Allāh keep an Imām alive for so long if people have no access to him?

The reason we ask this question is because we believe the purpose of an Imām is only to lead people by answering their questions and governing over them. An Imām in fact is a means through which Allāh sends blessings to His creation. In some ahādith we are told, 'if there was no Imām, the earth would collapse'. In other words, as long as the Imām is present, even if the entire world were to cease believing in God, Allāh would continue to keep the world alive.

Often we hear of great disasters and we wonder if the world might end suddenly because of a nuclear war or even being hit by a meteorite, and so on. Then we recall the hadith of Rasulullāh (s) that 'even if only one day was left for the world to end, Allāh would extend it until a man comes forth from my descendants who will fill it with justice and peace as it will be filled with injustice and oppression.' This gives us hope that Allāh wants human beings to succeed in the end and to live with peace and justice. But it also promises us that as long as the Imām has not returned, the world cannot end.

One of the greatest benefits of the ghayba is how independent and advanced in their religious understanding the Muslims, and in particular the Shi'ah, have become. In the age when the Imām was present, any doubt or question was put before him and the answer was readily available. There was no need to ponder on the verses of the Qur'ān deeply or to try and even understand the basic principles on which the laws of Islām are based. With the ghayba, the Ulama have had to take a lead in guiding people and this has resulted in the development of many Islāmic sciences such as Tafsir (Qur'ān exegesis), Usul al-Fiqh (Principles of Jurisprudence), 'Ilm al-Kalām (Theology), and so on.

We must always believe that Imām al-Mahdi ('atfs) is aware of our efforts and is guiding us from behind the scenes. Ultimately he is the protector of the Qur'ān and Islām. In one hadith we are told that during ghayba, people benefit from an Imām just like they benefit from the sun when it is hidden by clouds. This is a beautiful example. Imagine a person who is born in a place that is always cloudy and never sees the sun. He might deny the existence of the sun because he doesn't realize that the light and heat he enjoys during the day comes from something that is hidden behind the clouds. He may even ask, 'what is the use of a sun that we never see?' But he wouldn't be able to survive if the sun was not there.

When Imām Ja'far as-Sādiq ('a) was asked why the ghayba of the 12th Imām ('atfs) will take place, he said the reason will only become truly apparent after the return of

the Imām and that the wisdom behind the ghayba was like that of the story of Nabi Musa (‘a) and Nabi Khidr (‘a). You can read this story in the Qur’ān in Surah al-Kahf, 18:65-82. When you read these verses you will realize that the actions of Nabi Khidr (‘a) made no sense whatsoever to Nabi Musa (‘a) and the latter kept objecting to them until Nabi Khidr (‘a) finally told him the wisdom behind his actions and concluded, *‘this is the interpretation of that over which you could not maintain patience’* (18:82). In other words Imām Ja’far as-Sādiq (‘a) wanted to teach us that we must not be arrogant enough to believe that we can understand every secret of Allāh and the wisdom behind all His actions. Nor must we doubt what is given to us in authentic ahādith. Instead we must bear patience until the reasons reveal themselves to us.

In another hadith, the Imāms compared the ghayba to the time when the brothers of Nabi Yusuf (‘a) went to Egypt and did not realize that the king who was helping them with grain was their brother Nabi Yusuf (‘a). In other words, the Imām is in our midst and we benefit from him. Just because we do not recognize him does not mean we are not benefiting from him.

Belief in the unseen is the hallmark of the faithful (mu’mineen). Rasulullāh (s) once told his companions that the Muslims at the end of the times would be superior to them because they would believe in Allāh even though they never saw him; they would believe in him (Rasulullāh) without ever seeing him; and they would believe in an Imām without seeing him. They would only see writings on paper (i.e. the Qur’ān) and it would be enough to give them faith (imān) and conviction (yaqin).

We therefore have the opportunity to truly say we believed not by physically witnessing miracles or seeing the Prophet (s) but because of our intellect and the purity of our hearts. In this way, we would qualify to be of those whom Allāh describes by saying:

﴿ذَلِكَ الْكِتَابُ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْغَيْبِ ...﴾

*This is the Book (i.e. Qur’ān), there is no doubt in it, a guidance to the Godwary, **who believe in the Unseen...***

- Surah al-Baqarah, 2:2-3

The ghayba therefore is a test for some and it distinguishes the truly faithful from the hypocrite; but it is also an opportunity for us to become truly greater than what we would remain if the Imām was always in front of us.

The Signs of the Return of Imām al-Mahdi (‘atfs)

Numerous signs foretelling the reappearance of Imām al-Mahdi (‘atfs) have been narrated in the books of hadith. Many of these signs are general in nature and talk of a world filled with injustices such as: open disbelief in Allāh, widespread adultery and homosexuality, widespread drinking of alcohol, disobedience and disrespect of

parents, the taking and giving of interest (usury) freely, the use of music and intoxicants, obsession with the world and excessive materialism, the lack of any sense of shame or modesty, the inability to distinguish good from bad and right from wrong, the rule of oppressors and the righteous being weak in power, and so on.

Then there are signs that are more specific and talk of increased natural disasters such as earthquakes and landslides due to the excessive sinning of people. There will also be a lot of turmoil amongst nations with people rising against their rulers or killing them. Some nations will invade others and each ruler will rule for only a brief period before he is replaced with another. At one point, one-third of the world will die of man-made disasters (i.e. war) and another one-third will die of resulting natural disasters (plague, starvation, and so on). In other words, the world will really get bad and people will become desperate for a saviour before Imām al-Mahdi ('atfs) returns.

There are some signs of the coming of the Imām ('atfs) however that are regarded as 'definite signs' and the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) told us not to expect Imām al-Mahdi ('atfs) until these signs have appeared. They will occur very close to the time of the Imām ('atfs)'s return. These signs are:

1. A Voice from the Sky. A loud shout will be heard in the heavens announcing the return of Imām al-Mahdi ('atfs). Everyone will hear it and understand it in their own language. The faithful will realize this to be the sign of the Imām's return. Others will begin to doubt and say they were imagining what they heard. In some reports it is said a face will be seen in the skies that will be brighter than the Sun.
2. Solar and Lunar Eclipse in Ramadān. A lunar eclipse only occurs in the middle of the lunar (Islāmic) month (when there is a full moon) and a solar eclipse only occurs in the start or end of a lunar (Islāmic) month. Astronomically, it is impossible for the opposite to occur. But before the Mahdi ('atfs) returns, there will be a month of Ramadān when there will be a lunar eclipse at the start or end of the month; and in the same month a solar eclipse will occur in the middle of the month.
3. The Rising of the Sun from the West. We know the Sun rises in the East. Before the coming of Imām al-Mahdi ('atfs) the Sun will rise from the West. This change may be caused by a disaster that causes a polar shift in the axis of the earth (such that the North and South Poles are reversed and then the Sun would appear to rise from the other side); or it may even happen miraculously by the Will of Allāh in any other way He decrees (e.g. the earth rotating the other way). This may also cause the 2nd sign mentioned above (on eclipses).
4. Sayyid al-Khurāsāni. A man will rise from Khurāsān (Iran) and invite people to join his army for "*amr bil ma'ruf and nahi 'anil munkar*". This was also the motto of Imām Husayn ('a)'s rising so perhaps he will be inspired by Karbala. The army of al-Khurāsāni will ultimately join Imām al-Mahdi ('atfs). The

Imāms have said that anyone who hears of al-Khurāsāni should rush to join him.

5. Sufyāni. An evil man from the descendants of Abu Sufyān will rise to power in Syria, Palestine and Egypt. He will fight Imām al-Mahdi ('atfs) but finally be killed. The army of Sufyāni will be 'swallowed' in a landslide at a place between Makkah and Madina.
6. Return of Nabi Isa ('a). He will return to help Imām al-Mahdi ('atfs).
7. Dajjāl. He is also known amongst Christians as 'the Antichrist'. He will come at a time when people are starving all over the world and will dominate over people by demanding that they worship him in exchange for food. Nabi Isa ('a) will ultimately kill Dajjāl.
8. The Murder of Nafs az-Zakiyya (The Pure Soul). A very saintly man will be murdered in Makkah in front of the Ka'bah between the Black Stone Corner of the Ka'bah (Rukn al-Hajar) and the Maqām Ibrāhim.

Many other signs can be found in the books of hadith and tārikh such as Kitāb al-Irshād by Shaykh al-Mufid (English translation by I K Howard).

Research Homework

During every Imām's time, there were companions who were very learned. These included, for example, Abu Basir and Zurārah during the time of Imām Muhammad al-Bāqir ('a) and Hishām b. al-Hakam during the time of Imām Ja'far as-Sādiq ('a). Even during the times of the later Imāms (9th to 12th) there were scholars who compiled the ahādith of the Imāms and wrote books, such as Husayn b. Sa'id al-Ahwāzi and others.

For this homework, we wish to briefly review the Shi'ah ulama who lived after the ghayba of Imām al-Mahdi ('atfs) and who made significant contributions to Islām and towards preserving the teachings of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) during the ghayba.

You will find the answers to most of these questions in the book **Fiqh and Fuqaha** (<http://www.al-Islām.org/fiqh/>), especially in chapter 2 of the book. For some questions, you will need to research over the internet.

Fill in the Blanks

1. During Ghaybat as-Sughra (260-329 AH), Imām al-Mahdi ('atfs) had four ambassadors (sufara). The first safir was _____ and he was succeeded by his son _____ as the second safir.
2. The third safir of Imām al-Mahdi ('atfs) was _____ and the last safir was _____. He died on _____ 329 AH, which marked the start of the Ghaybat al-Kubra.

3. After the ghayba, the Shi'ah relied mostly on four books of hadith for their guidance from the Ahl al-Bayt ('a). These four books are _____ by _____, _____ by Shaykh as-Saduq and _____ & _____ by Shaykh Tusi. The largest Shi'ah collection of hadith however is the _____ by Allama Majlisi.
4. One of the most famous Shi'ah ulama to also pass away in 329 AH was _____. He was the father of the famous _____ and together they are known as the Saduqayn.
5. Another brilliant Shi'ah scholar was _____. His real name was Muhammad b. Muhammad b. Nu'man. He was born in 334 AH and died in 413 AH.
6. The two most famous students of Shaykh Mufid were _____ and Sayyid ar-Radi. The latter is famous as the compiler of _____.
7. Another great Shi'ah scholar was _____. He was the successor of Sayyid Murtada Alam al-Huda and he lived in Baghdad at first. When his home and library were burnt down in a Shi'ah-Sunni conflict, he moved to _____ where he established the Hawza 'Ilmiyya that continued to produce scholars for a thousand years, until late last century. He was the sole marj'a of his time and his works are studied to this day. In fact when the Shi'ah scholars write or say "Shaykh" without giving a name, they are referring to him. He compiled two of the Kutub al-Arba'a.
8. A scholar who rose to prominence from his childhood was _____. His real name was Hasan b. Yusuf b. Ali b. Mutahhar. He was born in 648 AH and died 726 AH. His works are still studied in the hawza today at the highest levels.
9. Muhammad b. Makki was another great Shi'ah scholar from Jabal Amil (South Lebanon) and because he was imprisoned and killed for his faith, he is known amongst the Shi'ah Ulama as _____. His most famous work is the Lum'ah that is studied to this day.
10. Two centuries later, in 966 AH, another great scholar, Shaykh Zainuddin, who wrote a commentary on the Lum'ah (known as the Sharh Lum'ah), was executed by the Sunni rulers as well and he is known as _____.
11. Shaykh Ahmad b. Muhammad Ardabili was so pious that he was popularly known as _____. He also contributed greatly to Islāmic sciences and fiqh. He died in 993 AH.
12. Shaykh Waheed Bihbahāni was a great scholar who saved the institution of ijtihād by defeating the _____ movement amongst the Shi'ah especially in Karbala, which was their stronghold. He was born in 1116 AH and died in 1205 AH.
13. Another great scholar was _____. He was born 1155 AH and died in 1212 AH. So great was his status that Shaykh Ja'far Kāshif al-

Ghita, himself a scholar of the highest rank, was his student and it is said he used to wipe this great scholar's slippers with the end of his turban.

14. The great Shi'ah scholar _____ was a descendant of Rasulullāh (s)'s great companion Jābir b. Abd Allāh al-Ansāri. He was born on _____ (Eid al-Ghadir) 1214 AH and he died in Najaf in 1281 AH. He was a genius of extra ordinary calibre. He establish new ways of studying Fiqh and Usul al-Fiqh and his two great works ar-Rasāil and al-Makāsib are still a requirement for anyone who wishes to become a mujtahid.
15. _____ is a more contemporary scholar. He was the sole marj'a of the Shi'ah before Ayatullah Muhsin al-Hakim and he died in Qum in 1381 AH at the age of 90.
16. _____ was the sole marj'a of the Shi'ah after Ayatullah Burujerdi. He was the teacher of Ayatullah al-Khui and the hawza in Najaf grew immensely under him, with almost 8000 students. He died in 1390 AH (1971) in _____ and was buried there in the great modern library he established.
17. _____ was the student of Ayatullah Muhsin al-Hakim and succeeded him as the sole marj'a until the revolution of Iran in 1979. He made great contributions to Islāmic sciences and died in Najaf under the rule of Saddam, on 8th Safar 1413 AH (8th August 1992). It is said he trained more than 1000 students over the five decades that he taught constantly. One of his most famous students is Ayatullah Sayyid Ali Sistāni.
18. _____ was a brilliant scholar and thinker. He is remembered for his brave stand against the tyrant Saddam in Iraq and was tortured and killed by Saddam in Baghdad on April 9, 1980 at the age of _____. He was a child prodigy and would have undoubtedly been the sole marj'a of the Shi'ah had he lived. His sister _____ was also tortured and killed by Saddam. His works on Usul al-Fiqh, Islāmic Economics and Islāmic Philosophy are still studied in hawzas today.
19. _____ is well known as the father of the revolution of Iran. He was also a great scholar and a mystic who wrote extensively on akhlāq and 'irfān. After the revolution of Iran in 1979, the Shi'ah in Iran began following him and he died on 3rd June 1989.
20. _____ was not an 'ayatullah' in the traditional sense but he was a prominent thinker and scholar. He compiled a commentary (tafsir) of Qur'ān known as _____ in 20 volumes. It is regarded to be one of the finest tafsir works in Islām to this day. He died on November 15, 1981 at the age of 89.

