



IMAMIA  
SUNDAY  
SCHOOL



SIRAAT

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Class: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

BOOK : 6

AGES: 10 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). <b>11 Dhu al qa'dah Birthday of 8th Imam, Hazrat Imam Reza a.s.</b>
2	09/22/13	Dhu al Qa'dah 16		
3	09/29/13	Dhu al Qa'dah 22		<b>25 Dhu al qa'dah Birthday of Hazrat Ibrahim (AS) and Hazrat Eesaa (AS)</b>
4	10/06/13	Dhu al Qa'dah 30		<b>1 Dhu al Hijjah Wedding of Imam Ali (AS) and Syedda Fatima Zehra (SA)</b>
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		<b>15 Dhu al Hijjah Birthday of 10th Imam, Hazrat Imam Ali un Naqi a.s / 18 Dhu al Hijjah EID e Ghadeer</b>
7	10/27/13	Dhu al Hijjah 21		<b>24 Dhu al Hijjah Eid e Mubahila</b>
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	<b>HOLIDAY</b>	<b>Thanksgiving Weekend/25 Muharram Martyrdom of 4th Imam, Hazrat Imam Zainul Abedin (AS).</b>
13	12/08/13	Safar 4		<b>7 Safar Birthday of 7th Imam Mossa Kazim (AS)</b>
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 <sup>th</sup> ) of Shuhada of Kerbala
16	12/29/13	Safar 25		<b>Safar 28-Martyrdom Prophet Muhammad SAW &amp; 2nd Imam; Safar 29-Martyrdom 8th Imam Ali al Ridha AS</b>
17	01/05/14	Rabi' al Awwal 3	<b>MID TERM</b>	4 Rabi' al Awwal -Wafat: Masooma-e-Qum (SA)
18	01/12/14	Rabi' al Awwal 10	<b>MID TERM</b>	<b>9 Rabi' al Awwal -Eid e Zehra (S.A.)</b>
19	01/19/14	Rabi' al Awwal 17		<b>17 Rabi' al Awwal - Prophet Muhammad SAW &amp; 6th Imam Jaffer as Sadiq AS / 18 Rabi' al Awwal - Birthday Syedda Umme Kulsoom bint Ali (AS)</b>
20	01/26/14	Rabi' al Awwal 24	<b>PARENTS DAY</b>	<b>Parents - Teachers Meeting</b>
21	02/02/14	Rabi' at Thaani 1		
22	02/09/14	Rabi' at Thaani 8		<b>10 Rabi' at Thaani - Birthday 11th Imam Hassan al Askari AS</b>
23	02/16/14	Rabi' at Thaani 15	<b>HOLIDAY</b>	<b>Presidents Day</b>
24	02/23/14	Rabi' at Thaani 22		
25	03/02/14	Rabi' at Thaani 29		
26	03/09/14	Jamaada al Ula 7		<b>5 Jamaada al Ula - Birthday Sayyida Zainab AS</b>
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		<b>15 Jamaada al Ula - Birthday Hazrat Imam Zainul Abedin (AS).</b>
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		<b>20 Jamaada al Thaani - Birthday Sayyida Fatima Zehra S.A.</b>
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		<b>1st Rajab - Birthday 5th Imam Ali un Naqi (A.S.) Mohammad Baqir (AS)</b>
35	05/11/14	Rajab 11	<b>FINALS</b>	<b>13th Rajab - Birthday 10th Imam Mohammad Taqi (A.S.)</b>
36	05/18/14	Rajab 18	<b>FINALS</b>	
37	05/25/14	Rajab 25	<b>HOLIDAY</b>	<b>Memorial Day Holiday</b>
38	06/01/14	Shaban 2	<b>RESULTS</b>	<b>RESULTS/GRADUATION PICNIC</b>









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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 their 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  
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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.
- Br. Hasnain Abdulaziz : For all the original artwork produced specifically for the ISSC West Madrasah, including the creation of the Yusuf and Amina characters (and their family members!). Also for the design of all cover pages and ongoing help with other artwork.
- Hujjat Madrasah : Whose Madrasah resources continue to be a valuable resource for many madāris around the world. Ideas and some minimal content has been taken from their website: <http://www.hujjat-workshop.org/>
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- All ISSC West Madrasah teachers and volunteers : For their support, review of new content, and ongoing help in the development of lesson plans, worksheets, and so forth.

## 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, subhānahu wa ta`āla, 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

BISMILLĀHI-RRAḤMĀNI-RRAḤĪM..

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

اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِ مُحَمَّدٍ

ALLĀHUMMA ṢALLI `ALĀ MUḤAMMADIN WA ĀLI MUḤAMMAD  
*O Allāh, send your blessings on Muḥammad and his household*

اللَّهُمَّ أَخْرِجْنِي مِنْ ظُلُمَاتِ الْوَهْمِ

ALLĀHUMMA AKHRIJNĪ MIN DHULUMĀTIL WAHM  
*O Allāh, remove me from the darkness of ignorance*

وَ أَكْرَمْنِي بِنُورِ الْفَهْمِ

WA AKRIMNĪ BINŪRIL FAHM  
*And favour me with the light of understanding*

اللَّهُمَّ افْتَحْ عَلَيْنَا أَبْوَابَ رَحْمَتِكَ

ALLĀHUMMA-FTAḤ 'ALAYNĀ ABWĀBA RAḤMATIK  
*O Allāh, open for us the doors of Your mercy*

وَ انشُرْ عَلَيْنَا خَزَائِنَ عُلُومِكَ

WANSHUR 'ALAYNĀ KHAZĀINA `ULŪMIK  
*And unfold for us the treasures of Your knowledge*

بِرَحْمَتِكَ يَا أَرْحَمَ الرَّاحِمِينَ

BIRAḤMATIKA YA ARḤAMA-RRĀḤIMĪN  
*By Your mercy, O the most Merciful of the Merciful*

اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَ آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ

ALLĀHUMMA ṢALLI `ALĀ MUḤAMMADIN WA ĀLI MUḤAMMAD  
*O Allāh, send your blessings on Muḥammad and his household*

# Syllabus for Book 6

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	TAWHID – Sifat Thubutiya and Salbiya – revision [●]	Terminology: Types of wājib acts ('ayni, fawri, takhyiri, kifai) [●] - Revision on Najāsah: how to make tahir the mutanajis, using water - Washroom Fiqh Rules (etiquette covered under Akhlāq)
2	ADALAH – Allah’s actions based on wisdom – why do people suffer?	Rules of Qibla - how to locate qibla - when not to face qibla
3	NUBUWWAH – Concept of miracles - Differences between mu’jiza and magic - Types of miracles of anbiya	Salāt of a Musafir (traveller) – Qasr [●] - praying in a moving vehicle
4	NUBUWWAH – Difference between Rasul & Nabi – why do we need Anbiya?	SAWM - moon sighting - mubtilat of sawm [●] - conditions for travellers
5	IMAMAH – Why do we need Imams? Qualities of an Imam	FOOD & DRINKS - halal and haram
6	QIYAMAH – Barzakh – Questioning/Squeezing of the grave – Kirāman Kātibeen	GHUSL - sunnah (Friday) ghusl - method of performing ghusl [●]
7	QIYAMAH - Importance of Its Belief in Islam	Gender-specific: <b>Boys Class</b> - istibra - respect for women - <b>Girls Class</b> - signs of bulugh - wājib ghusl - haid & istihādha - basic info on how it affects salāh and sawm

Lesson	Tārikh	Akhlāq
1	QASAS AL-ANBIYA – Nabi Zakariya ('a) and Nabi Yahya ('a)	Dressing & Sleeping Etiquette
2	QASAS AL-ANBIYA – Nabi Isa ('a) & Sayyida Maryam ('a)	Volunteering & Helping Others
3	SIRAH – The first Muslims and their persecution – Ammār Yāsir and his parents - Migration to Abyssinia - Sanctions against the Banu Hāshim	<i>Exercise on Help Others</i>
4	SIRAH – The year of Sorrow (Aamul Huzn) – Proof of Abu Tālib being a Muslim - Journey to Tāif	Wastage (isrāf) & Extravagance
5	AIMMAH – Imam Ali b. Musa ar-Rida ('a)	Rights of Parents
6	AIMMAH – Muhammad b. Ali al-Jawād ('a)	Forgiving Others
7	AIMMAH – Ali b. Muhammad al-Hādī ('a)	Controlling one's anger. Avoiding rudeness and foul language

## Objectives for Book 6

At the end of the year the student should:

### For Aqāid

- know all the sifat ath-thubutiyya and sifat as-salbiyya
- understand Islam's perspective on why people suffer and how it relates to God's justice and our freewill
- understand the definition of a miracle in Islam and how it differs from magic or sorcery
- understand the difference between a rasul and a nabi and why we need them
- understand the necessity of Imāms & their qualities
- understand the concept of barzakh, questioning in the grave and the noble scribes (kirām al-kātibin)

### For Fiqh

- (a) know the difference between various types of wājib acts
- (b) understand how a thing becomes najis and how/when it can be made tāhir again
- (c) know the rules regarding to the use of the washroom
- (d) know the rules regarding qibla
- (e) know the rules regarding salāt al-qasr
- (f) know the mubtilāt of sawm and how travelling affects a fast
- (g) know the definition of halāl and harām as it relates to food and drinks
- (h) know how to perform ghusl of jumu'ah

### For the gender specific class:

- (i) in the girls class know the signs of bulugh, the need for a wājib ghusl during haid and istihādha, and basic information on how haid and istihādha affect salāh and sawm
- (j) in the boys class know the rules of istibra, and basic laws regarding girls such as their being bāligh sooner, gender-mixing laws, respect for women and that girls who are bāligh do not pray/fast at certain times of the month

### For Tārikh

- (a) know brief history of Nabi Zakariya, Nabi Yahya, Nabi 'Isa and Sayyida Maryam, peace be on them
- (b) appreciate the struggles of the first Muslims, their persecution and Rasulullāh (s)'s suffering in Tāif and his losses in the Year of Sorrow
- (c) know the brief biography of the 8th - 10th Imāms ('a)

### For Akhlāq

- (a) know the Islamic etiquette for dressing and sleeping
- (b) know the importance of volunteering and helping others
- (c) know the importance of not being wasteful
- (d) understand the rights of parents in Islam
- (e) know the importance of preferring to forgive others instead of being revengeful
- (f) know the importance of controlling one's anger and not being rude to others





# **Aqáid** **(Beliefs)**



# Lesson 1

## Sifāt ath-Thubutiyya & Sifāt as-Salbiyya

In Book 5 we studied some of the attributes of Allāh (sifāt ath-Thubutiyya) and some of the qualities that cannot be attributed to Allāh (Sifāt as-Salbiyya). In this lesson, we will review them again as a revision. You should now memorize all these Sifāt and if you do not understand any of them, you should review Aqāid Lessons 2 & 3 in Book 5.

### Sifāt ath-Thubutiyya

	<u>What It Means</u>
1. Al-Qadeem	<b>Allāh is Eternal</b>
2. Al-Qādir	<b>Allāh is All-Powerful</b>
3. Al-Aalim	<b>Allāh is All-Knowing</b>
4. Al-Hayy	<b>Allāh is Ever-Living</b>
5. Al-Mureed	<b>Allāh does as He pleases</b>
6. Al-Mudrik	<b>Allāh is All-Aware</b>
7. Al-Mutakallim	<b>Allāh is the Master of Speech</b>
8. As-Sādiq	<b>Allāh is always Truthful</b>

### Sifāt as-Salbiyya

	<u>What It Means</u>
1. Shareek	<b>Allāh has no partner</b>
2. Murakkab	<b>Allāh is not made up of anything</b>
3. Makān	<b>Allāh is not in any fixed place</b>
4. Hulool	<b>Incarnation of Allāh is impossible</b>
5. Mahal al-Hawādith	<b>Allāh is not subject to change</b>
6. Mar'i	<b>Allāh is not visible</b>
7. Ihtiyāj	<b>Allāh has no need</b>
8. Sifat az-Zāid	<b>Allāh's Sifāt are not additional to Him</b>

## Lesson 2

### 'Adālah

Al-'Adālah refers to the Justice of Allāh. All Muslims believe that Allāh is just and fair. However most Sunni Muslims believe that when we say 'whatever Allāh does is just and fair' it means even if Allāh decides to punish the good and reward the evil, that is just and fair because He is our Creator and He can do as He pleases. The Shi'ah Muslims however do not believe this.

The Shi'ah Muslims follow the family (Ahl al-Bayt) of Rasulullāh (s) who taught that whatever Allāh does is fair and just *according to our human understanding of justice and fairness* even if at present we don't understand the reason(s) behind Allāh's actions. In other words, we must always believe that there is wisdom behind all actions of Allāh and that Allāh does not act without purpose. That is why Allāh will judge all people on the Day of Judgement in a manner they understand i.e. with witnesses and the weighing of deeds.

Allāh also tells us to be fair and just to others. It would be hard for people to believe Allāh is Just if He says, 'you have to be fair and just but I can do as I please'. Also, Allāh tells us never to lie and He also tells us in the Qur'ān that He never lies. So if Allāh has promised to reward the good and punish the evil, it is not possible that Allāh would break His promise, even though He is All-Powerful and no one can stop Him from doing as He pleases.

In other words, according to the Imāms from the Ahl al-Bayt ('a), if we see something that seems to be unfair, instead of assuming Allāh is doing as He pleases, we must assume that there is some wisdom and a very good reason for this that Allāh knows but we do not know or understand.

This of course doesn't mean Allāh cannot do as He pleases. However there is a big difference between what Allāh *can* do and what Allāh *will* do, just as there is a lot of difference between what you can do and what you actually do as an intelligent and responsible human being.

## Allāh's Actions Based on Wisdom

Here is a story to explain this:

Once upon a time, there lived a jeweller and a thief in the same town. One day, the thief decided he would rob the jeweller.

One the first day, it snowed heavily. The thief decided not to go to the jeweller because it would be hard to escape with all the snow. The jeweller however had no customers that day because of the snow and he was very upset. Of course if the thief had showed up, it would be very easy to rob the jeweller because he was all alone.

The next day, the jeweller was going to work when his car broke down. The thief had set out to rob him but when he got there, the place was shut so he went back home.

On the third day, it rained heavily and the thief fell ill and he had to go to a doctor. The thief began thinking perhaps Allāh was trying to tell him something. So he decided he would not steal again.

In the meantime, the jeweller had no customers for three days and kept wondering why Allāh is not helping him earn his livelihood.

From their individual, human perspective, each person was upset because they couldn't get the profit they wanted. But only Allāh knew how they were affecting each other's lives and how, if they knew the future, they would actually be very grateful to Allāh.



Jeweller



Thief

## Why Allāh can Never be Unjust

The Shi'ah, who follow the teachings of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) insist that even though Allāh has the power to do as He pleases, He never acts unjustly and He is never unfair to any of His creatures. Usually when people act unfairly, there is a reason for it. Some of the reasons for being unjust and unfair are:

- a) Ignorance: sometimes people don't know that what they are doing is unjust. They may even be unjust as a parent or a judge or a police officer. But being unjust out of ignorance cannot apply to Allāh because He knows everything (He is al-Aalimu).
- b) Need and Greed: sometimes people need something desperately or are greedy for it and they cannot get it easily so they decide to take it by force even if it means being unjust to others. Allāh however has no need for anything and He is never desperate. To Him belongs everything in the heavens and in the earth. He is needless (al-Ghaniyyu).
- c) Force: some people may be forced to act unjustly. A tyrant ruler may force his people to torture others or even force his army commanders and soldiers to invade another country. Of course the people being forced always have a choice to refuse but they may lack courage or feel they have no choice. Allāh however cannot be forced by anyone. He is All-Powerful (al-Qādiru).
- d) A person may be cruel and find it amusing and may act unjustly only for 'fun'. But Allāh is All-Wise (al-Hākimu). None of His actions are done without purpose or in vain.