In the more recent years the Shi'ah have not followed one sole marj'a, partly perhaps because the marāj'i have had to play the role of a political leader in addition to a spiritual and religious leader; and different regions of the world have looked up to different marāj'i for guidance.

AKHLAQ **(Ethics)**

Lesson 1

Jihād al-Akbar

In Book 9, under Fiqh we learnt about Jihād as one of the Furu' ad-Din and we described it as fighting in battle to defend Islam. That form of physical and armed struggle is also called *Jihād al-Asghar* (The Minor Jihād) because of another form of struggle that is even greater and is called *Jihād al-Akbar* (The Greater Jihād).

These two terms come from a famous hadith of Rasulullāh (s). He had once sent a group of Muslim on a military expedition and when they came back, he said to them, 'Welcome to those who have returned from *jihād al-asghar* and now what awaits them is *jihād al-akbar*.' When he was asked what this greater jihād was, he said, '**Jihād against the self (*nafs*)**'.

Until a human being attains perfection, they constantly struggle with a 'self' that invites them to evil (also called *nafs al-ammāra*) and a 'self' that admonishes and tries to stop them when they want to do evil (also called *nafs al-lawwāma*).

Fighting against the self is a greater jihād because it is harder yet more important. It is harder because no one sees his own self as an enemy so we have to struggle against an 'enemy' that is invisible and within. It is only through constant introspection (*murāqabah*) and self-accounting (*muhāsabah*) that we can identify our weaknesses and negative traits and then struggle against them and overcome them.

In general any kind of addiction is harmful for the soul because it prevents us from experiencing Allāh's love (or being 'addicted' to Allāh) and it causes hard-heartedness. But more specifically, it is constant sinning that causes hard-heartedness and therefore we will discuss Jihād al-Akbar as a struggle against sinning and what is *harām*.

Hard-heartedness is a state when a person may have a lot of knowledge but they don't experience any love or feelings towards Allāh or Islam. When we no longer feel awe or love for Allāh and we can no longer cry when reciting du'as and we feel no sweetness or pleasure of faith (*imān*) when worshipping Allāh then we know our hearts have become 'hard'. We should therefore pray to Allāh to 'soften' our hearts.

Imām Ali ('a) has said, 'Dry eyes is because of hard-heartedness and hard-heartedness is the result of constant sinning.'

One could say the purpose of life is to do jihād against the self's desire to sin until the soul has completely surrendered to Allāh and does no *harām* whilst fulfilling all that is wājib.

Addiction to desires go hand in hand with sin because desires of any kind give us physical pleasure and when we are *addicted* to pleasure we easily forget that we are sinning or that it is making us forgetful of Allāh and the Day of Judgement and causing our hearts to become hard.

In one hadith we are told, ‘Hellfire is ringed with desires while Paradise is surrounded with unpleasanties.’ If we try and imagine ourselves as journeying towards our final destination (Paradise or Hellfire), to get to Paradise – more beautiful and peaceful than anyone can imagine – as our eternal abode, we must walk on ‘thorns’ with patience and undergo various sufferings because of not giving in to temptation. Until we don’t cross these difficult valleys and mountains, we won’t see the boundaries and walls of Paradise. But to slip into Hellfire – the most horrifying place beyond anyone’s imagination – we simply have to keep giving in to desires and sinning, thinking we are enjoying its pleasures and before we know it, we would be slipping down the brink of Hellfire.

Jihād al-Akbar is easier if we constantly remind ourselves of the temporary nature of this world and the permanence of the next world. It also helps to see ourselves as being on a journey and as we struggle, we are constantly moving towards Paradise or Hell.

Imām Ali (‘a) said, ‘Jihad against the self is the dowry of paradise’ and in another hadith he said, ‘Jihad against your desires is the price of paradise.’

And as a tip, Imām Ali (‘a) advised, ‘Repel your *self* when tempted with lusts and establish it according to the Book of Allāh when it doubts.’

As long as a person does not struggle against his or her *nafs*, they are shackled by desires and are slaves to their addictions even if they think they are slaves of Allāh. A person only becomes free by becoming a true slave of Allāh and surrendering to nothing but Allāh.

That is why Rasulullāh (s) said, ‘Fight your vain desires, you will own (free) your selves.’ And he also said, ‘It is with struggle (*mujāhadah*) that evil habits (addictions) are overcome.’

One of the ways to do *jihād al-akbar* is to fast. Fasting is always hard at the start because we have to wean ourselves from our habits and often we don’t even know how addicted we are until we are forced to give up some of our daily habits. Rasulullāh (s) advised us, ‘Fight your selves with little food and drink, the angels will shade you and shaytān will flee from you.’

Persistence in Sin

Sometimes scholars divide sins into major sins and minor sins. They define major sins as those sins for which punishment is explicitly promised in the Qur’ān and minor

sins as those whose punishment is mentioned in hadith only. But what is most important to remember is that all scholars agree: 'Persistence in a minor sin is a major sin.'

We must not think of how 'small' our sin is but rather think of how great the Lord is against Whom we are sinning.

Allāh also mentions 'minor sins' in the Qur'ān but this is for mistakes and lapses not for habitually sinning:

﴿إِنْ تَجْتَنِبُوا كَبَائِرَ مَا تُنْهَوْنَ عَنْهُ نُكَفِّرْ عَنْكُمْ سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ وَنُدْخِلْكُمْ مُدْخَلًا كَرِيمًا﴾

If you avoid the major sins that you are forbidden, We will absolve you of your misdeeds, and admit you to a noble abode.

- Surah an-Nisā, 4:31

In a hadith from Rasullullāh (s), he said, 'One of the signs of wretchedness (i.e. being hard-hearted) is repeating a sin.'

Sins are forgiven on the condition that the person repenting makes a firm intention not to repeat the sin again.

﴿وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا فَعَلُوا فَاحِشَةً أَوْ ظَلَمُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ ذَكَرُوا اللَّهَ فَاسْتَغْفَرُوا لِذُنُوبِهِمْ وَمَنْ يَغْفِرِ اللَّهُ فَمَا لَهُ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَلَمْ يُصِرُّوا عَلَىٰ مَا فَعَلُوا وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ﴾

And those who, when they commit an indecent act or wrong themselves, remember Allāh, and plead [Allāh's] forgiveness for their sins - and who forgives sins except Allāh? - and (they) do not persist in what they have committed while they know.

- Surah Āl-i 'Imrān 3:135

When a person persists in sin, it also makes him or her shameless. Thereafter they sin openly and publicly without a care of hiding their sinful habit. This then hardens the spiritual heart of the person so that he or she is incapable of purifying themselves and preparing themselves for Jannah.

If we are going to struggle against our lower self and against sin and desires, we must have a strategy. To build a strategy and plan, we must know the means that the *nafs* uses to keep us from purifying ourselves and thereafter have practices that we can use as a measure of how struggle.

We therefore list some of these here (based on hadith and du'as of Rasullullāh (s) and the Ahl al-Bayt ('a)). Your teacher may ask you for suggestions as well, especially on ways to practice *Jihād al-Akbar*.

Causes of Hard-Heartedness

- Persistence in Sin.
- Publicizing one's sins to others or sinning openly and publicly.
- Being obsessed with physical pleasures and desires (food, sex, sports, computer games, etc.).
- Spending too much time in sleep, eating, chatting and talking, joking, etc.
- Not worshipping Allāh enough or worshipping without attentiveness.
- Forming addictive habits (even if not harām) e.g. coffee, games, internet, meaningless hobbies, etc.
- Associating with sinful or irreligious friends.
- Giving up on coming to the Masjid and/or reciting the Qur'ān.
- Being miserly with one's wealth and time and not volunteering unless there is some personal benefit to get out of it.

Ways to Practice Jihad al-Akbar

- Pray *salāt al-layl* everyday (taught in Book 9 Fiqh). This teaches us to struggle against the desire for sleep.
- Fast every Mondays and Thursdays. It is mustahab to fast on these days and it teaches us to strive against the addiction to food.
- Keep a log that you update every night of how you spent your day. This daily self-accounting before going to bed is called *muhāsabah* and is one of the signs of a true Shi'ah. In particular check if any sin was committed that day, if time was wasted and if there were incidents of excessive eating, sleeping or talking.
- Increase your knowledge of Islam. Keep a copy of Nahj al-Balāgha by your bedside and read passages from it every time you need inspiration and encouragement for Jihād al-Akbar.
- Recite the Qur'ān everyday even if it is a few āyāt only.
- Watch your anger. When a person first starts resisting temptation and not giving in to desires, they get angry easily. When you see anger rising in you, breathe deeply, lie down, and recite salawāt until the anger subsides.
- Find ways to help the poor and needy. Feeding the poor, carrying out a humanitarian activity or giving charity with your own hands softens the heart.
- Constantly plead with Allāh for help in your struggle against the *nafs*. This keeps us sincere and humble so that we are never hypocritical in our *jihād an-nafs* and we never become proud and imagine it is the result of our own efforts that we are progressing spiritually.

Lesson 2

Honesty, Trust & Integrity (al-Amānah)

In the study of akhlāq we use the terms *amānah* and *khiyānah* as opposites to mean ‘trustworthiness’ vs. ‘betrayal of trust’.

For forty years before Rasulullāh (s) began preaching Islam, he demonstrated two qualities amongst his people: truthfulness (*as-sidq*) and trustworthiness (*al-amānah*). And long before he declared his messengership, the Quraysh (who would later become his enemy) called him ‘*as-Sādiq*’ (The Truthful) and ‘*al-Amin*’ (the Trustworthy).

A Muslim’s faith, worship, piety, good deeds, etc. all are of no value if he or she is not honest and/or has no integrity (i.e. cannot be trusted). Being truthful and trustworthy are absolute qualities that a Muslim must have in order to be regarded as a faithful Muslim.

Just as ‘*amin*’ is one who is trustworthy, a ‘*khāin*’ is one who is not trustworthy and is guilty of *khiyānah*.

Amānah – Honesty

﴿وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِأَمَانَاتِهِمْ وَعَهْدِهِمْ رَاعُونَ﴾

...and those who keep their trusts and covenants,

- Surah Mu’minun, 23:8

If someone entrusts something to us, we must be faithful to the trust and return it back to him or her when it is asked for. It does not matter what the value of the item is, or whether person is a Muslim or not, if he or she is a practising and pious Muslim or not, and in fact, it does not even matter if the person is our enemy.

Imām as-Sādiq (‘a) said, ‘Be loyal to trusts even if it is to the murderer of Imām Husayn (‘a).’

And Imām Ali (‘a) said, ‘Be faithful to what you are entrusted with even if it is with the murderers of the children of prophets.’

Rasulullāh (s) said, ‘He that has no *amānah* has no *imān* (faith).’

Rasulullāh (s) also said, ‘One who betrays a trust in the world and does not return it to the rightful owner and then dies, he dies outside my religion and will meet Allāh while He is displeased with him.’

Imām Ali (‘a) said, ‘I swear that before Rasulullāh (s) passed away he repeated to me thrice, ‘O Aba al-Hasan, fulfill trusts to the good or the evil, small or big even if it is just a needle and thread.’

Two common misconceptions are that we don’t have to be loyal to trusts with non-Muslims and also that if someone has taken our right, we can take theirs just to get even or recover some of our rights.

As for the first one, the ahādith above clearly show that if we accept to hold a trust, we cannot betray it regardless of who it is. The Qur’ān in fact condemns the Jews during the time of Rasulullāh (s) of the same thing because they would not be faithful to trusts and pledges they made with the Arabs who were not Jews:

﴿وَمِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ مَنْ إِنْ تَأْمَنَهُ بِقِنطَارٍ يُؤَدُّهُ إِلَيْكَ وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ إِنْ تَأْمَنَهُ بِدِينَارٍ لَا يُؤَدُّهُ إِلَيْكَ إِلَّا مَا دُمْتَ عَلَيْهِ قَائِمًا ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَالُوا لَيْسَ عَلَيْنَا فِي الْأُمِّيِّينَ سَبِيلٌ وَيَقُولُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ الْكَذِبَ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ﴾

And among the People of the Book is he who if you entrust him with a quintal⁴¹ will repay it to you, and among them is he who, if you entrust him with a dinar⁴² will not repay it to you unless you stand persistently over him. That is because they say, ‘We have no obligation to the non-Jews.’ But they attribute lies to Allāh, and they know [it].

- Surah Al-I Imrān, 3:75

The reason why Allāh ends the āyah with ‘they attribute lies to Allāh, and they know it’ is because these Jews used to justify their dishonesty to non-Jews by saying God has allowed them and they don’t have to be loyal to those outside their faith. But ‘they attribute lies to Allāh’ means God never allowed it and they have no proof for this in the Torah (*Tawrāt*) but it was their rabbis who allowed them.

As for the second misconception, Imām Ali (‘a) has clarified, ‘Do not betray one who entrusts you even if he betrays you. And do not let out his secret even if he lets yours out.’

In other words, if someone mistreats you it does not give you the right or license to commit a breach of trust or to lie or compromise on your honesty and integrity. This is because when we lie or break promises or ignore trusts and pledges, we harm

⁴¹ Quintal: a pile of gold.

⁴² Dinar: Arab currency. Think of a dinar like a dollar.

ourselves more. We kill a part of our soul and this is far more serious than anything it does to the person we cheat.