Any reason you can think of why someone would be unjust or unfair, does not apply to Allāh. Allāh also has no negative attributes like selfishness, meanness, lying or breaking promises, and so on. And He promises in the Qur'ān to reward the good and punish the evil and He also says:

﴿... وَعَدَ اللَّهُ لَا يُخْلِفُ اللَّهُ الْمِيعَادَ﴾

*...a promise of Allāh. Allāh does not break His promise.*

- Surah az-Zumar, 39:20

﴿...وَعَدَ اللَّهُ حَقًّا وَمَنْ أَصْدَقُ مِنَ اللَّهِ قِيلًا﴾

*...a true promise of Allāh, and who is truer in speech than Allāh?*

- Surah an-Nisā, 4:122

## The Qur'ān on 'Adālah

Many verses of the Qur'ān talk about the justice of Allāh. Here are some:

﴿إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَظْلِمُ النَّاسَ شَيْئًا وَلَكِنَّ النَّاسَ أَنفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ﴾

*Indeed Allāh does not wrong people in the least; rather, it is people who wrong themselves.*

- Surah Yunus, 10:44

This means some of the injustices we see happening all around us comes from people who deny others their rights. If we see poverty around us, it is because of the rich who don't give charity, khums and zakāh or because of those who charge interest to others. If we see ignorance in people it is often because others do not give them a chance to educate themselves.

Allāh also says in the Qur'ān:

﴿إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَظْلِمُ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ وَإِنْ تَكَنْ حَسَنَةً يُضَاعِفْهَا وَيُؤْتِ مِنْ لَدُنْهُ أَجْرًا

عَظِيمًا﴾

*Indeed Allāh does not wrong [anyone] [even to the extent of] an atom's weight, and if it be a good deed He doubles it[s reward], and gives from Himself a great reward.*

- Surah an-Nisā, 4:40

﴿وَنَضَعُ الْمَوَازِينَ الْقِسْطَ لِيَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ فَلَا تُظْلَمُ نَفْسٌ شَيْئًا وَإِنْ كَانَ مِثْقَالَ حَبَّةٍ مِنْ

خَرْدَلٍ أَتَيْنَا بِهَا وَكَفَى بِنَا حَاسِبِينَ﴾

*We shall set up the scales of justice on the Day of Resurrection, and no soul will be wronged in the least. Even if it be the weight of a mustard seed We shall produce it and We suffice as reckoners.*

- Surah an-Anbiyā, 21:47



Even though Allāh does not need a scale or balance, He says He will do this because it is what humans are used to; so it will be used to show them that no one will be punished unjustly.

## Why Evil and Suffering Exist in the World

The most common argument against the justice of Allāh is the constant tragedies and suffering that occur in the world. If Allāh is just, kind and loving, why does He let this happen and why doesn't He stop them from happening?

There are several reasons why suffering exists in this world and why even the good and innocent suffer:

1. Suffering caused by Cause and Effect. Our world runs on a system of cause and effect. For example, there may be good reasons why an earthquake or volcanic eruption takes place and even benefits to these occurrences. But our limited knowledge makes us look at only the harm they cause. We don't see the bigger picture and how one event is linked to many other events. Another example would be death. It is a great tragedy for us when our loved ones die. But death is necessary for the world to continue and for others to come into existence and for humans to change and progress rapidly.
2. Suffering we cause ourselves. Allāh has given us freewill and intelligence. But sometimes, knowingly or unknowingly we make decisions that cause us harm. For example, we dress poorly and go out in the cold. Then we fall ill and suffer because of that decision. This is a suffering we caused ourselves. We may expect Allāh not to make the weather cold but that is because we are not thinking of others and how the cold weather helps animals and other creatures of Allāh, how it kills a lot of disease and prepares the earth and trees for Spring, how it affects the oceans and the mountains, and so on.
3. Suffering caused by others. Because of the freewill given to us by Allāh so that He may test us in this world, sometimes some people hurt others out of greed, fear or simply because of being cruel. They may deny others their rights or even inflict harm on them.

For example, out of greed for profit, they may destroy the environment, which in turn may cause a lot of disease and problems for others. Or out of greed for wealth and control, they may prevent medical advancements or cheaper medication from becoming available to others. Of course Allāh will punish the wrongdoers in the Hereafter but if He stops people from doing any wrong in this world then there would be no freewill and no test for anyone and it would never be known, who is good and who is bad, who helps the oppressed and who oppresses others, and so on. Allāh says in the Qur'ān:

﴿ظَهَرَ الْفَسَادُ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ أَيْدِي النَّاسِ لِيُذِيقَهُمْ بَعْضَ الَّذِي  
عَمِلُوا لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ﴾

*Corruption has appeared in land and sea because of the doings of the people's hands, that He may make them taste something of what they have done, so that they may come back.*

- Surah ar-Rum, 30:41

Imām Ali ('a) also once said, 'if you see a person starving, it is because some has taken his share (by not paying his khums or zakāh or giving charity).' This means Allāh has provided enough for everyone but some people take or withhold the rights of others.

4. Suffering builds character. When we win, we feel good but it doesn't make us better. When we suffer, especially through no fault of ours and after doing our best, it is an opportunity to become better. We always claim to love Allāh and have faith in Him. Suffering is a chance for us to show Allāh that we really love Him and have faith in Him and that we can prove what we claim. The real nature of hypocrites becomes known during suffering and afflictions. They start blaming Allāh and their words and actions show that they never actually had any faith in Allāh. People who never suffer are weak and shallow. They are only happy when things are going well for them. Suffering teaches people to be patient, to struggle and to become wise and humble. Instead of being selfish, they begin to help others who may also be suffering like themselves. Allāh says in the Qur'ān:

﴿...فَعَسَىٰ أَنْ تَكْرَهُوا شَيْئًا وَيَجْعَلَ اللَّهُ فِيهِ خَيْرًا كَثِيرًا﴾

*...maybe you dislike something while Allāh places in it an abundant good.*

- Surah an-Nisā, 4:19

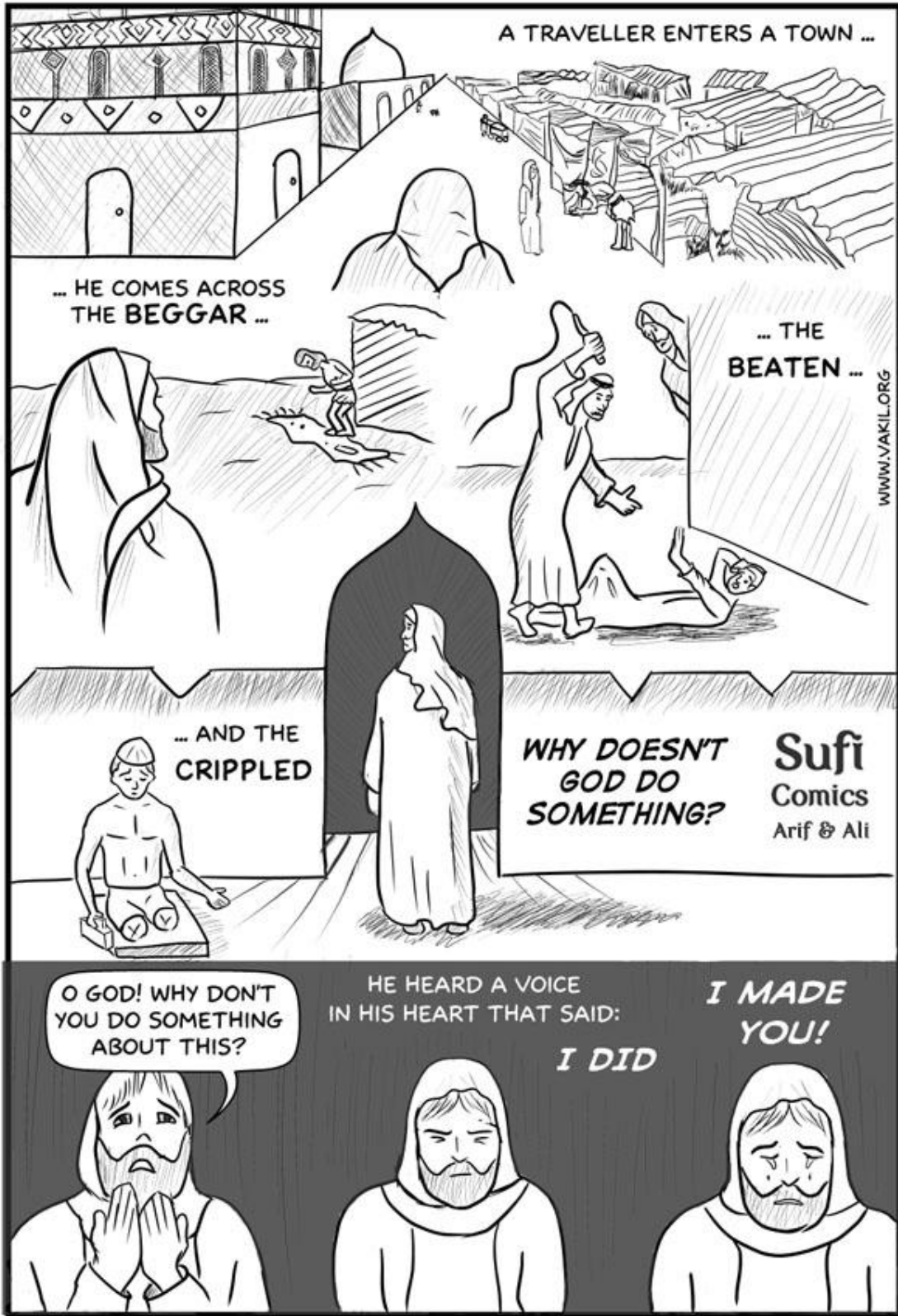
5. Suffering brings us closer to Allāh. When people enjoy a lot of ease and comfort, they forget Allāh and become lazy and heedless. They begin to think they are independent of Allāh and don't need Him. They may even become proud and arrogant. Allāh says in the Qur'ān:

﴿كَلَّا إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لِرَبِّهِ لَكَنَّاظٍ﴾

*Indeed man becomes rebellious when he considers himself without need.*

- Surah al-'Alaq, 96:6-7

Suffering reminds a *mu'min* or *mu'mina* that the world is a place of trial. It makes them turn to Allāh for help and brings them closer to Allāh. Suffering does not drive the faithful away from Allāh. It brings them closer because they begin to give even more importance to prayers and asking Allāh for help at all times. In many ahādith we are told that Allāh only tests those He loves and the more a person increases in faith, the greater his or her test in life will be. Imām Husayn ('a) once said, if three things were not there, people would not worship Allāh: helplessness, sickness and death.



## Lesson 3

# Miracles of the Prophets

### Concept of Miracles

A miracle is called *mu'jiza* in the Arabic language. *Mu'jiza* literally means 'that which people are unable to do.' So in Islamic terminology, a *mu'jiza* is an act that people are unable to do but Allāh shows it at the hands of someone He has chosen as proof of their being a prophet (Nabi), messenger (Rasul) or Imām appointed by Allāh.

A *mu'jiza* may appear either before or after the birth of a Nabi, Rasul or Imām; during his childhood or after his growing into an adult; either before the declaration of his Nubuwwah, Risālah or Imāmah or after such declaration or just at the time of such a claim, either in his life time or after his passing away; either on his body or in such things which have any connection with him like clothes, house or grave. It makes no difference whether that *mu'jiza* appears to be his own direct action or the action of Allāh.

In all such conditions, any action that proves the truth of the claim of nubuwwah, risālah or Imāmah is called a *mu'jiza*.

When we say that ordinary people are unable to perform a *mu'jiza* we mean they cannot perform it without external help. For example, doctors today may be able to cure the blind but only with the help of special equipment, medicine, research and so on. But Nabi Isa ('a) used to cure the blind only by praying for them or touching their eyes. This was a *mu'jiza* of Nabi 'Isa ('a) because no one could cure the blind in his time and even today, doctors cannot cure the blind in this manner. Some miracles cannot be imitated even with technology, science and research. For example, Rasulullāh (s) had many miracles but his greatest living *mu'jiza* is the Qur'ān, which can never be imitated.

The Qur'ān challenges anyone to try and imitate it and says no one can bring its like even if all the men and jinn came together. We will study more about the Qur'ān as a miracle in Book 7.

## Differences between Miracles (Mu'jiza) and Magic

It is known that many people like magicians, astrologers, hypnotists, etc. do perform many extraordinary feats and acts which common people are unable to perform, and which baffle even intelligent persons. So what is the difference between a mu'jiza and such extraordinary feats? How can we tell the difference?

There are several conditions for a mu'jiza that easily show the difference between a miracle and magic:

1. A mu'jiza occurs only to prove the truth of the claim of Nubuwwah, Risālah or Imāmah. Therefore, it is necessary that the person who shows the mu'jiza should be claiming either to be a prophet, messenger of Imām during his lifetime.
2. A mu'jiza does not happen by accident. The person showing the mu'jiza should also will for the mu'jiza to occur as proof of his claim.
3. A mu'jiza can never be surpassed by any other person's extraordinary feat. In other words, mu'jiza should always remain beyond the reach of the people of the time and should always remain unchallenged and undefeated. If a mu'jiza is real, no magic can overcome it.
4. The religion that the person claims to bring from Allāh must be sensible according to the views of the right thinking people of his time based on perfection and intelligence.
5. The person performing the mu'jiza must himself practice and obey the rules of that religion himself.
6. The ethical, moral and social life of the person who claims to show the mu'jiza must be beyond reproach, most perfect and most noble in the eyes of the right thinking people of his time.
7. His behaviour in private should not differ from that in public; his private life should be as blameless as his public life.
8. The challenge given in connection with that mu'jiza should not be limited to a time. It must remain a challenge during the entire period that the person's nubuwah, risālah or imāmah is supposed to continue.

## The Different Types of Miracles

Every Nabi, Rasul or Imām did not perform the same mu'jiza. It was necessary that the mu'jiza should be something that the people can relate to but also something that is beyond anyone in their time.

For example, in the days when people only travelled by horses and camels, if it took a person months to travel from one city to another and a person travelled the same distance in one day, we could see it was a miracle. But if someone did that today, it wouldn't be a miracle because anyone can travel that distance in a day using an airplane.

Since the purpose of a mu'jiza is to convince the people that such a thing could not occur without the authority of Allāh, it was also essential that a mu'jiza should supersede every branch of knowledge or expertise which was the most advanced in the time of a Nabi, Rasul or Imām. Otherwise, the learned people would not be convinced.

To convince people that a mu'jiza was genuine, Allāh always gave such powers or miracles to His representatives that even the experts of that era could easily judge and be a witness that the claim of the mu'jiza was genuine and that it was impossible for a man to make up such things himself.

For example, in the days of Nabi Musa ('a), the magicians were very powerful and advanced in their skills. They could make people believe that pieces of ropes were snakes. So Allāh gave Nabi Musa ('a) the ability to change his walking stick into a huge serpent that was real and could even swallow the sticks and ropes of the magicians.

In the days of Nabi 'Isa ('a), medicine was very advanced but the physicians had no cure for blindness and leprosy. So Allāh gave Nabi 'Isa ('a) the miracle of curing lepers without medicine, giving eyesight to those who were born blind and even the ability to bring the dead back to life.

During the time of Rasulullāh (s), the Arabs were very proud of their language. They would compose poetry of a very high standard without any previous preparation. They called non-Arabs 'Ajam' which means 'dumb'. They thought that non-Arabs were dumb in comparison to

themselves because of their language skills. Poets were held in high esteem. Seven odes were put on the walls of Ka'bah and were treated as sacred.

At that time, Allāh gave Rasulullāh (s) the miracle of the Qur'ān. It was quite separate from all the styles of their literature. It is neither poetry nor ordinary prose. And it so impressed the Arabs that when Surah al-Kawthar (the shortest surah of the Qur'ān) was put on the walls of the Ka'bah, the most renowned poet wrote under it "these are not the words of a human being". And the seven odes were promptly taken down.

Since Rasulullāh (s) was the final Messenger (Rasul) of Allāh, his miracle of the Qur'ān is still a living miracle even today. Over 1400 years later, no one has been able to find any contradictions in the Qur'ān or to imitate and produce anything like it.