Khiyānah - Deceit

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَخُونُوا اللَّهَ وَالرَّسُولَ وَتَخُونُوا أَمَانَاتِكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ﴾

O you who have faith! Do not betray Allāh and the Apostle, and do not betray your trusts knowingly.

- Surah al-Anfāl, 8:27

Rasulullāh (s) said, 'If any of four (vices) enters a home, it destroys it and will never be blessed: treachery (*khiyānah*), theft, drinking alcohol, and fornication.'

And he also said, 'Plotting, deceiving and cheating are in Hellfire.'

Imām Ali ('a) described '*khiyānah*' (deceiving others) as 'the head of hypocrisy' and Rasulullāh (s) warned us, 'Do not deceive one who deceives you for you will be like him.'

Revealing a secret that is told to you in trust is also a form of breaching a trust. Rasulullāh (s) said, 'Letting out the secret of your (Muslim) brother is *khiyānah*, so keep away from it.'

Lastly, when a person regrets or repents betraying a trust, in addition to *tawbah*, they must make every effort to return what they took to the rightful owner. Giving back what was entrusted is a part of sincere repentance.

Amānah and Khiyānah with Allāh and His Messenger

So far we have discussed honesty and deceit amongst people. You may want to think about the same concepts in relation to Allāh and His Messenger (s). Just to initiate your thinking along those lines, consider the following:

- The body and health we possess are given to us on loan and trust from Allāh. One day we have to return it. When we use the body to sin, are we being loyal to the trust?
- The wealth that comes to us is a trust from Allāh. When we don't pay our khums and zakāh, is it not *khiyānah*?
- When the Messenger of Allāh (s), was leaving the world, he entrusted us with the Qur'ān and the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) [cf. *hadith ath-thaqalayn*]. When we don't follow the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) or we neglect the Qur'ān, how do the ahādith on *amānah* and *khiyānah* apply to us?

A Note on Hubb ar-Riyāsah

Rasulullāh (s) is reported to have said, ‘Disobedience to Allāh starts with the love of one of six things: the love of the world, the love of fame and leadership, the love of food, the love of sex, the love of sleep, and the love of comfort.’

This hadith is profound in meaning because if we try and put it to test, we will hardly be able to find any sin that does not fall under one of these six categories.

Some of the sins are discussed in other lessons of akhlāq in detail. For example, the love of the world and wealth is discussed under the topics of materialism (Lesson 5), the love of sex under promiscuity, adultery, and so on (Lesson 7).

But in this lesson we wish to discuss briefly the love of leadership, fame and holding a social status. Leadership in Arabic is called ‘*riyāsah*’ and love for leadership is therefore called *hubb ar-riyāsah*.

Leadership usually involves a lot of work and pain. Yet people love it because it gives them attention and praise from others. Their egos enjoy basking in the limelight of people’s attention and in some cases it may also bring business opportunities and the means to make lots of money. Sometimes a leader may have the illusion that all the praise from those whom he leads is sincere. Usually they are only flattery and quickly turn to criticism if the leader fails to give them what they want.

It is often seen that *hubb ar-riyāsah* is found in older people. They are the ones who usually become presidents and prime ministers and politicians. There is a reason why it affects the older generation more. When we are young, shaytān knows our greatest concerns are our physical pleasures. So he tries to keep us distracted from Allāh and away from *jihād an-nafs* through physical pleasure and the other forms of love that is mentioned in the hadith above. But when we grow old, our need for physical pleasures dims and reduces. We are then faced with our mortality and we fear our impending death. In a last attempt to somehow keep ourselves from disappearing to oblivion, we seek fame and to ‘make our name’.

A true believer is of course quite happy remaining unknown because he or she seeks comfort and security from Allāh only. If he or she does take up positions of authority it is only out of a sense of duty and to guide and serve the community. There is no greed or competing against others to get votes and to prove being better than others. When they are called upon to serve, the faithful (*mumineen*) will volunteer themselves and when they are not, they are quite happy working for Allāh behind the scenes.

But for those whose *nafs* is impure and whom shaytān can still mislead, shaytān preys on this fear of death and oblivion and therefore whispers all kinds of ‘noble’ justifications to them on why they should ‘fight’ to dethrone others and take up positions of leadership and fame.

When one becomes a leader, they take on a great responsibility. In the eyes of Allāh they are now held accountable. If the community or society they lead becomes more corrupt or sinful, they are to be questioned on the Day of Judgement. If the leader sleeps with a full stomach while even one of those he leads sleeps hungry, he is also held accountable. That is why Imām Ali (‘a) said a leader is like one who rides on the back of a lion. Others may envy and admire him but only he knows the danger. In other words if he slumbers for a moment, the lion may throw him off his back and devour him. Holding the reins of leadership is very much like that. It seems attractive but is not as easy as it appears.

A person who takes up leadership but does not have the courage to speak or stand for the truth will very easily resort to backbiting, lying, cheating, bribing and other such sins in order to overcome challenges.

All this may give you an impression that leadership is bad and should never be considered. But in fact leadership can be commendable and even wājib, provided we find ways to do it with *taqwa* (Godconsciousness) and sincerity (*ikhlas*). If we have the courage to stand up for truth and the sincerity to serve Allāh alone then leadership is in fact even more commendable than other mustahab acts of worship. This is because a worshipper only benefits himself or herself whereas a leader moulds and changes a society and reforms the whole community. We could say that if a person has the right qualities to lead a community (such as the qualities of *taqwa* and religious knowledge) and the people are willing to follow him, then it may even be wājib for him to take up the leadership position especially if by not doing so, other corrupt individuals will take over and harm the community or nation.

Lesson 3

Tawakkul & Istiqāma

Tawakkul

Tawakkul is simply defined as *Trust in Allāh*. It is a state in which we have more confidence and gain more security with Allāh than with anyone or anything else like a friend, relative, our wealth, citizenship, etc.

Allāh is always there to help His creatures. But what matters is their ability to draw from this Help, which in turn depends on how much trust they have in Allāh. The more trust (*tawakkul*) a person has, the greater their ability to get what they want from Allāh.

﴿وَمَنْ يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ مَخْرَجًا وَيَرْزُقْهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَحْتَسِبُ وَمَنْ يَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ فَهُوَ حَسْبُهُ﴾

...And whoever is conscious of Allāh, He shall make a way out for him, and provide for him from where he does not imagine. And whoever puts his trust in Allāh, He will suffice him...

- Surah at-Talāq, 65:2-3

When a person does not trust in Allāh sufficiently, they start looking for alternative means of security. And this manifests itself through hoarding. They hoard wealth, food, clothes, knowledge, and anything they think will give them an advantage over others. This is a survival mechanism but it shows a weakness in faith and trust in Allāh and is therefore undesirable in a human being. Instead Allāh tells us:

﴿وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى الْعَزِيزِ الرَّحِيمِ الَّذِي يَرَاكَ حِينَ تَقُومُ وَتَقَلُّبِكَ فِي السَّاجِدِينَ إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ﴾

And put your trust in the All-mighty, the All-merciful, who sees you when you stand [for prayer], and your going about among those who prostrate. Indeed He is the All-hearing, the All-knowing.

- Surah ash-Shu'ara, 26:217-220

As we grow older our worries increase. We are constantly stressed and anxious about the future. What happens if we fall sick? What will happen if our parents die? What if we lose our job? What about this and that....?

How comforting it is when a person trusts Allāh and lives a day at a time knowing that as long as Allāh is on his or her side, nothing can harm him or her and all will be well. Allāh points to this level of trust as well in the Qur'ān:

﴿إِنْ يَنْصُرْكُمُ اللَّهُ فَلَا غَالِبَ لَكُمْ وَإِنْ يَخْذَلْكُمْ فَمَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يَنْصُرُكُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ
وَعَلَى اللَّهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ﴾

If Allāh helps you, no one can overcome you, but if He forsakes you, who will help you after Him? So in Allāh let all the faithful put their trust.

- Surah Al-i Imrān, 3:160

When Rasulullāh (s) asked the archangel Jibrāil ('a) to define *tawakkul*, he said, 'It is to know with conviction (*yaqin*) that the creation of Allāh can neither benefit nor harm you. They neither give you nor withhold from you. It is to place all your hopes on Allāh and not on the people. When a person becomes like this then he or she does not work to impress anyone but Allāh and does not fear anyone but Allāh and does not desire anything from anyone but from Allāh. This is the meaning of Tawakkul.'

Imām Ali ('a) said, 'Tawakkul is that you should see no one as being the provider of your sustenance (*rizq*) except Allāh.'

When Imām as-Sādiq ('a) was asked the limit of Tawakkul, he said, 'It means that you should not fear anyone or anything along with Allāh.'

This is also the meaning of the āyah concerning the faithful whom some tried to intimidate with their enemies:

﴿الَّذِينَ قَالَ لَهُمُ النَّاسُ إِنَّ النَّاسَ قَدْ جَمَعُوا لَكُمْ فَاخْشَوْهُمْ فَزَادَهُمْ إِيمَانًا وَقَالُوا
حَسْبُنَا اللَّهُ وَنِعْمَ الْوَكِيلُ﴾

Those to whom the people said, 'All the people have gathered against you; so fear them.' That only increased them in faith, and they said, 'Allāh is sufficient for us, and He is the best One to trust.'

- Surah Al-i Imrān, 3:173

But tawakkul does not mean we just sit at home and 'trust' that Allāh will take care of all our needs. Rasulullāh (s) once met a group of people who were not farming for their food and simply waiting for others to give them handouts. He asked them, 'who are you?' They said, 'we are those who trust in Allāh'. Rasulullāh (s) said to them, 'No, actually you are devourers.' Meaning you are like parasites. You don't work and you expect others to work and pay for your expenses and to feed you.

Tawakkul therefore means you work hard as if it all depends on you but you pray as if it all depends on Allāh. Tawakkul means after you have done all you could, you don't worry or stress. You leave the matter in Allāh's hands and you are at peace and at ease with whatever happens thereafter because you trust that with Allāh in control of your life, all that happens will eventually be good for you.

The concept of *tawakkul* is derived from the concept of *tawhid* (Oneness of God). According to Islam, the universe in its entirety belongs exclusively to Allāh, Who is indebted to no one for His existence; He is the only preserver of the universe. On Him rests the entire order of the cosmos. He alone wields all sovereign authority. He is the only Bestower of bounties, because to Allāh alone belongs the heaven and earth and everything therein. There is no one who shares anything with Allāh in the governing of the universe.

Not even a raindrop or a leaf can drop on the earth without His permission:

﴿وَعِنْدَهُ مَفَاتِحُ الْغَيْبِ لَا يَعْلَمُهَا إِلَّا هُوَ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا فِي الْبُرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ وَمَا تَسْقُطُ مِنْ وَرَقَةٍ إِلَّا يَعْلَمُهَا وَلَا حَبَّةٌ فِي ظُلُمَاتِ الْأَرْضِ وَلَا رَطْبٌ وَلَا يَابِسٌ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ مُبِينٍ﴾

With Him are the keys of the Unseen; no one knows them except Him. He knows whatever there is in land and sea. No leaf falls without His knowing it, nor is there a grain in the darkness of the earth, nor anything fresh or withered but it is in a manifest Book.

- Surah al-An'ām, 6:59

And there is not a creature in the universe, small or mighty, except that it depends on Allāh for existence, survival and sustenance:

﴿وَمَا مِنْ دَابَّةٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا عَلَى اللَّهِ رِزْقُهَا وَيَعْلَمُ مُسْتَقَرَّهَا وَمُسْتَوْدَعَهَا كُلٌّ فِي كِتَابٍ مُبِينٍ﴾

There is no creature on the earth, but that its sustenance lies with Allāh, and He knows its [enduring] abode and its temporary place of lodging. Everything is in a manifest Book.

- Surah Hud, 11:6

And nothing lives or dies without Allāh's permission:

﴿وَمَا كَانَ لِنَفْسٍ أَنْ تَمُوتَ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ كِتَابًا مُؤَجَّلًا...﴾

No soul may die except by Allāh's leave, at an appointed time...

- Surah Al-i Imrān, 3:145

Let tawakkul then be a part of our lives. We should do our best and make the best decisions we can in life. And:

﴿فَإِذَا عَزَمْتَ فَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَوَكِّلِينَ﴾

Once you are resolved, put your trust in Allāh. Indeed Allāh loves those who trust in Him.

- Surah Al-i Imrān, 3:159

And in Allāh let the faithful put all their trust:

﴿قُلْ لَنْ يُصِيبَنَا إِلَّا مَا كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَنَا هُوَ مَوْلَانَا وَعَلَى اللَّهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ﴾

Say, 'Nothing will befall us except what Allāh has ordained for us. He is our master, and in Allāh let all the faithful put their trust.'

- Surah at-Tawbah, 9:51

Hoarding

Hoarding we said was the result of lacking tawakkul. The Qur'ān condemns hoarding severely:

﴿...وَالَّذِينَ يَكْنِزُونَ الذَّهَبَ وَالْفِضَّةَ وَلَا يَنْفِقُونَهَا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَبَشِّرْهُمْ بِعَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ . يَوْمَ يُحْمَى عَلَيْهَا فِي نَارِ جَهَنَّمَ فَتُكْوَى بِهَا جِبَاهُهُمْ وَجُنُوبُهُمْ وَظُهُورُهُمْ هَذَا مَا كَنْزْتُمْ لِأَنْفُسِكُمْ فَذُوقُوا مَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْنِزُونَ﴾

..and (as for) those who hoard up gold and silver and do not spend it in Allāh's way, announce to them a painful chastisement. On the Day when it shall be heated in the fire of Hell, then their foreheads and their sides and their backs shall be branded with it; 'this is what you hoarded up for yourselves, therefore taste what you hoarded!'

- Surah at-Tawbah, 9:34-35

During a famine in Madina, Imām Ja'far as-Sādiq ('a) once asked one of his servants, 'What is the position of our stocked grains?' and the servant replied happily, 'We have sufficient to last us months.' Imām as-Sādiq ('a) then instructed him: 'Take it out to the market and sell it.'