# Lesson 4

## Rusul & Anbiyā

### The Difference between Rasul and Nabi

Allāh sent 124,000 anbiyā (singular: nabi) to guide mankind. The first Nabi was Nabi Adam (‘a) who was also the first man. The last Nabi was Rasulullāh Muhammad (s).

Every Rasul (Messenger) is also a Nabi (Prophet). But every Nabi is not necessarily a Rasul. The plural of Rasul is Rusul and the plural of Nabi is Anbiyā.

A Rasul brings a special message from Allāh with changes in the laws of practice (*shari’ah*) whereas a Nabi who is not a Rasul simply follows the Book brought by the previous Rasul and reminds people of the laws (*shari’ah*) taught by the previous Rasul. Of course the main message of all the Anbiyā and Rusul was the same: the message of Tawhid, that there is no god but Allāh and none should be worshipped but Allāh.

A Rasul therefore holds a higher rank than a Nabi. Five of these Rusul who hold a special status and are also called the five Ulil ‘Azm (People of Determination) Prophets are:

1. Nabi Nuh (‘a)
2. Nabi Ibrāhim (‘a)
3. Nabi Musa (‘a)
4. Nabi ‘Isa (‘a)
5. Nabi Muhammad (s)

Many Anbiyā and Rusul received books or scrolls of instructions from Allāh. Four of these divine scriptures are mentioned in the Qur’ān by name:

1. Tawrāt. This was revealed by Allāh to Nabi Musa (‘a)
2. Zabur. This was revealed by Allāh to Nabi Dāwud (‘a)
3. Injil. This was revealed by Allāh to Nabi ‘Isa (‘a)
4. Qur’ān. This was revealed by Allāh to Rasulullāh (s)

The Qur'ān also mentions other scriptures but does not give their names. For example, the scripture of Nabi Ibrāhim ('a):

﴿صُحُفَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَمُوسَى﴾

*The scriptures of Ibrāhim and Musa.*

- Surah al-'Ala, 87:19

## Sent to Different Nations and Times

Allāh sent 124,000 anbiyā to different tribes and communities in the world. Each Nabi was sent to his own people so that he could talk to them in their own language and relate to their culture and way of life.

It was important that Allāh should send anbiyā to every major community in the world so that no group of people can say on the Day of Judgement that they were not warned. Allāh says this in the Qur'ān:

﴿وَمَا كَانَ رَبُّكَ مُهْلِكَ الْقُرَىٰ حَتَّىٰ يَبْعَثَ فِي أُمِّهَا رَسُولًا يَتْلُوا عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِنَا وَمَا كُنَّا مُهْلِكِي الْقُرَىٰ إِلَّا وَأَهْلُهَا ظَالِمُونَ﴾

*Your Lord would not destroy the towns until He had raised a messenger in their mother city to recite to them Our signs. We would never destroy the towns except when their people were wrongdoers.*

- Surah al-Qasas, 28:59

When Allāh sent the final Messenger, Rasulullāh (s), even though he initially preached to the Arabs in and around Makkah, Allāh sent him for the whole of mankind. That is why Allāh says to Rasulullāh (s) in the Qur'ān:

﴿وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً لِّلْعَالَمِينَ﴾

*We did not send you but as a mercy to all the nations.*

- Surah al-Anbiyā, 21:107

One of the reasons why Rasulullāh (s) was called 'a mercy' is because after his coming, Allāh does not instantly punish people for their disobedience and wrongdoings. In past, as soon as people disobeyed

Allāh stubbornly, they would be warned by the Nabi of their time and then punished by Allāh if they refused to repent. For example, the people of Nabi Nuh (‘a) were drowned in a flood for their sins. Similarly, the people of Nabi Hud (‘a), Nabi Sālih (‘a), and Nabi Lut (‘a) were all destroyed because of their sins.

## Why do we need Anbiyā?

The Anbiyā and Rusul, *alayhim as-salām* (peace be on them all) are like a bridge between us and Allāh.

Allāh talks to the Anbiyā and Rusul in one of three ways:

1. Directly e.g. with Nabi Musa (‘a) (who was called Kalimullah – one who speaks with God directly).
2. Through a dream e.g. with Nabi Ibrahim (‘a) (who dreamt Allāh was commanding him to sacrifice his own son Nabi Ismāil (‘a)).
3. Through the angel Jibrāil (‘a) e.g. with Rasulullāh (s) and with all other anbiyā and rusul.

The anbiyā then tell people what Allāh has told them.

So the anbiyā are there to show us the right way and to guide us. Some people say human beings already know by their instinct what is good and bad, why do they need a nabi? But this is not always true. People understand good and bad depending on where they were born and the culture they were raised in. What some people believe to be good in China might be regarded as bad in America, and so on.

Secondly, let us take an example of a very intelligent person who wishes to become a surgeon. Even though he or she may be very intelligent, it would take him or her a very long time to realize and learn everything on his or her own. However with a teacher, he or she can benefit from the experience and knowledge of others and can quickly learn everything he or she needs to know and then teach others. Similarly, even if we are ‘good at heart’, the teachings of Nabi guide us along the shortest and fastest path to success so that we don’t have to learn by constantly making mistakes. Furthermore, there are matters related to the Hereafter, such as the Day of Judgement, Paradise and Hellfire, that we

cannot see or know about unless a Nabi who is given hidden knowledge by Allāh tells us about them and how to prepare for them.

In the past, some people used to refuse to follow and obey a Nabi because they said, ‘how can he be a prophet of Allāh when he is just like us? Why doesn’t Allāh send an angel from the heavens so we can know he is really a prophet?’

But Allāh wanted the anbiyā and rusul to be human like us and to feel pain and pleasure like we do so that we can see how they live and not feel it is impossible to imitate them. It would not be possible for a nabi or rasul to be a role model for us if they were angels or non-human.

Allāh mentions this in the Qur’ān as well:

﴿وَقَالُوا مَا لِهَذَا الرَّسُولِ يَأْكُلُ الطَّعَامَ وَيَمْشِي فِي الْأَسْوَاقِ لَوْلَا أَنْزَلَ إِلَيْهِ مَلَكٌ  
فَيَكُونُ مَعَهُ نَذِيرًا﴾

*And they say, ‘What sort of a messenger is this who eats food and walks in the marketplaces? Why has not an angel been sent down to him so as to be a warner along with him?’*

- Surah al-Furqān, 25:7

﴿وَلَوْ نَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكَ كِتَابًا فِي قِرْطَاسٍ فَلَمَسُوهُ بِأَيْدِيهِمْ لَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِنَّ هَذَا إِلَّا  
سِحْرٌ مُّبِينٌ . وَقَالُوا لَوْلَا أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْهِ مَلَكٌ وَلَوْ أَنْزَلْنَا مَلَكًا لَقُضِيَ الْأَمْرُ ثُمَّ لَا يُنظَرُونَ .  
وَلَوْ جَعَلْنَاهُ مَلَكًا لَجَعَلْنَاهُ رَجُلًا...﴾

*Had We sent down to you a Book on paper so they could touch it with their [own] hands, [still] the faithless would have said, ‘This is nothing but plain magic.’ And they say, ‘Why has not an angel been sent down to him?’ Were We to send down an angel, the matter would surely be decided, and then they would not be granted any respite. And had We made him (i.e. the messenger) an angel, We would have surely made him a man...*

- Surah al-An’ām, 6:7-9

Even though the anbiyā were human, but they were also special in many ways. For example:

- A Nabi is chosen by Allāh
- A Nabi can receive messages (revelation – called *wahy* in Arabic) from Allāh
- A Nabi is *ma'sum*, meaning they never commit sins
- A Nabi is able to perform miracles to prove his nubuwwah
- A Nabi is the most perfect person of his time in morals (*akhlāq*) and knowledge (*'ilm*)

In summary therefore, we need guidance from Allāh through messengers and prophets because:

1. Justice of Allāh: So that no one can complain on the Day of Judgement that they had no means of finding out the truth.
2. Grace of Allāh: Just as Allāh provides for our physical needs (air, food, warmth, family, etc.) out of His grace and kindness, similarly, He provides us with guidance because it is the need of our souls.
3. People forget or change the message brought by previous prophets. Therefore it becomes necessary to remind people through other prophets. The final message (Qur'ān) is protected by Allāh from any change:

﴿إِنَّا نَحْنُ نُزَكِّي الدِّكْرَ 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

4. We may know a little about the things in this world and perhaps we can guess how to behave or live in society but the real life is yet to come after death and that is hidden from us. Only someone who can communicate with Allāh (i.e. a prophet or messenger) can tell us about those realities. Without their guidance, we would never know what to expect and how to succeed in the Hereafter where we will live forever.

## A Short Story to Explain Nubuwwah

Two men were travelling together and became friends. When they reached their town, one of them invited the other to his house for dinner the next day.

However, he did not give him his address or phone number. His friend wanted to go to his house for dinner, but how could he? He did not know how to get there.



When Allāh created us, it was so that we should worship Him.

If Allāh had not appointed the Anbiyā ('a) to guide us, how would we have known what to do to please Him or how to come closer to Him?

It was because He wanted us to find Him that He sent so many Anbiyā ('a) to teach and guide us how to reach Allāh.

A Nabi or Rasul must therefore always be obeyed. A person who rejects a Nabi or Rasul disobeys Allāh:

﴿وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ رَّسُولٍ إِلَّا لِيُطَاعَ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ...﴾

*We did not send any messenger but to be obeyed by Allāh's permission....*

- Surah an-Nisā, 4:64

As homework, read the following verses (āyāt) of the Qur'ān:

- Surah al-Baqarah, 2:136
- Surah al-Baqarah, 2:285
- Surah Aal-i Imrān, 3:84

Can you see from these verses how Islam is different from all other religions in the world and how a Muslim believes in all Prophets and Books of Allāh?

## The Duties of a Nabi

1. To give people good news of Jannah (Paradise) and to warn them about Hellfire and to call people to Allāh:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ شَاهِدًا وَمُبَشِّرًا وَنَذِيرًا وَدَاعِيًا إِلَى اللَّهِ بِإِذْنِهِ  
وَسِرَاجًا مُنِيرًا﴾

*O Prophet! Indeed We have sent you as a witness, as a bearer of good news and as a warner and as a summoner to Allāh by His permission, and as a radiant lamp.*

- Surah al-Ahzāb, 33:45-46

2. To judge between people when they disagree so as to guide them:

﴿...فَبَعَثَ اللَّهُ النَّبِيِّينَ مُبَشِّرِينَ وَمُنذِرِينَ وَأَنْزَلَ مَعَهُمُ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ  
لِيَحْكُمَ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ فِي مَا اخْتَلَفُوا فِيهِ...﴾

*...then Allāh sent the prophets as bearers of good news and as warners, and He sent down with them the Book with the truth, that it may judge between the people concerning that about which they differed;*

- Surah al-Baqarah, 2:213

3. To purify the souls of people and give them wisdom:

﴿هُوَ الَّذِي بَعَثَ فِي الْأُمِّيِّينَ رَسُولًا مِنْهُمْ يَتْلُو عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ  
وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَإِنْ كَانُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ لَفِي ضَلَالٍ مُبِينٍ﴾

*It is He who sent to the unlettered [people] a messenger from among themselves, to recite to them His signs, to purify them, and to teach them the Book and wisdom, and earlier they had indeed been in manifest error.*

- Surah al-Jumu'ah, 62:2

4. To explain the laws of Allāh i.e. the *shari'ah*) so people do not go astray:

﴿... يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ أَنْ تَضِلُّوا وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ﴾

*Allāh explains [the laws] for you so you should not go astray, and Allāh has knowledge of all things.*

- Surah an-Nisā, 4:176

5. To establish justice in society by putting the laws into practice:

﴿لَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلَنَا بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَأَنْزَلْنَا مَعَهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْمِيزَانَ لِيَقُومَ النَّاسُ

بِالْقِسْطِ...﴾

*Certainly We sent Our messengers with manifest proofs, and We sent down with them the Book and the Balance, so that mankind may maintain justice;*

- Surah al-Hadid, 57:25

6. To teach and guide people so that they come out of darkness (falsehood) into light (truth):

﴿كِتَابٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ إِلَيْكَ لِتُخْرِجَ النَّاسَ مِنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِمْ...﴾

*[This is] a Book We have sent down to you that you may bring mankind out from darkness into light, by the permission of their Lord...*

- Surah Ibrāhim, 14:1

7. After telling people what Allāh has revealed, to explain and clarify the verses that have been revealed so that people can think about them and understand them better:

﴿... وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الذِّكْرَ لِتُبَيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ مَا نُزِّلَ إِلَيْهِمْ وَلَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ﴾

*We have sent down the reminder to you so that you may clarify for the people that which has been sent down to them, so that they may reflect.*

- Surah an-Nahl, 16:44



# Lesson 5

## Imámah

### Why do we need Imāms?

In Book 5 we already learnt about the meanings of ‘Imām’ and ‘Khalifa’ and we explained how an Imām is appointed by Allāh to lead and guide the Muslim ummah after Rasulullāh (s) by preserving the message of the Qur’ān and the teachings of Rasulullāh (s).

Many people question the need for an Imām. If a Nabi or Rasul has already brought all the laws of Allāh, what then is the need for more spiritual leaders? Cannot the Qur’ān and the ahādith and practices (*sunnah*) of Rasulullāh (s) be enough?

To answer this, we need to think about the following:

1. The Need for a Religious Guide. Although human beings are given a natural conscience to understand right from wrong and then given a Book from Allāh and the teachings of a Nabi, it is still possible for people to have different views about God and religion and to even fight about them, as we see today. If the Qur’ān and hadith is sufficient to remove all differences then why do we have so many sects in Islam today?

The only way to stop this disunity is to agree to follow one leader (Imām). It makes sense that the leader that everyone agrees to follow should be the most learned, the most just, the bravest and the most pious. It also makes sense that since Allāh has been sending Anbiyā and Rusul since He created human beings, that He would not suddenly leave humans on their own to find their own guidance. Instead, as part of His grace (*lutf*), He would ask His last Nabi to inform people whom to follow next after him and who their Imāms and guides should be.

The grace (*lutf*) of Allāh means the kindness and mercy of Allāh through which people get more than just the bare minimum so that they have a better chance of remaining on the right path. An Imām is a *lutf* of Allāh to give human beings the benefit of continuously having a guide who is guided by Allāh and who can

tell them the real interpretation of the Qur'ān in every age and era.

2. The Need for a Guardian of Islam. After a Nabi passes away and the religion he taught begins to spread to other countries and cultures and thousands of years pass, it is very easy for his original teachings and message to be lost. A lot of culture, superstitions and innovations are added to the original teachings. In fact this is exactly how the teachings of previous anbiyā before Rasulullāh (s) changed and why Allāh kept sending more prophets and messengers. Those who preach religion as scholars are sometimes unable to see what has changed from the original Islam. All this proves there is a need for an Imām who has a direct connection to the Qur'ān and the teachings of Rasulullāh (s) through previous Imāms and who has been given special knowledge from Allāh to understand the truth and to guide others to the original message.

Imām Ali ('a) said in a sermon (Nahj al-Balāgha Sermon 147) that the earth would never be without a person who is the proof of Allāh, whether he is known or hidden (in ghaybah), so that the Divine message is not lost forever. It is in fact impossible for the earth to exist without a representative of Allāh even for a twinkling of an eye, from the day Allāh put Nabi Adam ('a) on the earth until the day life on earth comes to an end.

3. The Need for a Political and Social Leader. For human beings to reach perfection, they need to live in a just and progressive society. For Muslims this nation or society is called the Muslim Ummah. An Ummah must be led by one who not only knows religion but also knows how to prevent social injustice and how to lead the people in political matters in accordance to the Will of Allāh. Of course the Muslims must deserve this by first recognizing such a just leader (Imām) and be willing to let him lead them.
4. The Need for a Proof of Allāh at all Times. An Imām is a Proof (Hujjah) of Allāh over His creatures. This means he serves as Allāh's 'Proof' against those who go astray so that they cannot complain to Allāh on the Day of Judgement they there was no one to guide them. It is however the duty of people to find who the Imām of their time is and not the other way around. The existence

of a Proof (Hujjah) only means that no one can have an excuse because Allāh has ensured there is always a guide from Him in the world at all times. Even when such a Proof is in ghaybah (i.e. not known by the public), his representatives guide people.