'But there is a shortage of wheat and barley in Madina,' the servant protested. The Imām ('a) however insisted and once the servant had sold the surplus grain, the Imām then told him to go out and buy supplies from the market as they needed it just like all the other Muslims in the city and if need be, to even add some barley to the wheat bread rather than hoarding what Muslims need.

Hoarding therefore creates greed. Sellers will stock up what is in demand and then sell it at higher prices during shortages. This is taking advantage of people's need and it is a great sin in Allāh's eyes.

Homework:

The following nine āyāt of the Qur'ān all end with '*and in Allāh let all the faithful put their trust*' or very similar words:

3:122	3:160	5:11	9:51	12:67
14:11	14:12	58:10	64:13	

Write a brief essay (about half a page) on what you understand tawakkul to be. In your essay, quote at least 2 verses from the above that are relevant to your discussion and give at least one example in life or in your experience where tawakkul can play a role (or has played a role in your life).

Imām Ali ('a)'s Trust (Tawakkul) in Allāh's Strength & Protection



Istiqāma vs. Haste

Istiqāma means ‘steadfastness’. It means to remain firm and rooted in our faith in Allāh and not to waver or doubt. It also means to remain persistent in good deeds and acts of worship like our daily salāh.

Istiqāma requires patience and that is why hastiness is condemned in Islam. A person who is hasty jumps to conclusions and makes decisions without enough thought. The outcome of hasty actions and decisions is always harmful and accompanied with remorse and repentance. Sometimes the decisions made or actions taken are irreversible.

Before reacting to any matter, always think it through. For example, when someone offers you an opportunity, don’t say yes or no immediately. Give it some time to think of the advantages and disadvantages. Similarly, if you receive an email, don’t hit the reply button right away. Wait sometime. In particular if you are angry or emotional about what you have read or heard, never be hasty. It will always end in regret! Even when you compose a reply in anger, wait for 3 days before sending it. Usually you will no longer want to send your reply that was composed in haste.



Hastiness therefore comes from shaytān whereas patience and steadfastness comes from Allāh.

When humans are not developed spiritually, they are usually hasty, which is why Allāh says:

﴿خُلِقَ الْإِنْسَانُ مِنْ عَجَلٍ سَأَرِيكُمْ آيَاتِي فَلَا تَسْتَعْجِلُونِي﴾

Man is a creature of haste. Soon I will show you My signs. So do not ask Me to hasten.

- Surah al-Anbiyā, 21:37

Of course not being hasty does not mean not doing things on time. For example, you should always say your prayers on time. There is a difference between being disciplined and doing things without forethought.

As for *Istiqāma* and not wavering, whether it is in faith or in battle, the Qur’ān commands us:

﴿فَاسْتَقِمُّ كَمَا أُمِرْتَ...﴾

So be steadfast, just as you have been commanded...

- Surah Hud, 11:112

And Allāh praises those who are steadfast saying:

﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا رَبُّنَا اللَّهُ ثُمَّ اسْتَقَامُوا تَتَنَزَّلُ عَلَيْهِمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ أَلَّا تَخَافُوا وَلَا تَحْزَنُوا
وَأَبَشِرُوا بِالْجَنَّةِ الَّتِي كُنتُمْ تُوعَدُونَ. نَحْنُ أَوْلِيَائُكُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ
وَلَكُمْ فِيهَا مَا تَشْتَهِي أَنْفُسُكُمْ وَلَكُمْ فِيهَا مَا تَدَّعُونَ﴾

Indeed those who say, 'Our Lord is Allāh!' and then remain steadfast, the angels descend upon them, [saying,] 'Do not fear, nor be grieved! Receive the good news of the paradise that you have been promised. We are your friends in the life of this world and in the Hereafter, and you will have in it whatever your souls desire, and you will have in it whatever you ask for.

- Surah Fussilat, 41:30-31

That is perhaps why Rasulullāh (s) advised us to adopt this as our principle in life, when it comes to matters of faith: he said, 'Say: 'Allāh is my Lord!' then be steadfast!'

And Imām Ali ('a) said, 'One who is steadfast shall be in paradise. One who wavers shall be in hell.'

Lesson 4

Knowledge vs. Bīd'ah

The Seeking of Knowledge

Knowledge (*al-'ilm*) is to the soul what food is to the body. Without knowledge a human soul withers and dies just as a body would without food.

But just as some foods can harm the body, so can some knowledge. The knowledge that helps us know Allāh better and helps us get to Jannah and helps us to serve Allāh and His creation is called 'useful knowledge'. Then there is trivia and useless information that people may spend endless amounts of time memorizing only because they are obsessed with a science, sport or hobby or because they wish to win lots of money, and so on. These are not forms of useful knowledge and in fact harmful to the soul.

That is why in du'as we ask Allāh:

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ عِلْمٍ لَا يَنْفَعُ

O Allāh! I seek refuge with You from 'knowledge' that is of no benefit!

Regarding useful and true knowledge, Rasulullāh (s) said, 'Seek knowledge even if it be in China' and he (s) said, 'Gazing at the face of a scholar is an act of worship.'

It is not befitting for a faithful (*mu'min*) man or woman to be ignorant and uneducated and ignorance is a form of humiliation and shame. That is perhaps why Imām Ali ('a) said, 'Knowledge is the lost property of the faithful.' In other words, knowledge always belongs with a *mu'min* even if he or she may lose it for a while before finding it again.

After the Battle of Badr, the Muslims took some of the polytheist Quraysh as prisoners of war. Usually these prisoners were freed on ransom. Rasulullāh (s) identified the prisoners who were literate and offered to free them provided they taught some of the illiterate Muslims how to read and write.

'Seeking knowledge is a duty on every Muslim', said Rasulullāh (s) and he also said, 'The ink of the scholars will weigh more than the blood of the martyrs on the Day of Judgement.'

This is perhaps because a martyr only offers one (his) life to Islam but a scholar can save an entire community and even a nation with his or her knowledge. Which is also why Rasulullāh (s) said, 'One rak'ah of a person learned in Allāh is better than one thousand rak'ahs of a person ignorant of Allāh.'

The reward of gaining knowledge is so great - especially religious knowledge – that Rasulullāh (s) said, ‘One who seeks knowledge, everything prays to Allāh for his or her forgiveness, even the fish in the sea.’ Imām Ja’far as-Sādiq (‘a) also quoted this hadith and added, ‘and even the birds in the sky.’ And other ahādith have mentioned even the beasts in the jungles. Some hadith mention that when a person sets out of his or her home to gain knowledge, they walk on the wings of angels.

So wonderful is knowledge that Imām Ali (‘a) said, ‘Everything decreases when you give it to others except knowledge (which increases).’ And whereas wealth requires protection, knowledge protects us.

And some ahādith tell us that when Allāh wishes to humiliate a person who is evil, He punishes him or her by denying them knowledge. So poverty of material possessions is not a humiliation but remaining ignorant when knowledge is accessible is a form of humiliation.

Some of the fruits of knowledge are humility, tolerance, compassion for others and a strong faith in Allāh. When you see a person who doubts in Allāh or denies Him, know that they are ignorant even if they are a university professor! Similarly when you see a person who is narrow-minded and very unforgiving and intolerant of others, always judging people and criticizing them, that also points to ignorance. And most of all, ignorance reveals itself as pride and boastfulness. A knowledgeable person is wise and humble and never thinks of himself or herself as being ‘learned’ but rather sees himself or herself as a ‘student’. Rasulullāh (s) once said, ‘Whoever says “I am learned” is ignorant.’

The greatest responsibility with having knowledge is to teach it to others and to act on it. ‘The best form of charity,’ said Rasulullāh (s), ‘is that a person should gain knowledge and then teach it to his brother (fellow Muslim).’ And he (s) also said, ‘The zakāh of knowledge is to teach one who does not know.’

For the learned, the greatest danger is when they don’t act on their knowledge. If a person gains knowledge and even preaches to others but does not act on it, their heart will become hard and in due course, the knowledge will in fact harm him or her. But the solution is not to remain ignorant. Rather it is to act on one’s knowledge and to practice what one preaches. And as a person does that, more wisdom and knowledge will come to them through self-realization and from Allāh.

The reason why knowledge is so important is because without it, purification of character is difficult, if not impossible. Knowledge gives us the map towards success in the hereafter and provides signposts towards Jannah. Knowledge in itself is not an end. It is a means. The end is to practice what we know so that a change occurs in our character and ultimately our souls. But we still need signposts and a map to navigate through life and know *how* to act and purify ourselves.

The greatest science and form of knowledge is of course knowledge of Tawhid. The more a person increases in his or her understand of Allāh’s Oneness and Absolute

Unity, the more they rise towards perfection and enlightenment. And at some point knowledge comes from Allāh and is only accessible through spiritual practices and devotion based on previous knowledge.

In summary, a Muslim is required to seek knowledge from cradle to grave. There is never a time when a Muslim is 'done' with studying or gaining knowledge.

Rights of Teachers

A teacher nourishes our minds and souls with knowledge just as a parent nourishes our bodies with food and water. Islam therefore asks us to respect teachers just like we do our parents.

Some of the rights of a teacher include:

- That we listen to them when they are teaching us and not disrupt their teaching.
- That we don't argue with them or raise our voices above theirs.
- That we respect them like we do our parents, even outside the classroom.
- That we pray for them and continue to remember them even after we stop studying with them and after they have passed away.

A teacher is able to teach you because his or her knowledge and experience is far greater than yours. And Allāh too has given them a rank above those who know less, for He says:

﴿...يَرْفَعُ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ دَرَجَاتٍ...﴾

...Allāh will raise those of you who have faith and those who have been given knowledge in ranks...

- Surah al-Mujādilah, 58:11

Rasulullāh (s) also said the superiority of a learned person over an ignorant worshipper is like that of the full moon over the stars. And in other traditions we are told of how it is so much harder for shaytān to mislead a learned person than it is for him to mislead an ignorant worshipper. When a scholar of Islam passes away it leaves a hole in the wall of Islam that can never be filled again.

If we study the history of any community we will find that as long as it had learned people in its midst, the community thrived. Once the learned died or left, the community became stagnant and began dying as well, even if there were lots of rich and influential people amongst them. Knowledge is therefore essential for the survival of a community or nation as well.

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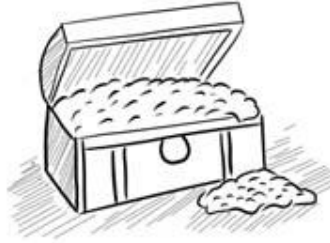
KEY TO KNOWLEDGE

Sufi Comics
Arif & Ali

THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD (SAW) ADVISED HIS PEOPLE:

KNOWLEDGE IS A TREASURE!

THE KEY TO WHICH IS THE ...



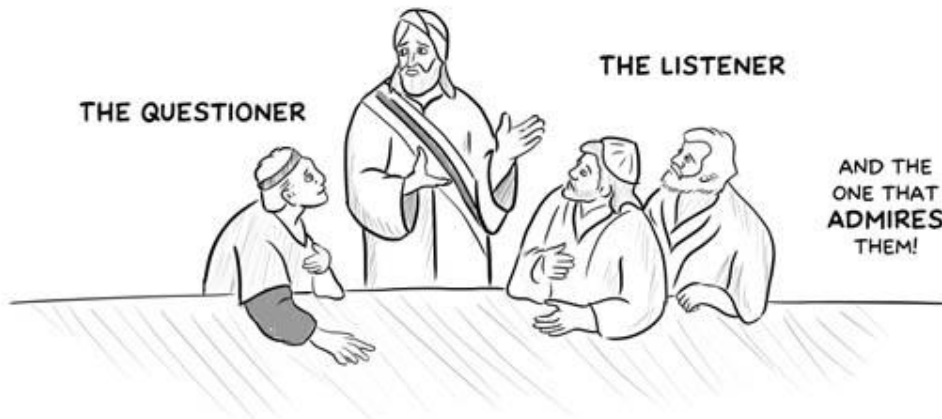
QUESTION

SO ASK AND ALLAH WILL HAVE MERCY ON YOU FOR VERILY FOUR PEOPLE ARE REWARDED...

THE SPEAKER

THE LISTENER

THE QUESTIONER



AND THE ONE THAT ADMIRES THEM!

قُلْ رَبِّ زِدْنِي عِلْمًا

MY LORD! INCREASE ME IN MY KNOWLEDGE ~ QURAN (20 : 114)

Bid'ah

Bid'ah is generally defined as 'innovation'. It refers to when a person adds or changes or removes something in Islam and therefore creates an innovation in religion that is of course *harām*. This is usually done by people who think they love Islam but they are ignorant so they introduce practices from their own culture into Islam (that may be out of emotional love but not based on the Qur'ān, hadith or any acceptable proof).

However unlike some Muslim groups that assume everything is *harām* and *bid'ah* unless proven otherwise, the Shi'ah faith is more particular about what can be categorized as *bid'ah*. According to Allama Majlisi *bid'ah* does not apply to general matters. For example, if people wear clothes that were not worn during the time of Rasullullāh (s) or if they build madrasahs and schools or teach other useful sciences, or eat foods that Rasullullāh (s) did not eat, that is not *bid'ah*. Bid'ah is to create or innovate in worship and Islam things that have no proof in Qur'ān or reliable ahādith (of a ma'sum) and then to implement them as if they are *wājib* and a part of religion.