5. The Need for a Connector to Divine Grace. An Imām connects the society to Allāh through Rasulullāh (s) and his own special position. The existence of Rasulullāh (s) and the Imāms is like the existence of the heart that pumps blood throughout the body and keeps all the organs alive and healthy.

## Qualities of an Imām

We studied the qualities that an Imām must have in Book 5. We will now review this topic again but with some more explanation.

1. 'Ismah: Being free from sin and error. An Imām, like a Nabi or Rasul, must be *ma'sum* or free from sins. The Imām is a guide for others and people look to him for leading them to the right path. An Imām who commits sins is himself in need of guidance and cannot guide others. Allāh says in the Qur'ān:

﴿... أَفَمَنْ يَهْدِي إِلَى الْحَقِّ أَحَقُّ أَنْ يُتَّبَعَ أَمَّنْ لَا يَهْدِي إِلَّا أَنْ يُهْدَىٰ فَمَا لَكُمْ كَيْفَ تَحْكُمُونَ﴾

*Is He who guides to the truth worthier to be followed, or he who guides not unless he is [himself] guided? What is the matter with you? How do you judge?*

- Surah Yunus, 10:35

When we say an Imām is *ma'sum* we mean his conviction in Allāh and his constant awareness of Allāh is so great that he never even thinks or considers committing a sin. Ma'sum does not mean that he is not able to commit a sin or that Allāh is forcing him not to. It is just like the case of a sane intelligent person who would never consider drinking poison or harming himself physically. No one stops him but he knows how harmful it is. An Imām never sins because he knows and sees exactly how sin affects a person's soul

and a person's life in the Hereafter. What prevents a ma'sum from sin is his piety and awe before Allāh. This is so strong in him that he becomes sinless. It is also necessary that a person appointed by Allāh to guide others should not sin otherwise people would be confused about his actions and not know what to follow and what to ignore.

If an Imām sins, then it will be wājib on his followers to correct him and stop him. This means the Imām will have to follow and obey the people and they will disrespect him and hold him in contempt. Allāh condemns those who tell others to do good but don't do it themselves:

﴿تَأْمُرُونَ النَّاسَ بِالْبِرِّ وَتَنْسَوْنَ أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ تَتْلُونَ الْكِتَابَ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ﴾

*Do you command others to piety and forget yourselves, even though you recite the Book? Do you not think?*

- Surah al-Baqarah, 2:44

2. A'lam: Most Knowledgeable Person of his Time. An Imām must know the Qur'ān entirely. He must also know all the sciences of Islam and he should in fact be able to answer any question he is asked. If a person cannot answer a question or he needs to ask someone else, then he cannot be the Imām because people would need another Imām to answer the questions he cannot. One of the proofs that Imām Ali ('a) was the rightful successor of Rasulullāh (s) is that others asked him for advice and help with questions they couldn't answer but Imām Ali ('a) never asked anyone for answers after Rasulullāh (s).
3. Tafdil: Superior in All Good Qualities. The Imām must be the most excellent person of his time in all virtues like piety, bravery, justice, courage, generosity, etc. If there is anyone in his time who is superior to him in these qualities then it means he would be inferior to that person and the other person is more deserving to be the Imām. One who is inferior to others cannot be a leader to those superior to him.
4. Zuhd: Free from Love of the World. A person interested in worldly pleasure and attracted to it cannot be an Imām. Such a person will also be greedy to amass wealth and to gain power over others. He can then mislead others and even be unjust because of his interest

in the world and it will interfere with his mission. An Imām is free from such distractions. He cannot be tempted or influenced or even threatened by the world because the world has no value in his eyes. An Imām will never build palaces for himself. Instead his clothes, food, lifestyle will all be very simple and like that of the poorest of his followers.

5. Mu'jiza: Performance of miracle. An Imām should be able to perform miracles as proof that his Imāmah is from Allāh through Rasulullāh (s) and/or the previous Imām. This ensures that even if a person is very knowledgeable and claims to be sinless, he cannot claim to be the Imām without proving it through a miracle.
6. Nusus: Appointment by Allāh and His Messenger (s). An Imām cannot be chosen by the people or elected by a council or take over leadership by force. Allāh must appoint him either by asking Rasulullāh (s) to declare him as the Imām or the previous valid Imām appoints him as his successor. This designation is called *nass* (plural: *nusus*) and ensures a continuous chain of appointment from Allāh.

# Lesson 6

## Death & Barzakh

### Barzakh

In Book 5 we learnt about the importance of death and the necessity of the Day of Judgement. However, when people die, there is another world they must live in until the Day of Judgement. This middle world is called Barzakh.

The world of Barzakh is on the earth as well but those of us who are still alive in our physical bodies cannot see it.

For some people, when they die and go to the world of Barzakh, their souls only lie asleep until the Day of Judgement. This may be for example people who were mentally handicapped or people who were good but never really knew about Islam or followed the truth. Allāh will judge their case on the Day of Judgement.

For those who knew the truth about Islam and were either very good or very evil, the first thing that happens in Barzakh is the Questioning in the Grave.

### Questioning and Squeezing of the Grave

As soon as a person dies and is buried and people leave the cemetery, two angels called Munkar and Nakir come to the soul of the person who has just been buried and start questioning him or her. This happens in the world of Barzakh so those still alive in this world cannot see what is happening.

The questions that Munkar and Nakir ask are for example, 'who is your Lord? What is your religion? Who is your Nabi? What is your Book? What is your Qibla? Who is your Imām?'

If a person was evil and sinful, even if he was a Muslim, he will get confused and forget everything he knew in this world and will not know what to answer.

Those who answer correctly are blessed by the angels and told to rest and rejoice until the Day of Judgement when their reward will be even greater. Doors of bliss are opened for them in their grave and they can sense the breeze of Paradise (Jannah) and they are overjoyed and eagerly wait for the Day of Judgement. They pray to Allāh for those who are still in this world and ask Allāh to unite them in Paradise. In particular the Qur'ān mentions this about those who die sacrificing their lives for Allāh:

﴿وَلَا تَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ قُتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَمْوَاتًا بَلْ أحيَاءٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ يُرْزَقُونَ. فَرِحِينَ بِمَا آتَاهُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ وَيَسْتَبْشِرُونَ بِالَّذِينَ لَمْ يَلْحَقُوا بِهِمْ مِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ أَلَّا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ. يَسْتَبْشِرُونَ بِنِعْمَةِ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَفَضْلٍ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُضِيعُ أَجْرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ﴾

*Do not suppose those who were killed in the way of Allāh to be dead; rather, they are living and provided for near their Lord, rejoicing in what Allāh has given them out of His grace, and rejoicing for those who have not yet joined them from [those left] behind them that they will have no fear, nor will they grieve. They rejoice in Allāh's blessing and grace, and that Allāh does not waste the reward of the faithful.*

- Surah Aal-i Imrān, 3:169-171

﴿... قَالَ يَا لَيْتَ قَوْمِي يَعْلَمُونَ. بِمَا غَفَرَ لِي رَبِّي وَجَعَلَنِي مِنَ الْمُكْرَمِينَ﴾

*He said, 'Alas! Had my people only known for what my Lord forgave me and made me one of the honoured ones!'*

- Surah Yā Sin, 36:26-7

Those who cannot answer the questions of Munkar and Nakir correctly are cursed by the two angels and doors of punishment are opened for them in their graves and even while they suffer in Barzakh, they are even more frightened of the Day of Judgement that will be even more severe.

If a person loved the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) then they get to meet the Imāms after they die and the Imāms come to visit them just like they used to go and meet the Imāms (for ziyārah) when they were alive in this world.

There are also two places in the world of Barzakh where the souls of the good and the evil can visit other souls. The good souls visit a place called Wādi as-Salām (The Valley of Peace). Here they meet the souls of those who had died before them and they talk to each other and ask each other about those who are still alive in this world and they pray for them. The evil souls visit a place called Wādi al-Barhut (The Valley of Torment) where they see other evil souls and they only curse each other and suffer more punishment.

We are also told in some narrations that everyone who dies is squeezed in the grave. Those who are good feel the squeeze like two brothers hugging each other on the day of Eid! But those who are evil suffer tremendous pain because of the squeezing from all sides of their graves.

In many ahādith we are told that our deeds come with us to Barzakh. So after we are buried, we will see our Salāh, our Sawm, our Hajj, our Zakāh, our love for the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) and so on, in the form of beautiful people. They will keep us company, give us light in the dark grave and protect us and make us happy and give us good news of Paradise. But for those who do evil and never repent, their deeds will come to them in Barzakh in the form of wild dogs, snakes, scorpions, etc. who will continuously bite them and torture them.

This is why we must not take our actions lightly. We have to believe that whatever we do becomes real in the world of Barzakh and on the Day of Judgement.

If we wish to make our Salāh to be very beautiful and strong so it can help us in Barzakh, then we must take our Salāh seriously and do wudu carefully and pray with focus and attention, sincerely for Allāh only. Similarly, those who get to take their love for the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) in their graves are the ones who will be happiest. If we make a mistake or commit a sin, we should immediately ask Allāh for forgiveness (*istighfār*) and repent (*tawbah*) so that the fire or the wild beast we have created for our self in Barzakh is extinguished or dissolved.



If someone we love from our family has died, we can help them in Barzakh but doing good deeds on their behalf. For example, if we give some charity (sadaqa) on their behalf or if we recite a Surah of the Qur'ān for their thawāb, then they receive it as a beautiful gift in Barzakh. When they are told that so-and-so has sent you this present, they are extremely pleased and they pray for us as well.

If a person does not teach his children to recite Qur'ān or to be good and give charity then of course they will never remember him when he dies. Then he will be very sad in Barzakh because there will be no one to send him gifts that can reduce his punishment or increase his rewards.

We should pray for those Muslims in our family and community who have died so that one day others will remember us in their prayers when we are in Barzakh!

### **Thawāb Jāriya**

Finally, it is important to know that once a person dies, they no longer have the chance to do good or undo their sins through repentance. They now depend on others to pray for them and do good on their behalf. There is however one option:

A person can do certain good deeds in this world that will continue to earn him or her spiritual reward (thawāb) even after he or she is dead. These "Ongoing Rewards" are called in Arabic "Thawāb Jāriya". Some examples of Thawāb Jāriya are:

1. Building a masjid, madrasah or Islamic library and even helping to build or establish part of it. As long as the building stands and people worship in it or benefit from it, a person gets thawāb for it even if he or she is dead.
2. Planting a tree. As long as the tree stands and people benefit from its shade or fruits, a person gets thawāb.
3. Writing or publishing a copy of the Qur'ān or any book of useful knowledge. As long as even one page of this book exists and people read it and benefit from it, a person gets thawāb.

4. Leaving behind a pious child. If a person raises his or her child to be religious and teaches the child to recite Qur'ān, then as long as the child lives and does good deeds, the parent gets a share of the thawāb. And even when the child teaches others who teach others, the parent still gets thawāb for that because of being the original cause of that good deed.
5. Teaching others Islam. Every time a student practices something Islamic they learnt from the teacher, the teacher gets thawāb even if he or she is dead. And even when the student grows up and teaches others, the teacher still gets some of the thawāb.
6. Building a well or water supply for people. As long as people drink and use the water from that well or supply, the person who helped build or pay for it continues to get thawāb.

## Kirāman Kātibeen

When we are in this world, everything we say or do is recorded by two angels who sit on our right and left side. These two angels are together known as Kirāman Kātibeen, which means 'Honourable Scribes' or 'Noble Writers'. The angel on the right side is always in charge and records all our good deeds as soon as we do it.

When we do something wrong, the angel on the left side asks the angel on the right side if he should record our sin and the angel on the right side tells him to wait for a bit to see if we ask Allāh for forgiveness. If we do istighfār and tawbah, then they don't write it. Or if they write it and we later do istighfār and tawbah then they erase it.

Allāh is so kind that when we think of doing something good, He tells the angels to record it as one good deed. The angels know we are thinking something good because a fragrant smell comes from our souls to the angels. And if we actually do it, then the angels record the reward ten times.

And when we think of doing something wrong, they don't write anything but they know it because a stench comes from our souls. And if we do it then they record it unless we do tawbah.

Allāh mentions these two angels in the Qur'ān:

﴿وَإِنَّ عَلَيْكُمْ لَحَافِظِينَ . كِرَامًا كَاتِبِينَ . يَعْلَمُونَ مَا تَفْعَلُونَ﴾

*Indeed, there are over you watchers, noble writers, who know whatever you do.*

- Surah al-Infitār, 82:10-12

﴿مَا يَلْفِظُ مِنْ قَوْلٍ إِلَّا لَدَيْهِ رَقِيبٌ عَتِيدٌ﴾

*he (a human being) says no word except that there is a ready observer beside him.*

- Surah Qāf, 50:18

Because of this last ayah of Qur'ān, some scholars say the individual names of these two angels are Raqib and 'Atid.

Rasulullāh (s) taught to always live our lives as if we have two very pious people walking on our right and left side all the time. When we want to commit a sin, we should feel ashamed that these two honourable, noble scribes are watching us.

From other ahādith we learn that each person has four angels. Two who record our deeds of the day and two who record our deeds at night.

The angels of day come to a faithful (*mu'min*) at the time of dawn (fajr) prayers. When they descend, the two angels appointed for the night ascend. When the sun sets (at maghrib time), the two angels appointed to write in the night descend and the two angels who write by day ascend with his scroll (of deeds) to Allāh. And this to-and-fro of theirs does not stop until the time of a person's death at which time they say to the person who is righteous: 'May Allāh reward you for being such a good companion. How many a righteous act you showed us and how many beautiful words you made us hear, and how many excellent gatherings (majlis) you made us attend! We, this day, stand (as witnesses) on what you love and are intercessors (for you) to your Lord.' And if he was sinful they say to him: 'May Allāh repay you for being such an evil companion. You used to annoy us. How many evil acts you made us see and how many evil words you made us hear and evil gatherings

you made us attend! And we, this day, are witnesses (against you) before your Lord.<sup>1</sup>

The great Shi'ah scholar Mulla Fayd Kāshāni wrote that the two angels who record our deeds are called 'Noble Writers' (Kirāman Kātibeen) because they rush to write our good deeds and hesitate to write our sins, in the hope that we may repent and seek forgiveness. When they write a good deed, they rush to ascend with it to the heavens and proudly show it to Allāh, the Exalted, and they bear witness to that saying, "Your servant so-and-so has done such-and-such a good deed!" And when they write a person's sin, they ascend with it to the heavens with grief and sorrow. Allāh, the Exalted, asks, "What has My servant done?" But they remain silent until Allāh asks a second and a third time. Then they say, "Our Lord! You are the Concealer (of sins) and have commanded your creatures to conceal their shameful deeds. Conceal their shameful acts, for You are the Knower of all that is hidden!" And it is for this reason that they are called '*noble writers, who know whatever you do*' (Qur'ān 82:11-12).<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Huwayzi, *Tafsir Nur*; Ibn Tāwus, *Sa'd as-Su'ud*.

<sup>2</sup> Kāshāni, *Tafsir as-Sāfi*, Surah 82:11-12.

# Lesson 7

## Qiyāmah

### Importance of Its Belief in Islam

﴿وَكُلُّهُمْ آتِيهِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ فَرْدًا﴾

*And each of them will come to Him alone on the Day of Resurrection.*

- Surah Maryam, 19:95

After Tawhid, the most important foundation of Islam and the most emphasized subject in the Qur'ān is the belief in life after death. This is called the belief in Ma'ād or Qiyāmah, which literally means 'The Resurrection'. This will be the Day when all humans are raised to life again and their actions and intentions are judged and thereafter the good are rewarded with eternal bliss and paradise and the unjust are punished with Hellfire. Without belief in Ma'ād, life would have no purpose or meaning.

There are hundreds of verses in the Qur'ān that discuss life after death, the Day of Resurrection (Qiyāmah), the recording of deeds, the scales of judgement, eternal life, paradise and hell, and so on. The various names by which the Qur'ān refers to the Day of Judgement were taught to you in Book 5. Some of these names that are frequently used in Qur'ān and hadith are Yaum al-Qiyāmah (Day of Resurrection), Yaum ad-Din (Day of Judgement) and Yaum al-Aakhir (The Last Day).