Examples of Bid'ah (some of which occurred after Rasullullāh (s) and for which there is no support from the hadith of the ma'sumeen ('a)) include: pledging allegiance to a *fāsiq*, making the property or life of a Muslim lawful, punishing someone in an Islamic court only on the basis of suspicion, doing *mas-h* of wudu on the socks or shoes instead of feet, saying '*as-salātu khayrun min an-nawm*' in adhān, removing '*hayya 'ala khayril 'amal*' from the adhān, praying *tarāwih* in the month of Ramadan in congregation (*jamā'ah*) as if it is prescribed by Allāh and His Messenger (s), praying *nāfila* (mustahab) salāh in Jamā'ah, doing a second adhān on Fridays (for salāt al-jumu'ah), making the two mut'ahs haram (*hajj at-tamattu* and *zawāj al-mut'ah*), opposing the rightful Imām, giving inheritance to far relatives and denying it to the immediate heirs, not giving khums to those deserving, paying zakāh on income and wealth when it is only *wājib* on specific things, ending a fast and having *iftār* before the time, doing wudu after ghusl janābah when it is not necessary, folding hands in *qiyām* of salāh, saying '*āmeen*' after Surah al-Fātiha in salāh, demanding witness for a marriage '*aqd*' (when it is not required) and not having a witness for a divorce when it is *wājib* to do so, and so on.

According to Shahid al-Awwal, even though *bid'ah* is to add or remove from matters that are *wājib* and *harām*, it is also not desirable to add or reduce from what is mustahab or makruh because we are adding or removing from what was taught by a ma'sum. For example, to add a little more to the *Tasbih az-Zahra* ('a) is not desirable even if it is not *bid'ah per se* (as a complete new innovation in religion).

Similarly there may be rituals introduced into our own communities that are not in the Shari'ah and may not be *bid'ah* or *harām* but we need to ensure that people know this. The Shi'ah faith is not intolerant and does not rush to brand everything as *bid'ah* provided the scholars ensure that people don't forget with time and assume them to be a part of religion.

Allamah Majlisi says, 'Bid'ah is to make halāl what Allāh has made harām, or to consider makruh what is not made makruh by Allāh, or to make wājib what Allāh did not make wājib or to make mustahab what Allāh did not make mustahab.'

For example, a mustahab, nāfila salāh is always 1 or 2 rak'ahs, if a person starts a 3 rak'ah nāfila salāh of his own, this is bid'ah. Or if a person starts praying maghrib before its real time and considers it to be the time of *fadila* (recommended), that is harām and a bid'ah, or if a person starts doing two rukus' per rak'ah in a normal daily salāh, or a person starts believing that saying '*Ash-hadu anna Ali waliyullah*' is a wājib part of adhān (when it is not a part of adhān but only mustahab), and so on.

Similarly, Allama Majlisi says, 'For example, reciting the dhikr of Allāh with the tasbih "*lā ilāha ilallāh*" is highly recommended. But if a person decides on his own that every morning after Fajr salāh he will recite this 1500 times as if it is a part of religion and prescribed by a ma'sum and he considers it to be a form of worship for himself (and that others can emulate), then this is a *bid'ah* in religion and a serious sin....'

Bid'ah is a common problem amongst many Sufi groups who have their own formulae of dhikr and tasbihs and duas.

Bid'ah is therefore to alter and change religion and the shari'ah of Allāh. Either by adding something or reducing something, whether it is in usul ad-din or in furu' ad-din.

Imām Ja'far as-Sādiq ('a) said, 'The halāl of Muhammad is halāl forever until the Day of Judgement and his harām is harām forever until the Day of Judgement. There will never be another one besides him and no one will come after him (as a prophet or messenger).'

And Imām Ali ('a) said, 'No innovation (bid'ah) comes into existence without having to give up a sunnah. Therefore beware of bid'ahs...' and he also said, 'Nothing demolishes religion like innovations.'

Rasulullāh (s) said, 'The worst of matters are innovations. Every innovation is a form of misguidance and every misguidance shall be in Hellfire.' And he said, 'Follow and do not innovate. For you have been given whatever suffices you.' He also said, 'The people who innovate (*ahl al-bid'ah*) are the doors of Hellfire.'

Sometimes we may assume that only the minority innovate in religion. But with time these innovations (bid'ahs) can become mainstream. Hence Imām Ali ('a) said, 'The people who innovate (*ahl al-bid'ah*) are those who are opposed to the commands of Allāh, and His Book and His Messenger. They act according to their own opinion and desires, (and they are the *ahl al-bid'ah*) even if they are the majority...'

Rasulullāh (s) advised as follows: 'A little action based on *sunnah* is better than a lot of action based on *bid'ah*.'

Fighting Bid'ah and the Responsibility of the Learned

To ensure a community is not misguided and does not introduce its own emotional practises into religion, Islam first asks the most learned to lead. Anyone who takes on religious leadership when they are not deserving of it is condemned.

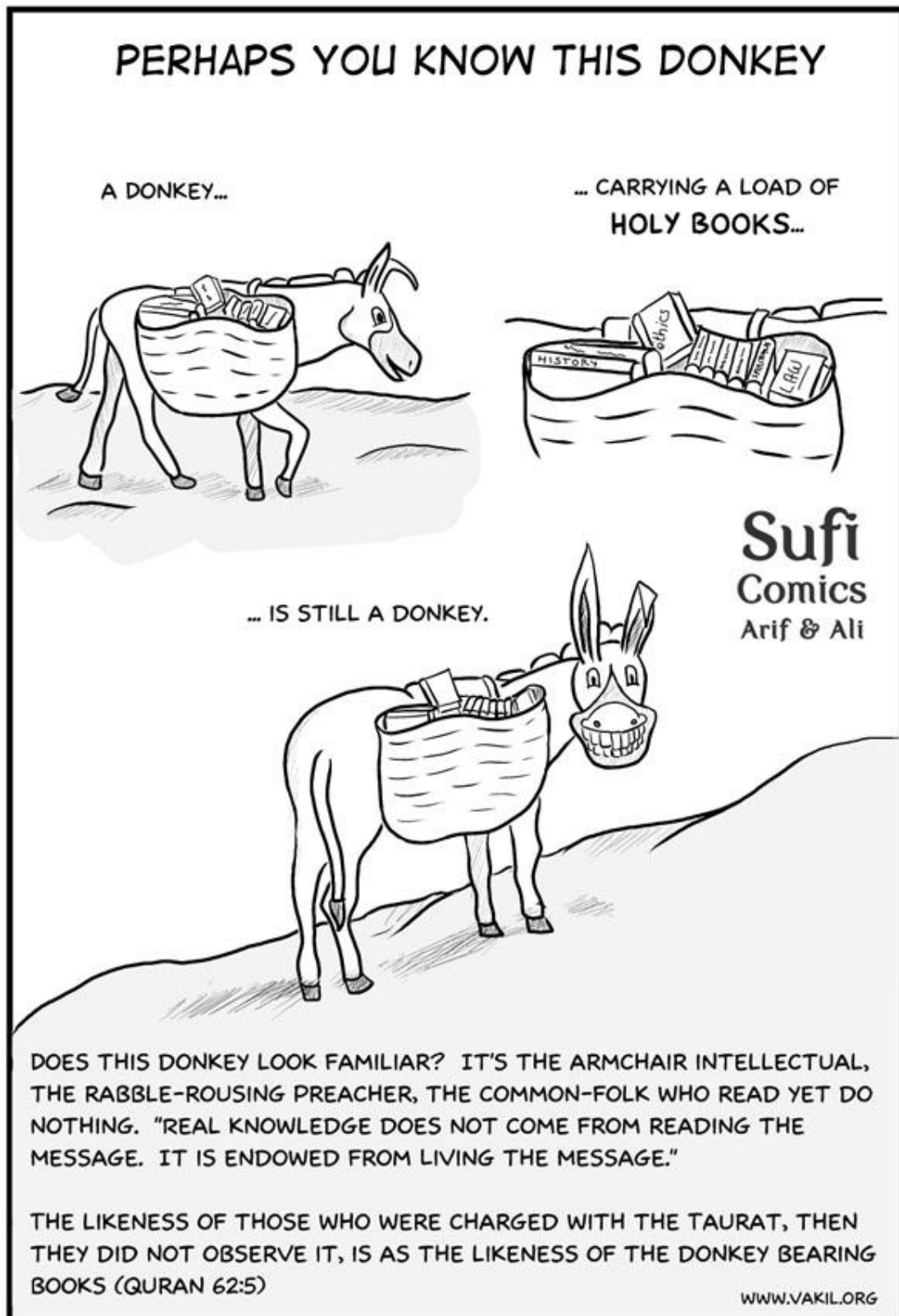
In the words of Imām as-Sādiq ('a), 'Anyone who calls people to himself whilst amongst them there is one who is more knowledgeable than him, is a misguided innovator.'

Secondly every Muslim is responsible to try and stop bid'ah in the community, just as *al-amr bil ma'ruf* and *an-nahi 'anil munkar* are wājib on all who know better. Rasullāh (s) for example, said, 'When you see one who innovates (in religion) than belie him on his face.' And he said, 'One who smiles at the face of an innovator has helped in the destruction of his religion'

And last but not least, one of the functions of knowledge is to help us identify what is real Islam from what is an innovation and therefore a person of knowledge is obliged to speak out against bid'ah even when everyone else keeps quiet.

Rasullāh (s) said, 'When innovations become manifest in my ummah, then let the learned (*'ālim*) reveal his knowledge. Whoever (is learned and) does not do so, then on him is the curse of Allāh.'

True Knowledge is What You Practice



A Mu'min is Never Ignorant by Choice and Effects of Knowledge Shows

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Sufi Comics
Araf & Ali

WHERE IS GOD'S TREASURE ?

PROPHET DAVID (A), THE KING OF ISRAELITES WHISPERS

O GOD! ALL KINGS POSSESS TREASURES

WHERE IS YOURS?

GOD REPLIED:

- I POSSESS A TREASURE THAT IS GREATER THAN THE SKY...
- ... SMELLS BETTER THAN THE PERFUMES OF PARADISE
- ... MORE BEAUTIFUL THAN THE CELESTIAL KINGDOM

ITS EARTH IS ENLIGHTENMENT
ITS SKY IS BELIEF
ITS MOON IS LOVE
ITS STARS ARE INSPIRATION
ITS CLOUDS ARE REASON
ITS FRUITS ARE OBEDIENCE
AND ITS YIELD IS WISDOM

MY TREASURE HAS FOUR DOORS:

KNOWLEDGE CONTENTMENT PATIENCE REASON

MY TREASURE IS THE HEART OF THE BELIEVER!

Lesson 5

Zuhd vs. Materialism

Zuhd

Zuhd is loosely defined as ‘asceticism’. But this definition can be misleading. Zuhd is abstention from **worldliness** and **materialism**. It is not abstention from the world or being part of a society or earning a living and having a family. In fact a famous hadith of Rasullāh (s) says:

لا رَهْبَانِيَّةَ فِي الْإِسْلَامِ

There is no monasticism in Islam

But besides that, Islam highly encourages Muslims not to attach themselves to worldly pleasures or to live in the world as if they are here to stay forever. One who practices zuhd is called a *zāhid* (fem. *zāhida*) and a distinguishing quality of a *zāhid* or *zāhida* is that all aspects of their lives show that they truly believe this world is a temporary abode.

Most of the time of a *zāhid(a)* is occupied in preparing for the permanent abode and not in hoarding and amassing for this world. Of course preparing for the next permanent abode is not by worship only but may and should include working to earn a lawful living to support one’s family, socializing with family and friends, and so forth. As long as the intention is to please Allāh and one’s mortality is not forgotten, the blessings of Allāh can be enjoyed in this world.

So we could re-define zuhd as ‘non-materialism’.

Rasullāh (s) said, ‘Zuhd is not to give up what is *halāl* or to make what is *halāl* *harām* for yourself or not to own anything in the world. But zuhd is that you don’t trust and find more security and safety with what is in your hands than what is with Allāh.’

Imām as-Sādiq (‘a) said, ‘If you put all that is good in a house, it’s key would be zuhd from the world.’

Nahj al-Balāgha is an excellent resource after the Qur’ān to find an understanding of zuhd in Islam because Imām Ali (‘a) has mentioned non-materialism in numerous sermons, letters and sayings.

Of course as a person grows spirituality, they may lose some more interest in the world and even abstain from some *halāl* matters. But this is not because they regard it wrong or evil or wish to become monks. Rather it is because they now love the worship of Allāh far more; and they derive more pleasure conversing with Allāh than

indulging in any halāl pleasure. It is in this sense that the following ahādith are given. Your teacher may discuss some of them to explain the point further:

Rasulullāh (s) said, ‘O Abu Dhar! When a person abstains from the world (i.e. worldliness), Allāh plants wisdom in his heart that manifests in his tongue and He makes him see the flaws of the world, its illnesses and its cure and He takes him out of the world safely into the Safe Abode (*Dār as-Salām*)’ i.e. to Jannah.

Imām Ali (‘a) said, ‘A person’s proportion of zuhd over what is temporary (i.e. the world) is based on how much conviction (*yaqīn*) he has over what is permanent (i.e. the hereafter).’

And Imām Ali (‘a) also said, ‘How can he abstain from this world who does not know the value of the hereafter?’ and in another hadith he said, ‘Do not be like one of those who want the hereafter with actions for the world.... He speaks against the world like the *zahideen* but he works for the world like those who long for it.’

Imām Muhammad al-Bāqir (‘a) advised, ‘Remember death frequently because when a person remembers death frequently, he abstains from this world (i.e. from materialism).’

Imām Ja’far as-Sādiq (‘a) said, ‘A *zāhid* is one who keeps away from halāl out of fear of *hisāb* (accounting on the Day of Judgement) and keeps away from harām out of fear of *‘adhāb* (chastisement on the Day of Judgement).’

Imām as-Sādiq (‘a) also said, ‘A *zāhid* prefers the hereafter to the world, prefers being unknown over fame, prefers struggling over comfort, prefers hunger instead of overeating, and prefers remembrance of Allāh over being heedless. His body is in this world but his heart is in the hereafter.’

Typically what stops a person from practising zuhd is being shackled by lusts and desires. First and foremost of course is the need to abstain from harām desires. Rasulullāh (s) said, ‘The best zuhd is to abstain from sins.’ But thereafter a faithful (*mu’min*) needs to combat addiction to desires and pleasure even if it is halāl.

Imām as-Sādiq (‘a) said, ‘It is forbidden on your hearts to taste the sweetness of faith (*imān*) until they abstain from the world.’

And of course most people go through life driven only by desires, greed and fear. Which is why our eleventh Imām, Imām Hasan al-‘Askari (‘a) said, ‘If the people of the world all became intelligent, it (the world) would fall into ruins.’ In other words a lot of what we see as ‘progress’ and ‘advances’ by human beings is only because of their hankering for the world and their desire to invent new devices that will give them more pleasure or more material comforts.

In seeking the company of those who are truly non-materialistic and not after the world, Imām Ali (‘a) taught us to identify a true *zāhid* as one who hides his zuhd. For

he ('a) said, 'When you see a *zāhid* who runs away from people, then follow him. And when you see him running after people then run away from him.'

Forgetting Death

One of the main, if not the primary reason, why humans become materialistic and worldly and make this world the end of their goal in life is because they forget their mortality and that death is not 'if' but simply 'when'. Islam therefore encourages the faithful to constantly think of death. Not in the sense of being morbid but in order to remain realistic.

A person who exerts himself only to build his world will have intense remorse when death overtakes him and he finds himself dying having lost both this world and the next. That is perhaps why when Rasullāh (s) was asked, 'Will anyone else be raised on the Day of Judgement with the martyrs (*shuhada*)?' He replied, 'Yes. One who remembers death twenty times every day.'

Imām Ali ('a) used to say, 'With every breathe there is death' and Imām Ja'far as-Sādiq ('a) said, 'The remembrance of death kills lusts.'

Our tenth Imām, Imām Ali al-Hādi ('a) said we should remember the time when we will be separated from our loved ones and leave them forever, when no doctor can help and no friend is of any use.

In many ahādith, death is called the 'Destroyer of False Desires' (*hādīm al-ladhāt*) because when people remember it, it kills in them the desire for worldly pleasures. Instead it gives life to the heart and stops people from being heedless. Rasullāh (s) once passed by a group of people who were sitting around and laughing very loudly. He said to them, 'Remember the destroyer of desires' And when they asked what it was, he said, 'Death'.

It is reported from Imām as-Sādiq ('a) that a man came to Abu Dhar and said, 'O Abu Dhar, how come we dislike death?' He said, 'Because you have made the world your home and ruined your hereafter. So you hate being moved from where you have settled to where you have ruined.'

Suggested Class Activity: Organize a session to watch the movie "O Lord! Send Me Back!" (given in the Teacher's DVD).

Materialism

When we discuss *materialism* in akhlāq, we mean preoccupation with the material world. A materialist in this sense is a person whose main focus in life is material possession and the belief that material success and progress are the highest values in life. This belief is what is prevalent in many societies today.

Islam opposes this materialism because constant focus on material ‘things’ (like wealth, property, children, games, pleasure, jobs, fashion, worldly social status, ‘the latest craze’) distracts a human being from focusing on spiritual matters that are far more important. Islam teaches us that humans have a soul and that the soul survives after physical death and even after the end of the physical body. And therefore preparing the soul (through spiritual focus) for eternal life is the real purpose of coming to this world and therefore needs to be our primary aim in life.

Running after material possessions is frequently where problems occur in our ability to succeed in the hereafter. We become obsessed by a desire to obtain material things or simply frustrated by the need to maintain them. And often times we don’t even know why we are running after them or why we need more. It simply becomes an addiction and an obsession.

Islam wants us to ask ourselves, ‘Are material things really more important than anything else? Is material success the highest goal? Is acquiring and enjoying material things all there is to life? Why am I here at all? If life is really just about materialism, why should I even try to live a moral life? Why does it matter how I treat others or how I live, as long as I have what I want? Why does what I believe about the origin of life matter?’

And as we grow older and begin losing our youth, energy, health, productivity, and so on, we soon come face to face with our mortality i.e. that we are heading towards the end of our lives. And this is very frightening for those who have used up all their youth and lives only running after the world and its pleasures as if it was a permanent abode that they would never leave.

In Book 9 (Akhlāq Lesson 5) we studied ‘The Love of the World’ (*Hubb ad-Dunya*) and at the end of the lesson, a number of āyāt of the Qur’ān as well as numerous ahādith from the ma’sumeen (‘a) were listed. In this lesson, we repeat them and also add some more to the list. Your teacher will not discuss all these āyāt and ahādith. They are given for your reference and for you to think about.

Your teacher, however, may assign you a project to review and write essays on some of these āyāt and/or ahādith just to gauge if your understanding of the fine balance between neither being a recluse nor being a materialist is sound. In other words, you must demonstrate that you understand how we are meant to enjoy the blessings of Allāh in this world without becoming attached to them or losing focus on Allāh and the Last Day.

Qur'ān and Hadith on Love of the World & Materialism

Qur'ān

﴿وَلَيْكَ الَّذِينَ اشْتَرُوا الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا بِالْآخِرَةِ فَلَا يَخَفُّ عَنْهُمْ الْعَذَابُ وَلَا هُمْ يُنصَرُونَ﴾

They are the ones who bought the life of this world for the Hereafter; so their punishment shall not be lightened, nor will they be helped.

- Surah al-Baqarah, 2:86

﴿زَيْنَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا وَيَسْحَرُونَ مِنَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا فَوْقَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَاللَّهُ يَرْزُقُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ﴾

Worldly life has been glamorized for the faithless, and they ridicule the faithful. But those who are Godconscious shall be above them on the Day of Resurrection, and Allāh provides for whomever He wishes without any reckoning.

- Surah al-Baqarah, 2:212

﴿...مِنْكُمْ مَنْ يُرِيدُ الدُّنْيَا وَمِنْكُمْ مَنْ يُرِيدُ الْآخِرَةَ...﴾

...Some of you desire this world, and some of you desire the Hereafter...

- Surah Aal-i Imrān, 3:152

﴿لَا يَغُرَّتْكَ تَقَلُّبُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فِي الْبِلَادِ مَتَاعٌ قَلِيلٌ ثُمَّ مَاؤَاهُمْ جَهَنَّمُ وَيَسَّرَ الْمَهَادُ لَكِنَّ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا رَبَّهُمْ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٌ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا نُزُلًا مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ وَمَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ لِلْأَبْرَارِ﴾

Never be misled by the bustle of the faithless in the towns. It is a trivial enjoyment; then their refuge is hell, and it is an evil resting place. But those who are conscious of their Lord - for them shall be gardens with streams running in them, [to remain in them [forever], a hospitality from Allāh; and what is with Allāh is better for the pious.

- Surah Aal-i Imrān, 3:196-198

In other words the āyah means to tell us, don't be fooled by all the coming and going of the people of the world. When you see the shopping malls full and the large number of people dressed up, enjoying in luxuries, eating rich sumptuous food, building large mansions, hoarding large sums of wealth, and living as if they will never die. The other side of the world is always kept hidden from us. We have to go to the hospitals, the cemeteries, the nursing homes, the homeless shelters, the

prisons, the asylums, etc. to see it. And in the end, all this will end as if it never existed. The sense of permanence in this world is an illusion and a mirage.

﴿وَذَرِ الَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا دِينَهُمْ لَعِبًا وَلَهْوًا وَغَرَّتْهُمُ الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا...﴾

Leave alone those who take their religion for play and diversion and whom the life of this world has deceived...

- Surah al-An'ām, 6:70

﴿الَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا دِينَهُمْ لَهْوًا وَلَعِبًا وَغَرَّتْهُمُ الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا فَالْيَوْمَ نَنْسَاهُمْ كَمَا نَسُوا لِقَاءَ يَوْمِهِمْ هَذَا وَمَا كَانُوا بِآيَاتِنَا يَجْحَدُونَ﴾

Those who took their religion for diversion and play and whom the life of the world had deceived. So today We will forget them as they forgot the encounter of this day of theirs, and as they used to oppose Our signs.

- Surah al-'Arāf, 7:51

﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ لَا يَرْجُونَ لِقَاءَنَا وَرَضُوا بِالْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَاطْمَأَنَّنُوا بِهَا وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنْ آيَاتِنَا غَافِلُونَ أُولَئِكَ مَا وَاهُمُ النَّارُ بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ﴾

Indeed those who do not expect to meet Us and who are pleased with the life of this world and satisfied with it, and those who are oblivious of Our signs - it is they whose refuge shall be the Fire because of what they used to earn.

- Surah Yunus, 10:7-8

﴿وَمَا هَذِهِ الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا لَهُوٌ وَلَعِبٌ وَإِنَّ الدَّارَ الْآخِرَةَ لَهِيَ الْحَيَوَانُ لَوْ كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ﴾

The life of this world is nothing but diversion and play, but the abode of the Hereafter is indeed Life, had they known!

- Surah al-Ankabut, 29:64

﴿يَا قَوْمِ إِنَّمَا هَذِهِ الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا مَتَاعٌ وَإِنَّ الْآخِرَةَ هِيَ دَارُ الْقَرَارِ﴾

O my people! This life of the world is only a [passing] enjoyment, and indeed the Hereafter is the abiding home.

- Surah al-Ghāfir, 40:39

﴿مَنْ كَانَ يُرِيدُ حَرْثَ الْآخِرَةِ نَزِدْ لَهُ فِي حَرْثِهِ وَمَنْ كَانَ يُرِيدُ حَرْثَ الدُّنْيَا نُؤْتِهِ مِنْهَا وَمَا لَهُ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنْ نَصِيبٍ﴾

Whoever desires the harvest of the Hereafter, We will increase for him his harvest, and whoever desires the harvest of the world, We will give it to him, but he will have no share in the Hereafter.

- Surah ash-Shura, 42:20

﴿وَلَوْلَا أَنْ يَكُونَ النَّاسُ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً لَجَعَلْنَا لِمَنْ يَكْفُرُ بِالرَّحْمَانِ لِبُيُوتِهِمْ سُقْفًا مِنْ فِضَّةٍ وَمَعَارِجَ عَلَيْهَا يَظْهَرُونَ وَلِبُيُوتِهِمْ أَبْوَابًا وَسُرُورًا عَلَيْهَا يَتَّكِنُونَ وَزُخْرُفًا وَإِنْ كُلُّ ذَلِكَ لَمَّا مَتَاعُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةُ عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ﴾

Were it not [for the danger] that mankind would be one community,⁴³ We would have surely made for those who defy the All-beneficent, silver roofs for their houses and [silver] stairways by which they ascend; and [silver] doors for their houses and [silver] couches on which they recline; and ornaments of gold;⁴⁴ yet all that would be nothing but the wares of the life of this world, and the Hereafter near your Lord is for the Godconscious.

- Surah az-Zukhruf, 43:33-35

Imām as-Sādiq (‘a) said about the āyah above, ‘If He (Allāh) would do that, then all of mankind would disbelieve.’

﴿وَقِيلَ الْيَوْمَ نَنْسَاكُمْ كَمَا نَسَيْتُمْ لِقَاءَ يَوْمِكُمْ هَذَا وَمَأْوَاكُمُ النَّارُ وَمَا لَكُمْ مِنْ نَاصِرِينَ ذَلِكَُمْ بِأَنَّكُمْ اتَّخَذْتُمْ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ هُزُوءًا وَغَرَّتْكُمْ الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا فَالْيَوْمَ لَا يُخْرَجُونَ مِنْهَا وَلَا هُمْ يُسْتَعْتَبُونَ﴾

And it will be said, ‘Today We will forget you, just as you forgot the encounter of this day of yours. The Fire will be your abode, and you will not have any helpers. That is because you took the signs of Allāh in derision, and the life of the world had deceived you.’ So today they will not be brought out of it, nor will they be granted goodwill.

- Surah al-Jāthiya, 45:34-35

⁴³ That is, a monolithic community of people without faith.

⁴⁴ Or ‘houses embellished with gold.’

﴿فَأَمَّا مَنْ طَغَىٰ وَآثَرَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا فَإِنَّ الْجَحِيمَ هِيَ الْمَأْوَىٰ﴾

as for him who was rebellious and preferred the life of this world, his refuge will indeed be hell.

- Surah an-Nāzi'āt, 79:37-39

﴿بَلْ تُوْثِرُونَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ وَأَبْقَىٰ﴾

Yet you prefer the life of this world, while the Hereafter is better and more lasting.

- Surah al-A'la, 87:16-17

Hadith

1. Rasulullāh (s) said, 'Be the children of the hereafter and do not be the children of this world.'
2. Rasulullāh (s) said, 'The world is the faithful (*mu'min*)'s prison and the unfaithful (*kāfir*)'s paradise.'
3. When Rasulullāh (s) went for *mi'rāj*, Allāh described to him the people of the world as follows: 'The People of the World (*ahl ad-dunya*) are excessive in their food, sleep, laughter and anger. They are never satisfied. They never forgive or accept the excuse of one who apologizes to them. They are lazy when it comes to obeying Allāh But very bold when it comes to disobeying Him. Their hopes are far-fetched. They never account for their souls. They help very little are not very useful but they talk a lot. Their fear of Allāh is very little and they get very happy and excited when they see food. They never thank Me when in ease and are neither patient when in trouble. They love to praise themselves even for what they never did and will claim what is not theirs. They are always talking about their desires and what they like. They like to mention the faults of others but will hide the good deeds of others.' Rasulullāh (s) then asked, 'O Allāh, do these people have any faults by which they are identified?' And Allāh said, 'Yes. They are ignorant and foolish. They show no humility from the one who teaches them. They see themselves as being very intelligent but the wise know them to be foolish.'
4. Rasulullāh (s), ' Work for your world as if you will live forever and work for your hereafter as if you will die tomorrow.'