The Qur'ān divides the whole of creation into two periods of time: 'The first life' and the Afterlife (or 'Last Day'). Our happiness in this world and success in the eternal, final life depends on our faith in the Last Day. It is because of belief in life after death and the Last Day that we decide not to waste time and to make meaningful use of our precious short lives. Belief in the Hereafter is what makes us generous to others with our wealth, our time and even our lives. We keep away from sins and avoid hurting others or disobeying Allāh because we believe in a Day of Judgement.

People who do not believe there is life after death have no reason to be moral or good in this world. It is because we realize that life does not

end when we die and we still have an important journey ahead of us before we get to Jannah and it is because we believe that we must stand before Allāh for accounting, that we act righteously and it gives us happiness and contentment even when we have to suffer in this world.

The first thing to happen after everyone dies and before the Day of Resurrection starts is the breaking apart of the whole universe and the start of a new world. The Qur'ān describes this vividly:

﴿إِذَا السَّمَاءُ انشَقَّتْ وَأُذِنَتْ لِرَبِّهَا وَحُقَّتْ وَإِذَا الْأَرْضُ مُدَّتْ وَأَلْقَتْ مَا فِيهَا  
وَتَخَلَّتْ﴾

*When the sky is split open and gives ear to its Lord as it should. When the earth is spread out and throws out what is in it, emptying itself.*

- Surah al-Inshiqāq, 84:1-4

And as the mountains become dust and the earth is leveled and made a flat surface and the stars all fall away, everyone will be brought out of their graves and there will be countless human beings scattered everywhere like moths, all gathering together for the accounting:

﴿الْقَارِعَةُ مَا الْقَارِعَةُ وَمَا أَذْرَاكَ مَا الْقَارِعَةُ. يَوْمَ يَكُونُ النَّاسُ كَالْفَرَاشِ الْمَبْثُوثِ.  
وَتَكُونُ الْجِبَالُ كَالْعِهْنِ الْمَنْفُوشِ﴾

*The Catastrophe! What is the Catastrophe? What will make you know what is the Catastrophe? The day mankind will be like scattered moths, and the mountains will be like carded wool.*

- Surah al-Qāri'ah, 101:1-5

Imām Ali b. Abi Tālib ('a) describes the Day of Judgement as follows:

*That day would be such that Allāh would collect on it all the previous and later generations, to stand in obedience for accounting and for award of their deeds. Sweat would flow up to their mouths like reins while the earth would be trembling under them. The person in the best condition among them would be he who has found a resting place for both his feet and an open place for his breath.*

- Nahj al-Balāgha, Sermon 101

*If you knew what I know of the unknown that is kept wrapped up from you certainly you would have gone out into the open weeping over your deeds and beating yourselves in grief and you would have abandoned your properties without any guard over them. Everyone would then have cared for his own self without paying attention to anyone else. But you have forgotten what was told to you and you feel safe from what you had been warned.*

- Nahj al-Balāgha, Sermon 115

*You are still in a place to which those who were before you have been wishing to return. In this world, which is not your house, you are just a traveller in motion. You have been given the call to leave from here, and you have been ordered to collect supplies while you are here. You should know that this thin skin cannot tolerate the Fire (of Hell). So, have pity on yourselves...*

- Nahj al-Balāgha, Sermon 182

*...and when the Trumpet will be blown, then every living being will die, every voice will become dumb the high mountains and hard rocks will crumble to pieces so that their hard stones will turn into moving sand and their bases will become level. On that Day there will be no interceder to intercede and no relative or friend to keep off trouble, and no excuse will be of any use.*

- Nahj al-Balāgha, Sermon 194

Then everyone will be given his or her Book of Deeds. The good will be given their book in their right hand and the evil will be given their book in their left hand.

﴿فَأَمَّا مَنْ أُوتِيَ كِتَابَهُ بِيَمِينِهِ فَيَقُولُ هَاؤُمُ اقْرَءُوا كِتَابِي . إِنِّي ظَنَنْتُ أَنِّي مُلَاقٍ

حِسَابِي . فَهُوَ فِي عِيشَةٍ رَاضِيَةٍ ﴿

*As for him who is given his book in his right hand, he will say, 'Here, take and read my book! Indeed I knew that I shall encounter my account.' So he will have a pleasant life.*

- Surah al-Hāqqah, 69:19-21

﴿وَأَمَّا مَنْ أُوتِيَ كِتَابَهُ بِشِمَالِهِ فَيَقُولُ يَا لَيْتَنِي لَمْ أُوتَ كِتَابِيهِ وَلَمْ أَدْرِ مَا حِسَابِيهِ  
يَا لَيْتَهَا كَانَتْ الْقَاضِيَةَ مَا أَغْنَىٰ عَنِّي مَالِيهِ هَلَكَ عَنِّي سُلْطَانِيهِ خُذُوهُ فَغُلُّوهُ ثُمَّ  
الْجَحِيمَ صَلُّوهُ﴾

*But as for him who is given his book in his left hand, he will say, 'I wish I had not been given my book, nor had I ever known what my account is! I wish death had been the end of it all! My wealth did not avail me. My authority has departed from me.' [The angels will be told:] 'Seize him, and fetter him! Then put him into hell.*

- Surah al-Hāqqah, 69:25-31

﴿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 يَظْلَمُ  
رَبُّكَ أَحَدًا﴾

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

- Surah al-Kahf, 18:49

Life is a journey and a journey is only useful when a real destination is expected. The world (First Life) is therefore the departure and Qiyāmah is the arrival. Imām Ali ('a) has said, 'This world is a place to leave behind and the Hereafter, that is the everlasting residence.'

Qiyāmah therefore gives meaning to this world. Movement and struggle have no meaning without a goal. Once we are convinced that there is life after death and that the Hereafter is where we will live forever and ever, how should we live our lives in this world?

Shouldn't we spend most of our short lives here preparing for our life in Jannah instead of living in the world as if it is permanent? If you had to write down a list of things you should set as your goal(s) in this life so that you may succeed in the Hereafter, what would you write?





# **Fiqh**

## **(Laws)**



# Lesson 1

## Fiqh Terminology & Washroom Rules

### Fiqh Terminology

By now, you should already know the meaning of the following terms:

- Wājib, harām, mustahab (or sunnah), makruh and mubāh
- Ihtiyāt wājib and Ihtiyāt mustahab

Your teacher will test you to make sure. If you don't remember them, review Book 4 (Fiqh Lesson 1) and Book 5 (Fiqh Lesson 1):

Some of the other fiqh terms used by the fuqaha (fiqh experts) are:

- Wājib al-'Ayni (or Wājib at-Ta'yini)
- Wājib al-Kifāi
- Wājib al-Fawri
- Wājib at-Takhyiri

You should learn their meanings (given below) and remember some examples of each type.

#### **Wājib al-'Ayni**

A wājib act or duty that all bāligh, sane Muslims have to perform. Even if some do it, it still is wājib on the others. For example, the 10 Furu ad-Din (salāh five times a day. Sawm in the month of Ramadān, Hajj, Zakāh, Khums, etc.). These are all Wājib al-'Ayni. Sometimes they are called Wājib Ta'yini.

#### **Wājib al-Kifāi**

A duty that is wājib on everyone until someone does it. Then it is no longer wājib on the others. For example, washing (ghusl) and burial of a dead Muslim. As long as no one does it, everyone is held responsible and it is wājib on all Muslims. But once a few of them come forward and do

it, it is no longer wājib on the others. Another example of Wājib al-Kifāi is if a Muslim walks into a room and says salām. It is wājib (al-kifāi) on everyone to reply the salām. But once one person replies, it is no longer wājib on everyone else even though it is good if they also reply the salām.

Other examples of Wājib al-Kifāi is to take up some professions and careers. For example, if there are no doctors in a town or city and people are falling sick but there is no one to cure them. Or there are no farmers and people do not have food to eat. Or there is no mujtahid to research and inform people of what is halāl or harām. Or in a Muslim country there are no soldiers, law enforcement officers, judges, etc. to help defend and establish justice in the Muslim country, then it is wājib al-kifāi on all Muslims to take up the needed profession (religious studies, medicine, farming, business, etc.). But once some take up this responsibility then it is no longer wājib on the rest.

### **Wājib al-Fawri**

This is a wājib act that must be done immediately and without delay i.e. as soon as it becomes wājib. For example, as soon as there is an earthquake or an eclipse, it is wājib on everyone present in that place to pray Salāt al-Ayāt without any delay. Salāt al-Ayāt is therefore both Wājib al-ʿAyni and Wājib al-Fawri.

Going for Hajj. As soon as a person has the health, wealth and means to go for Hajj, it becomes wājib to go the same year without delay (i.e. wājib al-fawri).

Yet another example is when someone recites or hears an āyah of the Qurʾān that requires a wājib sajdah. As soon as they recite it or hear it, they must perform the sajdah right away because it is a wājib al-fawri act.

### **Wājib at-Takhyiri**

This is a wājib duty where you have a choice. An example of Wājib at-Takhyiri is the choice to pray Salāt al-Jumuʿah or Salāt adh-Dhuhr on Fridays (only during the ghaybah of Imām al-Mahdi (ʿatfs) otherwise

Salāt al-Jumu'ah is wājib). So if a person prays Salāt al-Jumu'ah then they don't have to pray Salāt adh-Dhuhr and vice versa.

Another example is the kaffāra (penalty) in the month of Ramadān, that you will learn more about in Book 7. A person who has to pay a kaffāra for breaking a wājib fast intentionally has the choice of either feeding 60 poor Muslims or fasting for 60 days. So the Kaffāra is Wājib at-Takhyiri. When you do one, the other is no longer wājib.

Yet another example is that in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> rak'ah of salāh, we have the choice (*ikhtiyār*) to either recite Tasbihāt al-'Arba'a or Surah al-Hamd. We have to choose one but cannot leave out both.

### **Some more Terminologies**

The above four types of *wujub* (plural of *wājib*) are the most important ones that you should know and remember. The following are more terminologies for those who are interested in knowing the other terminologies that fuqaha (experts of fiqh) use. You don't have to memorize these and if there is not enough time in class, your teacher may skip them and you can read them on your own later on.

### **Wājib an-Nafsi and Wājib al-Muqaddami**

Some acts that are Wājib al-'Ayni or Fawri or Kifāi or Takhyiri, etc. are wājib in themselves. They are also called Wājib an-Nafsi. For example, salāh, hajj, rescuing a person who is drowning if you can, etc.

And some acts are not wājib in themselves but become wājib because without them you cannot fulfil another act that Wājib an-Nafsi. For example, wudu is not wājib in itself. But to pray salāh, you need to do wudu. So when it is time for Salāh, wudu becomes wājib. Wudu is therefore called Wājib al-Muqaddami.

Similarly Hajj is Wājib an-Nafsi but to go for Hajj, you may need to get a passport, visa, air ticket, etc. All these are not wājib but become wājib al-muqaddami when Hajj becomes wājib on you.

In Book 7 and 8 you will learn how ghusl can also become wājib al-muqaddami for Salāh or Sawm (fasting) in the month of Ramadān.

### **Wājib at-Ta'abbudi and Wājib at-Tawassuli**

A wājib act that requires a niyyah of '*qurbatan ilallāh*' is called wājib at-ta'abbudi. For example, salāh, sawm, hajj, etc.

A wājib act that does not require a niyyah of '*qurbatan ilallāh*' in order to be valid is called wājib at-tawassuli. For example, obedience of parents, fulfilling promises, saving your life from danger, etc.

## Rules Regarding the Washroom

When using the toilet, it is harām to face qibla or have your back facing it. This is discussed further in Lesson 3.

Sometimes you may be camping or out at a place where there is no washroom. In such situations, remember it is also harām for a person to urinate or relieve himself or herself:

- a) on private property without the permission of the owner.
- b) in a religious place that would disrespect the religion e.g. the compound or parking lot of a masjid, church, etc.
- c) near the graves of Muslims.
- d) on a path, alley or road where people usually walk.
- e) in a place where others may see you naked. It is therefore wājib to hide our private parts from others at all times, even from our parents and siblings.

It is makruh to relieve oneself under a tree or a place where there is a strong wind blowing.

After urinating, a person should wash himself or herself two times (wājib) and it is better three times.

Most places you visit outside Muslim homes or masājid (such as schools, gas stations, coffee shops and other public areas) will not have water containers or faucets in the washrooms. You should therefore always carry a disposable cup or a small empty water bottle in the car or your backpack that you can fill with water and use to clean yourself.

If you do not have a cup or bottle, then you can use wet tissue to clean yourself and then dry yourself with toilet paper. But you will still need to wash yourself with water properly and change your underwear before you are tāhir again and can pray salāh.

If a person is in the wilderness and cannot find water, they should clean themselves with three separate pieces of clean paper. And if they don't have paper, they can use a dry object like a dry piece of stone to wipe the najāsah from their body.

Most men's public washrooms have standing urinals. Muslims should not use urinals. Urinating while standing is makruh, it is not a decent way for a human being to relieve himself, and it is more likely to cause najāsah to fall to one's body or clothes. Always sit and urinate. If it is a public place, you may have to wipe the seat and dry it with some tissue first.

When in the washroom, it is makruh:

- a) to talk
- b) to read
- c) to sit in the toilet for a long time unnecessarily
- d) to stand and urinate

Even when outdoors where there is no proper washroom facilities, it is makruh:

- e) to urinate on a hard surface where the najāsah may splash on you
- f) to urinate in the burrows of animals
- g) to urinate in water, especially in still water

It is makruh to suppress your urge to urinate and if it is harmful to your health then it becomes harām.

To utter words in the remembrance of Allāh whilst in the washroom, is not makruh and in fact it is recommended for a person to thank Allāh for the healthy body and the ability to remove the waste from one's body and to ask Allāh to help us purify our souls of spiritual filth the way He has helped us to purify our bodies of its waste and toxins.



It is mustahab to:

- a) Enter the toilet with the left foot and to come out with the right foot first.
- b) Urinate before doing wudu for salāh and before going to sleep. You should also do wudu before sleeping.

The rules of tahārah should always be kept in mind so that the clothes and body are not touched by urine or any najis al-‘ayn. And if it is, it should be washed with water three times to clean it.

If a page of the Qur’ān, or some other sacred writing, such as a piece of paper or cloth with the names of Allāh, Rasulullāh (s), or the Imāms (‘a) or other prophets (‘a), or some of the sacred soil of Karbala falls into the toilet, it is harām to use that toilet until the sacred object has been removed. It is also wājib on every Muslim (wājib al-kifāi) to retrieve that object, whatever the cost. If it is not possible to retrieve it, the washroom must not be used until it is certain that the object has disappeared.

### **How to Make Tāhir a Mutanajjis using Water**

A thing that is inherently najis (like pig, dog, blood, urine, etc.) is called *najis al-‘ayn*. A thing that becomes najis because of contact with a najis al-‘ayn is called mutanajjis. A *najis al-‘ayn* can never be made tāhir. But a mutanajjis can be made tāhir again. For most things, this is done with clean (tāhir) and pure (mutlaq) water.

When clean and pure water is little in quantity (less than 400 litres), it is called ‘qalil’ in Arabic. Such water, if it is touched by anything najis, also becomes najis itself.

However when clean, pure water is in large quantity (called kurr water, which is 400 litres or more), it doesn’t become najis as long as the najāsah is not enough to change the taste, colour or smell of the water e.g. water in a lake. Similarly, running water like water in a running river or from the faucet is also able to clean a najāsah without becoming najis itself.

If a utensil (like a pot) becomes najis, first remove the najāsah completely then wash it three times with kurr or running water to make it tāhir. If you only have qalil water, fill the utensil with water and empty it out completely, three times. Or, alternatively, pour some water into the utensil and shaking it in such a way that the water reaches all the najis parts of the utensil (from where you have already removed and cleaned the najāsah before) then pour the water out and repeat (three times total).