Note: Some misinterpret the hadith above to say we should work hard for the world as if we will live here forever. What Rasulullāh (s) meant was that if you have to choose between doing something for this world vs. the hereafter, you should rush to do what is for the hereafter 'as if you will die tomorrow' and delay doing what is for the world 'as if you will live forever'. This is because if we die before doing what we wanted to do in this world, it won't matter. But if we miss doing what we wanted to do for the hereafter, it may have eternal consequences.

5. Rasulullāh (s), 'The most amazing thing is how a person who is convinced of the everlasting life is busy striving for the this vain life!'
6. Imām Ali ('a) said, 'The bitterness of the world is the sweetness of the hereafter and the sweetness of the world is the bitterness of the hereafter.'
7. Imām Ali ('a) said, 'The world is like poison. Only the one who doesn't know it will eat it.' And also, 'The world is a trap. Only one who doesn't know it will fall into it.'
8. Imām Ali ('a) said, 'Why is it that you rejoice over the little of the world that you get and it does not grieve you of the much of the hereafter that you lose?!'
9. Imām Ali ('a), 'One whose concern for the world is great, so will his sorrow and grief.'
10. Imām Ali ('a), 'Beware that you are not cheated out of the permanent abode (of the hereafter).'
11. Imām Ali ('a), 'The goal of the hereafter is permanence. Everything in the hereafter is permanent and everlasting.'
12. Imām Ali ('a), 'One whose remembrance of the hereafter is plenty, his sins will be few.'
13. Concerning Amr b. al-Aas, the vizier of Mu'āwiya, Imām Ali ('a), said, 'By Allāh, what prevents me from playing and fooling around is the remembrance of death and what prevents him from speaking the truth is forgetting the hereafter.'
14. Imām Ali ('a), 'Strive against yourself and work for the hereafter as hard as you can.'
15. Imām Ali ('a), 'You are a creature of the hereafter so work for it. You were not created for the world so abstain from it.'
16. Imām Ali ('a), 'How can a person work for the hereafter when he is busy with (running after) the world?'
17. Imām Zayn al-Abidin ('a), 'The life of the world is like a slumber while the hereafter is like waking up from sleep.'
18. Imām Ja'far as-Sādiq ('a) asked, 'If you are certain the world is temporary, then why all this greed and eagerness for it?!'

Lesson 6

Dhīkr vs. Ghafalah

The word '*dhikr*' means 'remembrance'. In Islamic sciences it refers to 'the remembrance of Allāh' (also called *dhikrullāh*). The opposite of *dhikr* is *ghafalah* that is usually translated as 'heedlessness'. It means to be oblivious to the remembrance of Allāh and to forget Allāh except on rare occasions such as when one is in trouble.

The remembrance of Allāh can take many forms. It can mean literal recitation of Allāh's Names in a *tasbih* or the recitation of Qur'ān or supplications (*du'as*). The daily *salāh* is also a form of *dhikr*. *Dhikr* can also be in the heart where one is constantly thinking of his or her Creator and feeling a sense of love and gratitude to Allāh. By far one of the greatest forms of *dhikr* is to remember Allāh when one is tempted with sin and then to abstain from the sin. This may be the desire to indulge in a pleasure or it may be the temptation to speak evil of someone, to express anger, to backbite, etc.

In all its meaning and in general, the Qur'ān declares:

﴿وَلَذِكْرُ اللَّهِ أَكْبَرُ﴾

...and the remembrance of Allāh is the greatest...

Surah al-Ankabut, 29:45

Rasulullāh (s) said, 'Do not prefer anything over the remembrance of Allāh because He (Allāh) says, "*and the remembrance of Allāh is the greatest*".'

Rasulullāh (s) also said, 'There is no action more loved by Allāh and better to save a person from every evil in this world or the hereafter than the *dhikr* of Allāh.' He was asked, 'Not even fighting in the way of Allāh?' He said, 'If it was not to save the remembrance of Allāh, He would not command us to fight (in His way).'

In the following āyah Allāh explicitly asks us to remember Him constantly and profusely:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ ذِكْرًا كَثِيرًا وَسَبِّحُوهُ بُكْرَةً وَأَصِيلًا. هُوَ الَّذِي يُصَلِّي عَلَيْكُمْ وَمَلَائِكَتُهُ لِيُخْرِجَكُم مِّنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ وَكَانَ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ رَحِيمًا﴾

O you who have faith! Remember Allāh with frequent remembrance, and glorify Him morning and evening. It is He who blesses you, and so do His angels, that He may bring you out from darkness into light, and He is most merciful to the faithful.

- Surah al-Ahzāb, 33:41-43

That is perhaps why Rasulullāh (s) said, ‘Recite the Qur’ān and remember Allāh frequently. For it is a cause of remembrance for you in the heavens (by the angels) and a light for you on the earth.’

Imām Ja’far as-Sādiq (‘a) said, ‘Remember Allāh frequently, as much as you can, every hour of the night and day because Allāh has ordered the frequent remembrance of Him.’

Generally speaking Islam sets a limit of moderation in all acts of worship. For example, it is recommended to worship Allāh from fajr until sunrise but then it is makruh to pray salāh after sunrise until closer to dhuhr time because people are expected to work and earn a living. Similarly, it is recommended to fast but at maghrib we are expected to break our fast. Charity is good but in moderation without being miserly or extravagant. However the dhikr of Allāh is the only exception. There is nothing like ‘too much’ or ‘excessive’ dhikr. We are encouraged to remember Allāh as frequently and as profusely as possible. And it doesn’t matter where we are – in bed, on the bus, at work, or in the marketplace. We are asked to stay connected to our Creator constantly even if it is in the heart and not verbal.

Imām as-Sādiq (‘a) has said, ‘The Tasbih of Fatima az-Zahra (‘a) is from the ‘abundant dhikr’ (*adh-dhikr al-kathir*) about which Allāh says, ‘remember Allāh with frequent remembrance’ (33:41).

When Nabi Musa (‘a) asked Allāh to appoint his brother Nabi Hārun (‘a) as a support, he (Musa) said to Allāh:

﴿كِيْ نُسَبِّحُكَ كَثِيْرًا وَنَذْكُرُكَ كَثِيْرًا﴾

so that we may glorify You frequently, and remember You frequently.

- Surah Tā Hā, 20:33-34

Which means even the prophets of Allāh were accustomed to profuse remembrance of Allāh.

The remembrance of Allāh has physical benefits too. Rasulullāh (s) said, ‘The remembrance of Allāh is a cure (for illnesses)...’ And Imām Ja’far as-Sādiq (‘a) guaranteed, ‘Lightning will never strike one who is remembering Allāh.’

In Dua Kumayl, Imām Ali (‘a) taught us to recite:

يَا مَنْ اسْمُهُ دَوَاءٌ وَذِكْرُهُ شِفَاءٌ

O’ You Whose Name is a cure and Whose remembrance is a healing.

Imām Ali (‘a) advised that even in danger, ‘when you meet your enemies in the battlefield, then talk less (to others) and increase your remembrance of Allāh, the Mighty & Glorious.’

Imām as-Sādiq ('a) said, 'Our Shi'ahs are those who when they are alone, they remember Allāh excessively.'

And our fifth Imām, Imām Muhammad al-Bāqir ('a) said about the signs of the Children of the Hereafter, '...nothing can turn them away from the constant remembrance of Allāh....'

This is what the Qur'ān says as well concerning the most sincere of Allāh's servants:

﴿رَجَالٌ لَا تُلِهِمْ تِجَارَةٌ وَلَا بَيْعٌ عَنْ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَإِقَامِ الصَّلَاةِ وَإِيتَاءِ الزَّكَاةِ يَخَافُونَ
يَوْمًا تَتَقَلَّبُ فِيهِ الْقُلُوبُ وَالْأَبْصَارُ﴾

Men whom neither trading nor bargaining distracts from the remembrance of Allāh, and the maintenance of salāh and the giving of zakāh. They are fearful of a Day wherein the heart and the sight will be transformed.

-Surah an-Nur, 24:37

But as mentioned earlier, the greatest form of dhikr is not to recite many duas and tasbihs and then fall for sin when tempted. It is to remember Allāh and out of fear for Him to lose the desire and temptation to sin and even to be ashamed of sinning while Allāh is watching.

Rasulullāh (s) said, 'One who obeys Allāh has remembered Him even if his (*mustahab*) prayers and fasts and Qur'ān recitation is not excessive.'

And this habit of remembering Allāh when faced with sin comes from being sincere and from the habit of remembering Allāh in the heart even when one is working or socializing with others. This 'hidden dhikr' in the heart is also mentioned in the Qur'ān:

﴿وَاذْكُرْ رَبَّكَ فِي نَفْسِكَ تَضَرُّعًا وَخِيفَةً وَدُونَ الْجَهْرِ مِنَ الْقَوْلِ بِالْغُدُوِّ وَالْآصَالِ وَلَا تَكُنْ مِنَ الْغَافِلِينَ﴾

And remember your Lord within your heart humbly and reverentially (i.e. with awe), without being loud, morning and evening, and do not be among the heedless.

- Surah al-'Arāf, 7:205

Turning Away from Dhikr of Allāh

﴿وَمَنْ أَعْرَضَ عَن ذِكْرِي فَإِنَّ لَهُ مَعِيشَةً ضَنْكًا وَنَحْشُرُهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ أَعْمَى قَالَ رَبِّ لِمَ حَشَرْتَنِي أَعْمَى وَقَدْ كُنْتُ بَصِيرًا قَالَ كَذَلِكَ أَتَتْكَ آيَاتُنَا فَنَسِيْتَهَا وَكَذَلِكَ الْيَوْمَ

تُنْسَى﴾

But whoever disregards My remembrance, his shall be a wretched life, and on the Day of Resurrection We shall raise him blind.’ He will say, ‘My Lord! Why have You raised me blind, though I used to see?’ He will say: ‘So it is. Our signs came to you, but you forgot them, and thus you will be forgotten today.’

- Surah Tā Hā, 20:124-6

﴿وَمَنْ يَعِشْ عَن ذِكْرِ الرَّحْمَانِ نُقِصْ لَهُ شَيْطَانًا فَهُوَ لَهُ قَرِينٌ وَإِنَّهُمْ لَيَصُدُّونَهُمْ عَنِ

السَّبِيلِ وَيَحْسَبُونَ أَنَّهُمْ مُهْتَدُونَ﴾

Whoever shuns the remembrance of the All-beneficent, We assign him a devil who remains his companion. Indeed they (the devils) bar them from the way while they suppose that they are [rightly] guided.

- Surah az-Zukhruf, 43:36

﴿وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ نَسُوا اللَّهَ فَأَنسَاهُمْ أَنفُسَهُمْ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ﴾

And do not be like those who forget Allāh, so He makes them forget their own souls. It is they who are the transgressors.

- Surah al-Hashr, 59:19

All the above āyāt point to the fact that humans need to be remembering Allāh in order not fall prey to shaytān. When Allāh does not occupy a human heart then it is always prey to shaytān.

In fact a person who remembers Allāh also remains aware of his own true self and why he is on the earth. Whereas a person who forgets Allāh is constantly driven by worldly desires and therefore he not only forgets Allāh but also forgets his or her ownself and is physically alive but spiritually in deep slumber until he or she is given a rude awakening at death. At that point – when it is too late – he or she realizes how they have wasted all their lives running after the wrong things and not preparing for their eternal abode.

Imām Ali (‘a) also said, ‘One who forgets Allāh, Allāh makes him forget his ownself and blinds his heart.’

Ghافلah

Ghافلah we said was the opposite of dhikr and means to be heedless or forgetful of Allāh. Many Qur'ān verses (āyāt) and ahādith caution us against this. The following āyah tells us what a person who dies whilst being *ghāfil* is told upon his death:

﴿لَقَدْ كُنْتَ فِي غَفْلَةٍ مِّنْ هَذَا فَكَشَفْنَا عَنْكَ غِطَاءَكَ فَبَصَرُكَ الْيَوْمَ حَدِيدٌ﴾

'You were certainly oblivious of this. We have removed your veil from you, and so your sight is sharp today.'

- Surah Qāf, 50:22

Rasulullāh (s) said, 'Strange is the one who forgets but is not forgotten (by Allāh), strange is the one who seeks the world while death seeks him, and strange is the one who is filled with laughter while he does not know whether Allāh is pleased with him or angry at him!'

And Rasulullāh (s) also said, 'O Aba Dhar! Be concerned with doing good even if you don't actually (get a chance to) do it, so that you may not be counted amongst the heedless.'

Imām Ali ('a) described 'Wakefulness' (*yaqda*) as 'a light' (*nur*) meaning a person who is *ghāfil* is like one who lives in a dark world but is unaware of it.

Imām Ali ('a) also warned, 'Woe be on one who is overcome with heedlessness so he forgets the departure (from the world) and never prepares for it; and Imām Ali ('a) lamented, 'The intoxication of heedlessness and arrogance is harder to recover from than the intoxication of wine.'

The solution of course is to keep at dhikr until ghافلah is removed. Imām Ali ('a) said, 'It is by constant remembrance of Allāh that heedlessness is avoided.'

If we knew that somewhere in the room we're in right now there is a small poisonous snake, we would not sit with heedlessness. We would be constantly aware and present. Similarly, Imām as-Sādiq ('a) asks, 'If shaytān is (known to be) the enemy then why the heedlessness?!' In other words, if we know that without being alert and present with the dhikr of Allāh, our hearts can be preyed upon by shaytān who is always lurking around to catch us heedless, then why do we not remain present with Allāh's remembrance?



﴿قُلْ ادْعُوا اللَّهَ أَوْ ادْعُوا الرَّحْمَانَ أَيَّمَا تَدْعُوا فَلَهُ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ...﴾

Say, 'Invoke "Allāh" or invoke "the All-beneficent." Whichever [of His Names] you may call upon, to Him belong the most beautiful Names.'...

- Surah al-Isra, 17:110

Dhikr as Sign of True Love for Allāh







Many people are like the man in the comic above. They claim to love Allāh and that they would do anything for Allāh. But the moment they hear of something interesting, like a new hobby or new game or meet a new friend or a new career or opportunity comes up, they turn and run away to it. Allāh describes this behaviour in the Qur'ān as well:

﴿وَإِذَا رَأَوْا تِجَارَةً أَوْ لَهْوًا انفَضُّوا إِلَيْهَا وَتَرَكُوكَ قَائِمًا قُلْ مَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ مِنَ اللَّهْوِ
وَمِنَ التِّجَارَةِ وَاللَّهُ خَيْرُ الرَّازِقِينَ﴾

When they sight a deal or a diversion, they scatter off towards it and leave you standing! Say, 'What is with Allāh is better than diversion and dealing, and Allāh is the best of providers.'

- Surah al-Jumu'ah, 62:11

SECRETS OF PRAYER TAUGHT BY IMAM JAFFER SADIQ (AS)
Sufi Conjes - Arif & Ali

<p>OPENING THE PRAYER</p> <p>WHEN YOU FACE THE QIBLAH, YOU SHOULD DESPAIR OF THIS WORLD, WHAT IT CONTAINS OF CREATION AND WHAT OTHERS ARE OCCUPIED WITH. EMPTY YOUR HEART OF EVERY PREOCCUPATION WHICH MIGHT DISTRACT YOU FROM ALLAH. SEE THE IMMENSITY OF ALLAH WITH YOUR INNERMOST BEINGS, AND REMEMBER THAT YOU WILL STAND BEFORE HIM. KNOW THAT ALLAH DOES NOT NEED YOUR SERVICE. HE IS INDEPENDENT OF YOU, YOUR WORSHIP AND YOUR SUPPLICATION.</p>		<p>BOWING IN PRAYER</p> <p>THE BONDSMAN OF ALLAH DOES NOT TRULY BOW (IN RUKU') BUT THAT ALLAH ADORNS HIM WITH THE LIGHT OF HIS RADIANCE, SHADES HIM IN THE SHADE OF HIS GREATNESS AND CLOTHES HIM IN THE GARMENT OF HIS PURITY. BOWING IS FIRST AND PROSTRATION (SUJUD) IS SECOND: THERE IS COURTESY IN BOWING, AND IN PROSTRATION NEARNESS TO ALLAH. WHOEVER IS NOT GOOD IN THE COURTESY IS NOT FIT FOR NEARNESS.</p>	
<p>PROSTRATION IN PRAYER</p> <p>ALLAH MADE PROSTRATION THE OCCASION TO DRAW NEAR TO HIM IN ONE'S HEART, INNERMOST BEING AND SPIRIT. WHOEVER DRAWS NEAR TO HIM IS FAR FROM ALL THAT IS OTHER THAN HIM. DO YOU NOT SEE THAT IN ITS OUTWARD APPEARANCE THE STATE OF PROSTRATIONS IS NOT COMPLETE EXCEPT BY DISAPPEARING FROM ALL THINGS AND BEING VEILED FROM ALL THAT THE EYES SEE? THUS DOES ALLAH WANT THE INWARD BEING TO BE. IF SOMEONE'S HEART IS ATTACHED TO SOMETHING OTHER THAN ALLAH IN PRAYER, HE IS NEAR TO THAT THING, AND FAR FROM THE REALITY OF WHAT ALLAH DESIRES IN HIS PRAYER.</p>		<p>SALAM (PEACE)</p> <p>THE MEANING OF THE TASLIM (GREETING OF PEACE) AT THE END OF THE PRAYER MEANS SECURITY, THAT IS, ANYONE WHO CARRIES OUT THE COMMAND OF ALLAH AND THE SUNNAH OF HIS PROPHET OUT OF HUMILITY TO HIM AND SHOWING FEAR, HAS SECURITY FROM THE TRIBULATIONS OF THIS WORLD AND FREEDOM FROM THE PUNISHMENT OF THE NEXT WORLD. AL-SALAM (PEACE) IS ONE OF THE NAMES OF ALLAH, WHICH HE ENTRUSTED TO HIS CREATION SO THAT THEY WOULD MAKE USE OF IT IN THEIR BEHAVIOUR, TRUSTS AND CONTRACTS; IN CONFIRMING THEIR COMPANIES AND ASSEMBLIES; AND FOR THE SOUNDNESS OF THEIR SOCIAL RELATIONS.</p>	

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﴿فَاذْكُرُونِي أَذْكَرَكُم...﴾

So remember Me; I will remember you...

- Surah al-Baqarah, 2:152

Lesson 7

Hayá

Modesty, Chastity & Bashfulness

In Book 10 (Akhlāq Lesson 7) we studied modesty and chastity (*hayā*) extensively. This lesson is a review of the subject but it also discusses the opposite of *hayā*, which is *fuhsh* (shamelessness) from the perspective of hadith.

Hayā (Chastity and Modesty)

Wherever the word *hayā* occurs in the following ahādith, it means modesty, chastity and shamefulness (in the positive sense and as opposed to shamelessness).

1. Rasullāh (s), 'One who is not ashamed of Allāh in public will not be ashamed of Allāh in private.'
2. Rasullāh (s), 'A person should feel shame from the two angels with him as if he has two righteous neighbours who are with him night and day.'
3. Rasullāh (s), '*Hayā* has ten parts. Nine parts are in women and one in men.'
4. Rasullāh (s), 'Whenever there is indecency in something it makes it ugly. And whenever there is *hayā* in a thing – without exception – it makes it beautiful.'
5. Rasullāh (s), 'If *hayā* was a person, he would have been a virtuous one.'
6. Rasullāh (s), '*Hayā* is religion itself, all of it.'
7. Imām Ali ('a), 'The best clothing in this world is *hayā*.'
8. Imām Ali ('a), 'A lot of *hayā* in a person is proof of his or her faith (*imān*).'
9. Imām Ali ('a), 'Three things are not to be ashamed of: For a man to serve his guests (his ownself), to stand up in the midst of a gathering for one's father or teacher, and to seek a right (that belongs to a person) even if it is little.'
10. Imām Hasan ('a), 'One who has no religion has no shame (*hayā*).'
11. Imām al-Kādhim ('a), '*Hayā* is from faith (*imān*) and faith (*imān*) is in Jannah.'
12. Imām al-Kādhim ('a), 'Be ashamed of (disobeying) Allāh in your privacy as you are ashamed of people in public.'

Fuhsh (Shamelessness and Indecency)

Any form of shamelessness and indecency is called *fuhsh* or *fahshā* in Arabic. For example, Allāh tells us in the Qur'ān:

﴿الشَّيْطَانُ يَعِدُكُمُ الْفَقْرَ وَيَأْمُرُكُمْ بِالْفَحْشَاءِ وَاللَّهُ يَعِدُكُم مَّغْفِرَةً مِنْهُ وَفَضْلًا وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ﴾

Satan frightens you of poverty and prompts you to [commit] indecent acts (fahshā). But Allāh promises you His forgiveness and grace, and Allāh is all-bounteous, all-knowing.

- Surah al-Baqarah, 2:268

Fuhsh or *fahshā* can be of many kinds. When a person swears at others, is rude and indecent, dirty and vulgar in speech, that is *fuhsh* of speech. Similarly, adultery, pornography, masturbation, homosexuality, and all forms of permissiveness are all *fahshā* of the body. Some of these were discussed in detail in Book 10 (Akhlāq Lesson 7).

Fuhsh (shamelessness and indecency) is the result of giving in to lusts and vain desires (*hawā*) that in turn comes from love for the material world. When a person is in love with the world, their constant concern is how to enjoy more pleasure and they forget that Allāh is watching and recording their every thought and action.

Rasulullāh (s) said, 'If *fuhsh* was a person it would have been the worst of God's creatures.'

Rasulullāh (s) also said, 'Every *fāhish* (shameless person) is forbidden from entering Jannah.'

And Rasulullāh (s) said, 'The worst of people is one whom people avoid because out of fear for his *fuhsh*.'

Hawā (Vain Desires)

Every human being has desires. Desires in themselves are not bad provided they are channeled in healthy ways and controlled by one's intellect and faith (*imān*). This could be the desire to marry, the desire for food, the desire to succeed, and so on. But when desires control a person then he or she stops having a purposeful life. A person addicted to and driven by worldly desires and physical pleasures is like a runaway train. It only gets faster and worse until it falls apart, breaks up and destroys itself.

It is this uncontrolled desire that is called *hawā*. When a person is dominated by their *hawā*, then it takes the place of God i.e. a person becomes subservient and obedient to his or her desires and ‘worships’ them. This, Allāh confirms in the Qur’ān:

﴿أَفَرَأَيْتَ مَنْ اتَّخَذَ إِلَهَهُ هَوَاهُ وَأَضَلَّهُ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ عِلْمٍ وَخَتَمَ عَلَىٰ سَمْعِهِ وَقَلْبِهِ وَجَعَلَ
عَلَىٰ بَصَرِهِ غِشَاوَةً فَمَنْ يَهْدِيهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ اللَّهِ أَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُونَ﴾

Have you seen him who has taken his desire (hawā) to be his god and whom Allāh has led astray knowing (him to be such), and set a seal upon his hearing and his heart, and put a blindfold on his sight? So who will guide him after Allāh? Will you not then take admonition?

- Surah Jāthiya, 45:23

In the time of Nabi Musa (‘a) there lived a man called Bal’am b. Bā’ura. He was a man of tremendous religious knowledge. He commanded utmost respect and was regarded as being very spiritual. But because he couldn’t fight his desire for the world and its pleasures, in the end, he gave up his faith and turned to his desire. And once he did that, there was no limit at which he stopped. He sold his hereafter completely for this world. Allāh tells us the exact reason why he fell from such a high level of piety to the fire of Hell:

﴿وَلَوْ شِئْنَا لَرَفَعْنَاهُ بِهَا وَلَكِنَّهُ أَخْلَدَ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ وَاتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ فَمَثَلُهُ كَمَثَلِ الْكَلْبِ إِنْ
تَحْمِلُ عَلَيْهِ يَلْهَثُ أَوْ تَتْرُكُهُ يَلْهَثُ ذَلِكَ مَثَلُ الْقَوْمِ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا فَاقْصُصْ
الْقِصَصَ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ سَاءَ مَثَلًا الْقَوْمُ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا وَأَنْفُسُهُمْ كَانُوا
يَظْلِمُونَ﴾

Had We wished, We would have surely raised him by their means, but he clung to the earth and followed his [base] desires (hawā). So his parable is that of a dog: if you make for it, it lolls out its tongue, and if you let it alone, it lolls out its tongue. Such is the parable of the people who deny Our signs. So recount these narratives, so that they may reflect. Evil is the parable of the people who deny Our signs and wrong themselves.

- Surah al-A’rāf, 7:176-177

This teaches us that knowledge is only a *means* to show us how to struggle against our souls. In itself, having religious knowledge does not make us pure or perfect. In contrast to this, those who strive against their desires until they overcome and tame them (because of practising the knowledge they have) are promised paradise:

﴿وَأَمَّا مَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهِ وَنَهَى النَّفْسَ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ فَإِنَّ الْجَنَّةَ هِيَ الْمَأْوَىٰ﴾

But as for him who is awed to stand before his Lord and forbids the soul from [following] desire (hawā), his refuge will indeed be paradise.

- Surah an-Nāzi'āt, 79:40-41

It may at times frighten us to think that we may fail or give in to our desires at the last moments of our lives. How do we prevent this? The Qur'ān hints at the answer:

﴿كَلَّا إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَيْطَغَىٰ أَنْ رَأَاهُ اسْتَغْنَىٰ﴾

Indeed man becomes rebellious when he sees himself without need.

- Surah al-'Alaq, 96:6-7

In other words, when we forget that whatever good we see in ourselves is from Allāh and that we are constantly in need of His help and support, then we stop holding on to Allāh's rope, and pride takes over. Now we begin to imagine that it is by our own effort that we are good and we rely on our strength thinking, "it's up to me" to become perfect.

Only those succeed to Jannah who remain humble and sincere and constantly beg Allāh not to let go of them or to leave them alone, throughout their lives. They constantly thank Allāh for any good that He does *through* them but attribute it all back to Allāh and are therefore always in awe, fear and love of Allāh. This state of surrendered love to Allāh and constant Godconsciousness (*taqwa*) is the only shield and protection from the ego and shaytān, and therefore from *hawā*.

Ahādith on Hawā

Rasulullāh (s), 'Blessed is a person who gives up his present lusts for a promise in the future that he has not seen.'

Rasulullāh (s), 'The bravest of people is one who overcomes his or her vain desires.'

Imām Ali ('a), 'Jannah is surrounded with unpleasantries while Hellfire is ringed with lusts and desires.'

Imām Ali ('a), 'Stop yourself from giving in to lusts, you will save yourself from ruin.'

Imām Ali ('a), 'Know that anything that involves obedience to Allāh you will find a dislike for it (because of the self or ego) and anything that involves disobeying Allāh you will it desireful.'

Imām Ali ('a), 'An ignorant person (*jāhil*) is a slave of his or her desires.'

Imām Ali ('a), 'The foundation of religion is to oppose your vain desires.'

Imām Ali (‘a), ‘It is forbidden on every intellect that is shackled with lusts to benefit from wisdom.’ And also, ‘Overcome your lusts and your wisdom will be perfected.’

Imām Ali (‘a), ‘Blessed is one who overcomes his self and it does not overcome him and he controls his desires and is not controlled by them.’

Imām as-Sādiq (‘a) was asked, ‘what is the path to comfort?’ and he replied, ‘Opposing vain desires.’ So he was asked, ‘When then does a servant of Allāh get to rest?’ and he said, ‘The very first day he enters Jannah.’

Giving up lusts is therefore the best form of worship (and the best strategy to break away from addictions) and one who wants the permanent abode must turn away from vain desires and lusts.