If a rug or clothing becomes najis, remove the najāsah first then wash it three times with kurr or running water. If you only have qalil water, remove the najāsah, wash it, then wring it and squeeze all the water out, then repeat again (total three times).

If the carpet or rug cannot be moved, remove any visible najāsah, then pour clean water on it (covering a wider area), then dry it, and repeat the process three times.

## Lesson 2

# Qibla

Qibla is the direction of the Ka'bah in Makkah. The Ka'bah is a cube-shaped structure that was built by Nabi Ibrāhim ('a) and it is in the middle of Masjid al-Harām, the holiest masjid for Muslims. The location of the Ka'bah is the most sacred place on the earth.

### Rules of Qibla

Muslims are required to face the qibla at least five times every day when performing their daily prayers. When Muslims go for pilgrimage to Makkah (Hajj or Umra), they go around the Ka'bah seven times and this is called tawāf. (We will learn more about Hajj in Book 10.) Muslims also face the qibla when slaughtering an animal. When Muslims die they are buried lying on their right shoulder with their face towards the qibla. Also, when a person is about to die, it is ihtiyāt wājib to turn his/her feet towards the qibla if possible.

Besides the Ka'bah itself, qibla includes all the space from the ground below it to the sky above it. For those who live far away from the Ka'bah it is not necessary that they should pray in a straight line to the Ka'bah. They only have to ensure that they pray facing the shortest direction towards Makkah. For example, from North America, Makkah is closer eastwards rather than westwards, so we pray eastwards. Depending on our city, this may be East, North East, South East, and so on.

### How to Find the Qibla

If you know the direction of Qibla and you have a compass with you, it is easy to find the qibla. For example, the qibla direction from Toronto is NNE (North-North-East). So whenever you are travelling within the province of Ontario, you can use a compass to find NNE and pray in that direction.

If you do not have a compass or do not know the compass direction for Qibla in the place you are visiting, there are several other ways to find the qibla:

1. Find a Muslim and ask him/her.
2. Find a masjid nearby. Even if it is closed, if you find the mihrāb (where the prayer Imām stands) you can know the qibla.
3. Find a Muslim grave in a cemetery. Because Muslims are buried on their right shoulder with their face towards the qibla, if you know where the tombstone or head of the grave is, then the qibla will be towards the right of the tombstone if you stand behind the tombstone facing the grave.
4. If you have access to the Internet, there are websites where you can enter your present address and it will show you where the qibla is.

But remember:

- a. qibla will not always be in relation to how your computer or cell phone screen is facing. You must align your screen with the street intersection shown on the screen.
  - b. Not all websites are accurate so do not use websites you are not sure of unless you first check and compare them with the qibla it shows for your home address.
5. As a last resort, you can use the Sun to find East-West or a highway that runs North-South or East-West. But these are not accurate and will only give you an approximate idea.

If a person has absolutely no way of finding the qibla, he/she must pray the wājib salāh in all four directions, at right angles to each other unless there is no time before qadā, in which case they can pray in any direction. If a person is sure the qibla is within two possible directions, then they should pray twice towards those two possible directions instead of four times.

If a person has to pray more than one salāh (e.g. dhuhr and asr), they should pray the first salāh in all four directions, and then pray the second one in all four directions. Of course if they are travelling, it will be qasr salāh for dhuhr, 'asr and 'ishā.

### Summary:

If you have no idea which direction to pray in:

- And there is enough time before qadā, pray in all 4 directions.
- And there isn't enough time before qadā, pray in any direction that you have the strongest feeling about. But for the next salāh, you must pray in all four directions until you find out the qibla.

If you think it is one of 2 directions then:

- Pray in those 2 directions and not all four right angles.

Note: A wājib salāh has to be prayed facing the qibla. A mustahab salāh has to be facing qibla if one is in a stationary position (standing still). But if they are in motion e.g. on a train, plane or car, they do not have to face qibla. For a wājib salāh on a train, plane, etc., you should face qibla when starting the salāh (i.e. for takbirat al-ihram) but it is not a problem if the train or plane changes direction while you are praying.

### **When It is Harām to Face Qibla**

- a. It is harām to face the qibla when using the washroom.
- b. It is also harām to have one's back towards the qibla when using the washroom. If a person knows the direction of qibla, they should sit on the toilet at right angle to qibla or at least turn a little sideways so that their face or back is not directly towards the qibla.

Exercise: Write down four times when it is wājib to face Qibla.

## Lesson 3

# Salāt al-Qasr

When you travel:

- a. for a total of 44 kms (28 miles) or more outside the city or town you live in, and
- b. you will be spending the night out of town, and
- c. you are staying out for less than 10 days...

...then it is wājib to shorten all the daily 4 rak'ah prayers to 2 rak'ahs. This shortened 2 rak'ah salāh is called *Salāt al-Qasr*. And it replaces salāt adh-dhuhr, salāt al-'asr and salāt al-'ishā. For each of these 4 rak'ah prayers, you would pray 2 rak'ahs with the niyyah of 'I am praying 2 rak'ah salāt al-qasr wājib qurbatan ilallāh'.

Nothing changes for salāt al-fajr and salāt al-maghrib.

If however you travel to a place and you plan to stay there for 10 days or more, then you must pray in full (like you do normally) even from the very first day you arrive.

If you missed any qasr salāh when you were travelling and then you return home, you must repay the qadā of the qasr salāh (as 2 rak'ahs) and not 4 rak'ahs. Similarly, if you have a qadā of a 4-rak'ah salāh (like 'ishā) and then you travel, you must repay the qadā as 4-rak'ah even though you are travelling because the salāh was missed when you were not a traveller.

### **Other Rules About the Traveller's Prayer (Salāt al-Qasr)**

1. For a person to pray qasr, his total distance, going and returning must be equal to or more than 44 kms (28 miles). It doesn't matter if the journey one-way is less than 22 kms (i.e. half of the total 44 kms). For example, if a person travels 15 kms to a place and he knows that whilst coming back he will take a longer route and travel 30 kms, he must still pray qasr at his travel destination because he knows that the total of his journey is going to be more than 44 kms.

2. Praying qasr is wājib for travellers who meet its conditions. It is not an option. Even if a person forgets and prays in full when they should have prayed qasr, their salāh is bātil and they have to pray the qasr salāh again.
3. Those who travel to Makkah, Madina or Kufa, have the option to pray either qasr or full prayers. They can pray in full inside Masjid al-Harām, Masjid Nabawi and Masjid Kufa, as well as anywhere in these cities. We also have the option of praying full in the haram of Imām al-Husayn ('a) in Karbala, up to a distance of 25 arms length from the sacred grave.<sup>3</sup>
4. If a person's work requires him/her to travel frequently then they have to pray full when travelling for work. But if they travel to the same place for a vacation then they would pray qasr. Similarly, a person cannot fast when travelling. But if their work requires them to travel all the time (e.g. a pilot), then they can fast in Ramadān when travelling for work reasons.
5. If the intention of a person who travels somewhere is to do something harām (e.g. gambling) then they cannot pray qasr and have to pray in full (and of course they are also committing a sin by travelling).
6. The person praying qasr must have the intention (niyyah) of travelling out more than 44 kms and staying for less than 10 days from before. Otherwise they have to pray in full. For example, if a person is following someone else and does not know how far he is going to go and then he travels more than 44 kms and it is time for salāh, he must pray in full because he never had the intention of travelling.
7. It is mustahab that a traveller should recite the Tasbihāt al-Arba'a 30 times (or even better 60 times) after every salāt al-qasr.<sup>4</sup>
8. A traveller can only pray qasr when he or she is in the outer limits of the city or area that he or she lives in. This outer limit is called

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<sup>3</sup> Ayatullah Sistani, *Islamic Laws*, Ruling 1365

<sup>4</sup> Ayatullah Sistani, *Islamic Laws*, Ruling 1378

*hadd at-tarakhkhus*. So if a traveller has been praying qasr and is now heading back home, he or she will pray qasr as long as they are outside the *hadd at-tarakhkhus*. Once a traveller enters the city limits, he or she must start praying in full again. Here are two examples:

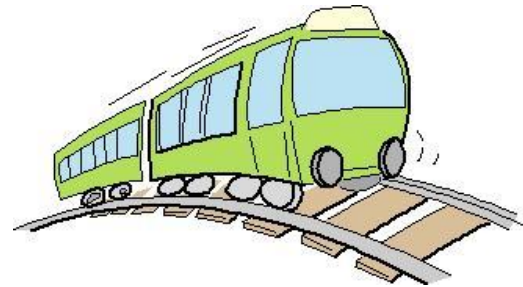
- a. Ali lives in Brampton. He travels to Niagara Falls for two days. He prays qasr in Niagara Falls. On his way back, he stops in Burlington. He will still pray qasr because he is still a traveller and outside the *hadd at-tarakhkhus*. But if on his way back home, he stops in Oakville or Mississauga to pray, he will pray in full because now he has entered inside the *hadd at-tarakhkhus* i.e. the limits of towns and cities that considered to be part of the Greater Toronto Area (GTA).
  - b. Fatima lives in Richmond Hill and travels to Ottawa for five days. On the way back, she stops in Kingston for salāh. She will still pray qasr because Kingston is still outside the *hadd at-tarakhkhus* of Richmond Hill. But if she stops in Oshawa or Whitby, she will start praying full again because she has re-entered the *hadd at-tarakhkhus* (city limits) of where she lives.
9. According to Ayatullah Sistāni, if a traveller plans to stay at a destination for 10 days or more and during that time he or she makes a trip to another place that is more than 44 kms, it does not break their “10 day intention” as long as they do not spend the night in the new location. They will pray qasr at the new destination during their day trip but once they return, they can continue praying full again. Here is an example: Ahmad lives in Germany. He is visiting Toronto for more than 10 days so he is praying full salāh. During his visit, he decides to go to Niagara Falls just for the day. He plans to go in the morning and return in the evening, without spending the night there. So when he is in Niagara Falls, Ahmad will pray Qasr. But when he returns to Toronto, he will continue praying full. His 10-day count does not break because he did not spend the night in Niagara Falls. (If your marj’a is other than Ayatullah Sistāni, you should check if his ruling on this is the same or not.)



## Salāh when on a Bus, Plane or Train

If a person is able to stop, dismount and pray, they must do so e.g. when travelling on a horse or one's own car.

If a person is travelling by plane or on a bus or train and knows it will stop at a place before the qadā of salāh and they will be able to pray, then they must wait and pray when they arrive at their destination and disembark.



If a person is on a train, plane or a means of transportation that will not stop before qadā time, they should do their best to ask for or find a place where they can stand and pray. If that is not possible, then they can sit and pray.

Whilst on the means of transportation, a person should try their best to find the direction of qibla (even if it is not precise). Then they should turn towards it for niyyah and takbirat al-ihram (i.e. to start their salāh). But if the plane, bus or train changes course during the person's salāh and they are no longer facing qibla, they do not need to worry about it and can continue praying. They should face qibla again before the start of the next salāh.

Wudu of course should also be performed unless it is impossible, in which case tayammum must be performed.

The clothes and body of the person praying whilst travelling must also be tāhir. If they are najis and they cannot make the clothes or their body tāhir, they must still pray the salāh but also offer its qadā after arriving at their destination.

## Lesson 4

# Fasting (Sawm)

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ  
تَتَّقُونَ﴾

*O you who believe! Fasting is ordered for you, as it was ordered for those before you, that you may be aware (of Allāh)*

- Surah al-Baqarah, 2:183

### Introduction

In Book 4, we already studied about the benefits of fasting and some actions that break a fast (*sawm*). In Book 7 inshā Allāh we will learn about the types of fasts and which ones are wājib, mustahab, harām and so on, as well as what is the penalty (*kaffāra*) of breaking a fast intentionally.

In this Book we will study a little more about what breaks a fast as well as moon-sighting rules for the month of Ramadān and what a person should do when travelling in the month of Ramadān.

### Moon Sighting

It is wājib for Muslims who are bāligh, healthy and not travelling, to fast in the 9<sup>th</sup> Islamic month, the holy month of Ramadān. Fasting in Islam means keeping away from certain things (like food and water) from dawn to dusk. Of course fasting is not just about hunger. During fasting we have to be extra careful to keep away from evil thoughts, words or actions.

Rasulullāh (s) has said, ‘The month of Ramadān is a month of patience. And the reward of patience is paradise (jannah).’

We also know that Islamic months follow the lunar calendar. This means a month starts every time a new moon is seen. Every Islamic month can only have 29 or 30 days. So if the new moon is not seen after 29 days,

we can assume that after one more day, the new month has begun (because we cannot have 31 days).

We also know that in the Islamic calendar, the night (eve) comes before the day. So the first night of the month of Ramadān comes first and then the first day of the month of Ramadān.

The wājib fasts of the month of Ramadān should be kept from the first day of the month of Ramadān until the last day of the month. It is harām to fast on the 1<sup>st</sup> of Shawwāl, which is the first day after the month of Ramadān, also called 'Id al-Fitr.

### **How do we know when it is the first night of the month of Ramadān so we can start fasting from the next day?**

If the previous month (Sha'bān) has completed 29 days and the moon is still not sighted that night, then we know the month of Sha'bān has 30 days. And the next day after that would be the first day of Ramadān because Sha'ban (like any Islamic month) cannot have more than 30 days.

If however the new moon (called a 'crescent') is seen after 29 days of Sha'bān then we know the next day is the 1st of Ramadan.

We must see the moon with our own eyes or at least two 'ādil (trustworthy and not people who sin openly) must have sighted the moon and they bear witness to their sighting of the moon before others can accept it.

If a person is sure that he or she saw the crescent of Ramadān but there was no other witness, then he or she must assume it is the first of the month of Ramadān and start fasting, even if others do not because of not having sufficient witnesses.

When the moon is sighted in a different town, city or country, we may be able to follow that depending on what our marj'a advises.

Usually the people who are most learned in religious matters will advise you on whether you can follow the people who saw the new

moon in another city or country or not and whether we should start or stop fasting or not.

It is wājib for a person who cannot find the answer from a scholar to try and look up towards the skies (if it is clear) at maghrib time, on the first possible night of Ramadān and try and see if he or she can sight the moon.

If the first of the month of Ramadān is not confirmed but there is a doubt and it is possible that one may find out during the day that the moon was sighted elsewhere and that it is the first day of Ramadān, then it is recommended that a person should fast, but without the intention of a wājib Ramadān fast. They should fast only *qurbatan ilallāh*. This way, if it is found even several days later that the day that the person fasted was in fact the first day of Ramadān then it will automatically be counted as the wājib Ramadān fast.

However if a person does not fast because no proof was found and later he finds out that in fact it was the first day of Ramadān, then he or she only has to pay the qadā for the 1<sup>st</sup> day and there will be no other penalty (kaffāra).

The 1<sup>st</sup> of Shawwāl is the day of 'Id al-Fitr and it is harām to fast on that day. So when a person has fasted 29 days, they should make the utmost effort to try and find out if the next day is 'Id or the 30<sup>th</sup> day of Ramadān. This is also done by trying to sight the moon, or following two 'ādil witnesses or the guidance of the marj'a on moon-sighting in other towns and cities.

If a person cannot confirm that the next day is 'Id, then he or she should fast that day as the 30<sup>th</sup> of Ramadān but thereafter if he or she finds out during the day that it is in fact 'Id, they must break their fast immediately even if they find out only 5 minutes before maghrib.

## Niyyah

After the moon of the month of Ramadān is sighted, a Muslim who is bāligh and 'āqil (sane) should prepare for the month by making a solemn

intention to fast all the wājib Ramadān fasts for the sake of Allāh's pleasure only (*qurbatan ilallāh*).

Without such an intention, no fast can be considered valid. For example, if a person is fasting because it is Ramadān but also to diet or lose weight then their fast is bātil.

However, it is not wājib to utter the niyyah loudly. Just making the intention in one's mind is enough. One can make the intention for each day's fast or even make the niyyah to fast the whole month on the first night of Ramadān. The time for making a niyyah for the next day's fast is from the beginning of the night until just before dawn.

A fasting person (*sā'im*) should persist in his or her niyyah for the whole day. If they waver whether to break their fast or continue it or make intentions to break it, their fast becomes bātil, even though they do not eat or drink anything. That is why, once it is maghrib time and a person *knows* the fast is over (i.e. makes the niyyah to no longer be fasting) then it is sufficient to assume their fast has ended even if they do not eat or drink right away. It is however recommended to eat something immediately or just after praying salāt al-maghrib.

## **Suhur**

It is highly recommended to eat something in the early hours of the morning (the time of *suhur*) before fajr time, in preparation for the next day's fast. As a precaution, people stop eating or drinking anything at least 5-15 minutes before fajr time and this is called the time of *imsāk*. You can check your local prayer calendar for the time of *imsāk*.

If, while eating, a person realizes that the time for the morning adhān has arrived, they should take the food out of their mouth; if they swallow it deliberately, their fast will be bātil and they will have to pay its qadā and a penalty (kaffāra). It is therefore better to stop eating and drinking from the time of *imsāk*.

There are many duas and prayers that are recommended for the time of suhur in the month of Ramadān and especially for the final hour before the start of the fast. These are not wājib but one should try and recite

these, in addition to the Qur'ān and salāt al-layl. The month of Ramadān is the holiest month of the year.

### **What breaks a Fast (*mubtilāt as-sawm*)**

A fast is broken if someone does any of the following deliberately between the time of fajr to the time of maghrib:

1. Eating and drinking.
2. Smoking or inhaling dust or (smoke) fumes.
3. Vomiting.
4. Lying about Allāh and the Ma'sumeen ('a).
5. Immersing head under water.

Remember, the fast is only broken if it is done deliberately. This means if someone forgets and has a sip of water, it doesn't break their fast provided they stop immediately and spit out whatever is in their mouth. Similarly if a person forgets and eats something, they should spit out whatever is in their mouth (without inducing vomiting). Or if someone is pushed into a pool and their head goes under water, it does not break their fast because it wasn't deliberate.

Breaking a fast deliberately is not like missing a fast when one is ill or travelling. When one is ill or travelling, they only pay the qadā for the fast. But breaking a fast deliberately requires a person to:

- a. Ask forgiveness from Allāh (istighfār).
- b. Pay the qadā of each missed fast.
- c. Pay a penalty (kaffāra) for each missed fast. The kaffāra **for each missed fast** is to fast 60 days (out of which 30 days must be continuous), OR to feed 60 poor Muslims. If it is not possible to find 60 poor Muslims to feed, then one has to arrange to send money to a poor town or city where this can be arranged.

## **1. Eating and Drinking**

Brushing teeth is ok during a fast so that the mouth will not smell. But you have to be careful so that you don't swallow anything.

Also during wudu, when rinsing the nose or gargling the mouth, be careful not to let the water down your throat.

A cook is allowed to place food on his or her tongue just to taste it (e.g. to see if there is enough salt in the food) but not to swallow it. After tasting, they must spit it out.

Injections that give nourishment to the body such as glucose are also not allowed during a fast. And one should also not go to the dentist during a fast (for non-emergency procedures like regular check-up and cleaning) because the teeth may bleed.

## **2. Smoking and Inhaling Dust**

Those who smoke cigarettes or pipes are not allowed to do so during a fast.

When there is any dense dust or smoke or fumes near a person who is fasting, he or she must move away and try and prevent it from entering the throat. If they take it in deliberately or don't move away when they can and it goes down their throat, the fast becomes *bātil*. But if the dense smoke enters a person's throat involuntarily, or due to carelessness it reaches a little into the throat, the fast is not *bātil* as long as the person tries to prevent any further inhaling of the dust or smoke.

## **3. Vomiting**

Vomiting intentionally (i.e. inducing a vomit by gagging or putting one's fingers down the throat) breaks a fast and needs to be compensated by a *qadā* and *kaffāra*. However if one is ill and throws up, it does not break their fast as long as they don't try and continue vomiting deliberately. If a person is too ill to fast, of course they can break their fast and take

medicine and then repay the qadā only.<sup>5</sup> But if they decide to continue fasting and not to break their fast, then they need to ensure they do not vomit deliberately.

#### 4. Lying About Allāh and the Ma'sumeen ('a)

By '*ma'sumeen*' we mean all the prophets (*anbiyā*) from Nabi Adam ('a) to Rasulullāh (s), as well as Sayyida Fatima az-Zahrā ('a) and the twelve Imāms ('a) after Rasulullāh (s). As such it is always harām to lie about Allāh and the Ma'sumeen ('a). But during a fast, if a person lies about them intentionally, then besides the sin they commit, their fast is also bātil. Lying could be by quoting a forged hadith that is attributed to a ma'sum or misinterpreting an āyah of the Qur'ān or even lying about them with one's actions (such as in sign language).

If someone narrates something from Allāh or the Ma'sumeen ('a) assuming that it was true, but later discovers that it was not true, his or her fast will remain valid. If there is something about which we are not sure whether it is true or not, we should either not narrate it or if we do, we should quote the source.

#### 5. Immersing Head Under Water

If a person dives into water or even just immerses his or her head into water deliberately, their fast is bātil. The immersion however has to be all at once. So taking a shower does not break a fast unless one fills a tub with water and then immerses his or her head under water completely.

#### Conditions for Travellers in Ramadān

Those travellers who have to offer qasr (shortened) salāh cannot fast and should repay the fasts as qadā later on. But those travellers whose salāh is not shortened (such as those who stay more than ten days at a

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<sup>5</sup> In Book 7 we will also study about those who have a permanent illness or are too old or weak because of which they can never fast or repay any fasts.



place or those whose profession involves travelling) have to fast during their journey.

If a person who is fasting starts his or her journey *before* the time of salāt adh-dhuhr, they cannot complete their fast. But they should only break it *after* leaving their town or city to a place where they would be eligible to pray qasr. Otherwise they will have to pay the qadā and a penalty (kaffāra).

If a person starts his or her journey *after* the time of salāt adh-dhuhr, then they should complete their fast for that day and it will be a valid fast.

Likewise, if a traveller arrives back home (or the place where he or she intends to stay for ten days or more) *before* the time for salāt adh-dhuhr, they can complete their fast, if they have not already committed an act that breaks the fast. And even if they have had some food or drink during the journey, it is better for them not to do anything that breaks a fast after they have arrived home. However, that will only be out of respect for the month and it will not be considered a fast because they had already eaten during their journey.

When a traveller reaches his home (or the place where he or she intends to stay for ten days or more) *after* the time for salāt adh-dhuhr, they cannot complete their fast, but it is recommended to refrain from eating or drinking as a mark of respect for the month of Ramadān.

# Lesson 5

## Food and Drinks

### Halāl and Harām

It is very important for us to know the meaning of halāl and harām in Islam.

Halāl means 'allowed' or 'lawful'. Harām means 'forbidden' or 'unlawful'.

For food and drinks, anything that a Muslim is not allowed to eat or drink is called harām and all the rest are halāl for the Muslim to have.

Examples of harām foods are:

1. Pork and anything that has ingredients from pigs in it. For example, foods that have gelatin or lard in their ingredients.
2. Alcohol and anything that has alcohol in it like beer, wine and even some medicines and mouthwashes. Also any liquid that can intoxicate. It is wājib for a Muslim to leave a gathering where alcohol is being served and it is harām to sit at the same table where there is any kind of alcohol (beer, wine, etc.).
3. Meat of an animal that is harām to eat, such as the meat of rabbits, cats, dogs, horses, donkeys, and all reptiles.
4. Meat of an animal that is halāl but the animal was not slaughtered according to Islamic law (called *dabiha*). For example, a Muslim can eat chicken, cow (beef), camel, lamb, sheep or goat meat but only if the animal was killed in the right Islamic method. So we cannot buy chicken, beef, etc. from any butchery or grocery store unless we are sure it is halāl. Similarly, we cannot eat from the food court in the shopping malls or at any restaurants unless we are sure the food is halāl.
5. Meat of an animal that died naturally. For example, if a chicken or cow or sheep or goat dies in an accident or due to disease or old age, we cannot eat their meat. The animal has to be alive during *dabiha*. We will learn about the laws of *dabiha* later on.

6. Fish that do not normally have visible scales on them, like shark meat. Also it is harām to eat crabs, lobsters, squids, octopus, molluscs, etc. But we are allowed to eat shrimps and prawns. We will also learn about the Islamic laws of fishing later on in Book 11.
7. Birds who do not flap their wings like eagles and hawks as well as birds that are scavengers like vultures. We are allowed to eat chicken and turkey but they also have to be killed according to the laws of *dabiha*.

When we are invited to eat at the house of a Muslim or if we are eating at a restaurant that we are sure is owned by Muslims, we do not have to ask them about the food and we can assume it is halāl. However if a Muslim restaurant serves alcohol as well, then it is better to avoid it and not to eat their food or buy anything from them. Or if a Muslim restaurant owner sells halāl beef but harām chicken meat, we should also not eat there because we cannot trust such a person.

When it comes to meat, we have to be extra cautious and sure that what we eating is halāl.

### **Rules Regarding Gold and Silver Containers**

It is harām to eat or drink from containers made of real gold or silver. But if the dish is only gold or silver-plated or mixed with other materials then it is not harām. Also, if the food contained in a gold or silver dish is transferred into a different dish, it can be eaten.

### **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 - Usually found in mouthwashes and some medicines.

- 3 Pepsin - Usually found in cheese and cheese products.
- 4 Gelatin - Usually found in marshmallows and some cookies and candy.
- 5 Lard - Usually found in some cookies.

# Lesson 6

## Ghusl

### What is Ghusl?

Ghusl is a bath that is done in a special way and with a *niyyah*. You have already learnt about *niyyah* and its importance in Book 4. There are times when ghusl becomes *wājib* to perform and times when it is only *mustahab*, and we will learn about these differences later on.

### Method of Performing Ghusl

There are two ways to perform ghusl but we will learn only one way that is the most common and is called the *ghusl tartibi* (step-by-step) method and it is as follows:

1. *Niyyah*: You should know your intention. For example, 'I am performing the ghusl of *jumu'ah qurbatan ilallāh*'.
2. Wash head and neck first.
3. Then pour water on right side of the body washing from the right shoulder downwards.
4. Then pour water on the left side of the body washing from the left shoulder downwards.

The other method is called *ghusl irtimāsi* (ghusl by immersion in water) and is not common. If you are curious to know more about *ghusl irtimāsi*, which is by diving into a pool of clean water, then you can read the *risāla* of your *marj'a*. *Ghusl irtimāsi* is not allowed when fasting or during *hajj* when wearing the *ihrām*.

Here are some more details about each step during *ghusl tartibi*:

- 1. Before starting ghusl:** If there is any uncleanness or *najāsah* on your body, you should remove it and wash it off before starting ghusl. Also if you have oil in your hair or nail polish on your finger or toe nails, paint on your body, you must remove all things that prevent water from reaching your body before you start the ghusl. Henna is ok.

2. **Intention:** Just like in wudu, in ghusl also one must have the intention of performing it only for the sake of Allāh and to come close to Him (*qurbatan ilallāh*) otherwise the ghusl will be void (*bātil*). You should clearly know the reason for which you are performing ghusl.
3. **Washing Head and Neck:** When you start ghusl by washing your head and neck, let the water flow all over your head. Using your hands, make sure the water reaches all parts of your head (front, top and back), including your ears, the roots of your hair and all around your neck till the shoulders. You don't have to worry about washing inside your nose and mouth or all your hair if it is long.
4. **Washing the Right Side and Left Side of the Body:** It is better to wash the right side first and then the left side. Rinse each side thoroughly starting from a bit of the neck and where the shoulder starts to the bottom of your feet. Use your hands to ensure the water reaches everywhere including your chest, back, arms, armpits, elbows, fingertips, front and rear private parts, the navel, the back of the knees, all the way down to the sole of your feet. No part should be left unwashed.
5. If even a small part of the body remains unwashed, the ghusl will be considered *bātil*. If after a *wājib* ghusl you know you missed washing some part of your body, you must repeat the ghusl. But if you have a doubt and are not sure, and you have finished the ghusl, you don't have to repeat it.
6. In order to make sure that the body is fully washed, some of the body part that has already been washed should be included when washing the other part. For example, when washing the right side of the body some of the neck should be included; and when washing the left side some parts of the right half that are already washed should be washed again. It is better that the middle part of the body (including the private parts) should be washed on both occasions so that no part is left unwashed.

## **Ghusl of Jumu'ah**

One type of ghusl that is mustahab and highly recommended is the **Friday Ghusl** also called *Ghusl of Jumu'ah*. Jumu'ah means Friday and this is a special day for Muslims. It is the holiest day of the week in Islam. On Fridays Muslims pray a special salāh instead of salāt adh-dhuhr, which is called Salāt al-Jumu'ah and we will learn about this salāh later on.

The time for the ghusl of jumu'ah is from fajr to sunset (Ayatullah Sistāni, ruling no. 651) although it is better to perform it just before the time for Salāt al-Jumu'ah, which is also the time of salāt adh-dhuhr. According to Ayatullah Sistāni, the ghusl of Friday is so recommended, that if you miss it, you can still perform it on Saturday with a niyyah of qadā. Or if you know you will miss it, you can perform it in advance on Thursday, with the niyyah of rajā (ruling No. 651).

Once you perform the ghusl of Jumu'ah, it is not wājib to do wudu to pray salāt al-jumu'ah (ruling no. 653) unless your ghusl breaks (for the same reasons that wudu breaks). Although, it is recommended (mustahab) to perform wudu as a precaution (ruling 397).

# Lesson 7

## Gender-Specific (for Boys)

### Istibra

Istibra is the name given to the way for a man to clean himself after urinating.

Remember that urine is *najis al-'ayn* and if you do not clean yourself properly, your clothes and body can become najis too and your acts of worship including salāh will not be valid in the state of najāsah.

### The Method of Performing Istibra

1. If after the passing of urine, any part of the body also becomes najis, it should be washed and purified first.
2. Thereafter the part under the root of the urinary organ should be pressed thrice with the middle finger of the left hand.
3. Then the thumb should be placed above the urinary organ and the index finger should be placed below it and it should be pressed thrice up to the point of circumcision.
4. Finally, the front portion of the organ should be shaken three times.

And finally the urinary organ must be cleaned twice (wājib), (better thrice) with water.

### Advantage of Practising Istibra

Istibra is recommended (mustahab) after urinating and not wājib, but it should always be practised.

If a boy does *istibra* and any wetness comes out later or is found on his underwear, and he doesn't know whether that wetness is urine or not, then he can assume it is not najāsah and that his clothes are clean (tāhir). This is because he performed istibra after urinating.



However if he does not do istibra, then he would have to assume that the wetness was urine and he would have to clean himself again and change his clothes that have gotten wet or damp.

There is no equivalent practice to istibra for women, and any wetness that comes out after urinating is considered clean.

## Respect for Women

One of the signs of Islam's greatness is the respect and honour it gives to women, who have always been downtrodden and treated unfairly and unequally in human history.

Before Rasullāh (s) began preaching Islam 1400 years ago, the Arabs used to bury their daughters alive. In some religions a woman is regarded as evil and the cause of the downfall of man. She is blamed for Nabi Adam ('a) being expelled from Jannah whereas the Qur'ān says that both Nabi Adam ('a) and his wife Sayyida Hawwā ('a) ate from the forbidden tree together. In many countries it was only less than 100 years ago that women were given the right to vote or to participate in society. Islam allowed women to participate fully in society and to even own property and businesses 1400 years ago.

Some of the common accusations against Islam on the rights of women regarding matters like inheritance have been misunderstood and are false accusations. They need to be discussed in more detail and we will study that in Book 12 inshā Allāh.

For now it is important to remember that according to the Qur'ān, a man and a woman are equal in the eyes of Allāh. One is not better or more superior to the other because of their gender. What makes one better than the other is only taqwa (to be aware of Allāh all the time). That is why Allāh says:

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

*O humankind! Indeed We created you from a male and a female, and made you nations and tribes that you may identify yourselves with one another. Indeed the most honoured of you in the sight of Allāh is the most Godconscious among you.*

- Surah al-Hujurāt, 49:13

This āyah makes it clear that greatness comes from Godconsciousness (taqwa) and not gender. Taqwa means to keep away from sin because of constantly being aware that Allāh is watching us.

We should also be aware that whereas boys become bāligh a little later (at the age of 13-15 years), girls are considered to be bāligha from the age of 9. This means they mature physically and emotionally sooner than boys. Their responsibilities come sooner, and what is wājib for boys later on (like salāh and sawm), becomes wājib on girls from the age of 9.

As you grow into adulthood you will learn and realize more about the physical and emotional differences between boys and girls and you will also become aware of the natural attraction between boys and girls and why Islam teaches hijāb as a way of preventing sin and abuse of one gender against the other.

One of the meanings of hijāb that boys should learn to practice is to always be respectful of girls regardless of whether they are your sister, cousin or anyone at school or madrasah. One should never tease or make fun of a girl. It is a shame for a Muslim boy or man to make fun of any girl or woman.

In Islam, a man always looks out and protects women against other evil men. Never ever raise your hand against a girl or beat a woman even if she tries to hit you. It is a great sin in the eyes of Allāh to hit or take wrong advantage of anyone especially for a man against a woman. And in fact, only a coward hits a girl or woman.

When boys meet or talk to girls and women, they should not stare at them or make them uncomfortable with their behaviour. They should not act silly or say things to embarrass them. Instead they should be polite and respectful, and avoid staring at women who are strangers to them.

# Lesson 7

## Gender-Specific (for Girls)

### Signs of Bulugh

As boys and girls grow into men and women, they change physically and emotionally. This age of maturity is also called the age of puberty (or *bulugh* in Arabic). Boys mature (become *bāligh*) closer to the ages of 13-15 years while girls mature earlier and in Islam are considered to be *bāligha* from the age of 9 (i.e. the 9<sup>th</sup> Islamic birthday). This means whatever is *wājib* on adults like praying (*salāh*), fasting (*sawm*) and *hijāb* starts from the age of bulugh.

There are various physical signs of bulugh. Some are common to boys and girls like the growth of hair under the armpits and on the navel (called pubic hair) and some signs are unique to each gender. For example, as a girl grows older, her body starts adjusting to becoming a mother one day. She will experience some bleeding every month. This will occur repeatedly (as a cycle) every month and is called the menstruation cycle (or *haid* in Arabic).

Later on, when a girl grows up and gets married and decides to have a baby, this blood will be needed for the baby's growth in the mother's womb. Until then, the blood is discharged (i.e. comes out) from her body.

### Haid and Istihādha

*Haid* is a woman's monthly bleeding cycle, also called 'period'. Most menstrual periods last from 3 to 5 days but in some women it can vary and continue for up to 7-10 days. If you count a menstrual cycle from the first day of one period to the first day of the next period, the average menstrual cycle is 28 days long. But cycles in women can also vary from 21 days to 35 days. In young teens that are just beginning to experience *haid*, the cycle can be longer, up to 45 days.

The average age for a girl to get her first period is 12. But this does not mean that all girls start at the same age. A girl can start her period (i.e. experiencing *haid*) anytime between the ages of 8 and 15.

During the days that a girl or woman has her period, she is not required to pray the daily *salāh* or to fast. If she misses some *wājib* fasts in the month of Ramadan, she will have to pay back those missed fasts later on as *qadā*. But the *salāh* that she misses during her period do not have to be paid back.

Besides *Haid*, a *bāligha* woman can also experience bleeding that is not a part of her period or monthly menstruation cycle. This unexpected irregular (non-period) bleeding is called *Istihādha*. When a woman experiences *Istihādha*, she still has to pray and fast but there are some additional rules for it (such as performing wudu or ghusl before every *salāh*) that you will learn about in Book 8.

### **What is Harām for a Woman During *Haid***

- Praying *salāh* of any kind including *Salāt al-Ayāt*. She can however pray *Salāt al-Mayyit* because it does not require wudu or ghusl. (*Salāt al-Mayyit* is taught in Book 10.)
- Entering any *masjid* including *Masjid al-Harām* (Makkah), haram of *Rasulullāh (s)* (Madina) or haram of any of the *Imāms ('a)*.
- Touching the writings of the *Qur'ān*.
- Reciting any of the four *āyāt* of *Qur'ān* for which *sajdah* is *wājib* immediately. These four *āyāt* are:
  - a. Surah as-Sajdah, *āyah* 15 (32:15)
  - b. Surah Fussilat, *āyah* 38 (41:38)
  - c. Surah an-Najm, *āyah* 62 (53:62)
  - d. Surah al-Alaq, *āyah* 19 (96:19)

### **Wājib Ghusl**

There are three types of ghusls that are *wājib* for women only:

1. Ghusl of *Haid*: Wājib to perform after the end of the monthly bleeding of women, before a woman can start salāh and sawm again.
2. Ghusl of *Istihādha*: Wājib for women after certain kinds of irregular bleeding.
3. Ghusl of *Nifās*: Wājib after the bleeding of childbirth.

In the previous lesson you already learnt how to perform ghusl and all about the mustahab ghusl for the day of Friday (Ghusl Yaum al-Jumu'ah). A Wājib Ghusl is performed in exactly the same manner except that the niyyah is different.

For example, after her period is over, a girl must perform *Ghusl of Haid* with the intention of 'I am performing ghusl of *haid*, wājib qurbatan ilallāh'. Thereafter she can start praying and fasting as usual.

### **A Note on Hijāb**

When a Muslim girl reaches the age of nine Islamically, it is wājib for her to start wearing hijāb. This means she must cover herself, especially her body and her hair to protect herself from being seen by men who are not her mahram.

Hijāb means that the entire body of a woman should be covered in the presence of her non-mahram except the wrists to the fingers and the face. The head and neck should also be covered so that no hair is showing. The feet must also be covered. The overall appearance of the dress must be loose so that it does not reveal the shape of the body.

Bāligha girls and women do not have to wear hijāb when they are only with other women or when they are with mahram men like their grandfather, father or brothers. But they still have to dress respectfully and modestly in front of them.

The hijāb for men is to lower their eyes from looking at non-mahram women. Hijāb is like a shield that protects women from harm but also protects both men and women from sin. Bāligh boys and men must also dress decently and respectfully in the presence of others.

# TARIKH (History)



# Lesson 1

## Nabí Zakariya (‘a) & Nabí Yahya (‘a)

Nabi Zakariya (‘a) was sent to the people of Banu Isrāil. He was a descendent of Nabi Ya'qub (‘a) the son of Nabi Ishāq (‘a) the son of Nabi Ibrāhim (‘a). Nabi Zakariya (‘a) was loved and respected by his people because of his humble and cheerful manner. He was in charge of the mosque of Bayt al-Muqaddas in Jerusalem, and he preached the religion of Allāh from there. He guided the people according to the rules laid down in the Tawrāt of Nabi Musa (‘a), who had been the last Rasul (a Nabi who has been given a Book) before him.

Nabi Zakariya (‘a) had also been entrusted to look after Sayyida Maryam (‘a), the mother of Nabi Isa (‘a) from the time Sayyida Maryam (‘a) was a young child. Sayyida Maryam (‘a) was the daughter of Hannah, the sister of Nabi Zakariya’s wife. So Sayyida Maryam (‘a) was Nabi Zakariya’s wife’s niece.

Sayyida Hannah had made a vow to dedicate her child to Bayt al-Muqaddas, the most sacred mosque in Jerusalem and Nabi Zakariya had been chosen to look after her. He built a special room in the holy place just for Sayyida Maryam (‘a) where she stayed all the time and worshipped Allāh. Whenever Nabi Zakariya (‘a) would go and check on Sayyida Maryam (‘a) in her room, he would find she had fresh fruit in her room that were out of season. He wondered where the food came from and when he asked her, she said, ‘It is from Allāh.’ Nabi Zakariya (‘a) realised that he was the guardian of a very special child whom Allāh had chosen for a great honour i.e. the birth of Nabi Isa( ‘a).

Nabi Zakariya (‘a) was an old man then, at least 90 years old and had no children of his own. After seeing how Allāh had blessed Sayyida Maryam (‘a) and how Allāh was sending food to her miraculously, he felt very hopeful and he prayed to Allāh to bless him with a child who would succeed him.

And so Allāh blessed Nabi Zakariya (‘a) and his wife and gave them the good news of a son - Nabi Yahya (‘a) - who would be special too.

Let us read this story from the Qur’ān:



﴿إِذْ قَالَتْ امْرَأَةُ عِمْرَانَ رَبِّ إِنِّي نَذَرْتُ لَكَ مَا فِي بَطْنِي مُحَرَّرًا فَتَقَبَّلْ مِنِّي إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ. فَلَمَّا وَضَعَتْهَا قَالَتْ رَبِّ إِنِّي وَضَعْتُهَا أُنْثَىٰ وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا وَضَعْتَ وَلَيْسَ الذَّكَرُ كَالْأُنْثَىٰ وَإِنِّي سَمَّيْتُهَا مَرْيَمَ وَإِنِّي أُعِيذُهَا بِكَ وَذُرِّيَّتَهَا مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ. فَتَقَبَّلَهَا رَبُّهَا بِقَبُولٍ حَسَنٍ وَأَنْبَتَهَا نَبَاتًا حَسَنًا وَكَفَّلَهَا زَكَرِيَّا كُلَّمَا دَخَلَ عَلَيْهَا زَكَرِيَّا الْمِحْرَابَ وَجَدَ عِنْدَهَا رِزْقًا قَالَ يَا مَرْيَمُ أَنَّىٰ لَكَ هَذَا قَالَتْ هُوَ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَرْزُقُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ. هُنَالِكَ دَعَا زَكَرِيَّا رَبَّهُ قَالَ رَبِّ هَبْ لِي مِنْ لَدُنْكَ ذُرِّيَّةً طَيِّبَةً إِنَّكَ سَمِيعُ الدُّعَاءِ. فَنَادَتْهُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ وَهُوَ قَائِمٌ يُصَلِّي فِي الْمِحْرَابِ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يُبَشِّرُكَ بِيحْيَىٰ مُصَدِّقًا بِكَلِمَةٍ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَسَيِّدًا وَحَصُورًا وَنَبِيًّا مِنْ

### الصَّالِحِينَ ﴿﴾

*When the wife of Imrān (Hannah) said, 'My Lord, I dedicate to You what is in my womb... accept it from me; indeed You are All-hearing, the All-knowing. And she gave birth to her, she said, '..... I have named her Maryam...'. And so her Lord accepted her.... And he made Zakariya in charge of her (Maryam's) care. Whenever Zakariya visited her in the chamber, he would find food with her. He said, 'O Maryam, from where does this come to you?'*

*She (Maryam) said, 'It comes from Allāh. Allāh provides whomever He wishes without any count.' At that point Zakariya prayed to his Lord. He said, 'My Lord! Grant me a good offspring from You! Indeed You hear all supplications.'*

*Then the angels called out to him as he stood praying in the mihrāb (sanctuary): 'Allāh gives you good news of Yahya.... (who will be) a leader and chaste, a prophet, among the righteous.'*

- Surah Al-i Imrān, 3:35-39

## Nabi Yahya ('a)

Nabi Yahya ('a) was special because he was named by Allāh Himself even before he was born, when the angels gave his father Nabi Zakariya ('a) the good news of his birth and said, 'Allāh gives you the good news of Yahya.'

From the time he was a child, Nabi Yahya ('a) was wise and knowledgeable. He worshipped Allāh a lot even as a child and he was always very kind to his parents and never spoke to them harshly.

Nabi Yahya ('a) was very soft-hearted. Whenever he heard any mention of Jahannam, he would start crying and ask Allāh to protect him from it. Nabi Yahya ('a) was also very brave. Not only did he teach people to follow Allāh's commands but when he saw people committing sins, he did not hesitate to speak out to try and stop them.

One day, Nabi Yahya ('a) found out that Herod, the King of Palestine, wanted to marry his own niece. Nabi Yahya ('a) was extremely annoyed, because this sort of marriage was harām and forbidden in the Tawrāt. He told people this was wrong and Allāh was displeased with this and soon everyone in the country began talking about it.

The King's niece wanted to marry the King as soon as possible because she wanted to become the Queen of Palestine. When she heard of Nabi Yahya's ('a) objection to the marriage, she became his enemy.

Once when the King was drunk she came to him and told him that if he wanted to marry her then Nabi Yahya ('a) must be killed as soon as possible. The King, to please his niece so that she would marry him, issued an order to have Nabi Yahya ('a) arrested and killed.

Soon, the King's men arrested Nabi Yahya ('a) and brutally murdered him by beheading him. Then his head was brought on a tray before the tyrant King. And because of this great sin, shortly after, Palestine was attacked and the King was killed and lost all his power and kingdom. In some hadith, Nabi Yahya ('a) and Imām Husayn ('a) are compared as being very similar. This is because both of them rose against the tyrant ruler of their time, both of them were killed unjustly and both of them were beheaded and their heads were brought on a tray before the tyrant ruler of their time.

Allāh has praised and blessed Nabi Yahya (‘a) in the Qur’ān for how kind he was, how much he remembered Allāh and obeyed his parents and Allāh has also blessed Nabi Yahya (‘a) from the day he was born until the Day of Judgement:

﴿...وَأَتَيْنَاهُ الْحُكْمَ صَبِيًّا وَحَنَانًا مِنْ لَدُنَّا وَزَكَاةً وَكَانَ تَقِيًّا. وَبَرًّا بِوَالِدَيْهِ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ جَبَّارًا عَصِيًّا وَسَلَامٌ عَلَيْهِ يَوْمَ وُلِدَ وَيَوْمَ يَمُوتُ وَيَوْمَ يُبْعَثُ حَيًّا﴾

*...and We gave him (Yahya) wisdom while still a child, and kind-heartedness and purity from Us. He (Yahya) was Godwary, and good to his parents, and he was not harsh or sinful. Peace be on him the day he was born, and the day he dies and the day he is raised alive!*

- Surah Maryam, 19:12-15

We should try and follow Nabi Zakariya (‘a) by never giving up hope in Allāh and always praying to Him even when we think it is impossible for something to happen. And we should follow Nabi Yahya (‘a) by always remembering Allāh and being good to our parents. And whoever does this, then they will be blessed by Allāh just as Nabi Zakariya (‘a) and Nabi Yahya (‘a) were blessed.

## Lesson 2

# Sayyida Maryam (‘a) & Nabí ‘Isa (‘a)

Sayyida Maryam (‘a) was the mother of Nabí ‘Isa (‘a) and she was a descendant of Nabí Dāwud (‘a) and Nabí Sulaymān (‘a). We learnt in the previous lesson that from the time Sayyida Maryam (‘a) was born, Nabí Zakariya (‘a) looked after her and he kept her in a closed room in the sacred mosque in Jerusalem (Bayt al-Muqaddas) where no one could see her except Nabí Zakariya (‘a).

We also saw that Sayyida Maryam (‘a) spent all her time in worship and Allāh used to send special food for her from Jannah. The reason why Allāh chose such a special life for Sayyida Maryam (‘a) is because she was going to give birth to a great prophet (nabí) and messenger (rasul) - Nabí ‘Isa (‘a) - and he would be born miraculously without a father.

When Sayyida Maryam (‘a) was old enough to leave the sacred mosque, the angel Jibrāil (‘a) came to her and told her that Allāh has chosen her over all the women in the world for a special miracle. She would give birth to a great prophet.

‘But how will I have a son when I am not married?’ she asked the angel Jibrāil (‘a) but Jibrāil (‘a) assured her and told her that nothing was impossible for Allāh. When Allāh wishes to do something, He just says ‘Be!’ and it is done.

And so Sayyida Maryam (‘a) became pregnant miraculously. When she had her child, all the priests in the temple who were jealous of her and her special son began spreading rumours that Sayyida Maryam (‘a) was not a good and chaste woman because she gave birth to a child even though she was not married.

Allāh told Sayyida Maryam (‘a) not to say anything. Instead, the baby, Nabí ‘Isa (‘a) spoke from the cradle miraculously. He said to the people, ‘I am a servant of Allāh. I have been given a Book and Allāh has made me a prophet.’

Allāh describes the whole incident in the Qur’ān:

﴿فَأَتَتْ بِهِ قَوْمَهَا تَحْمِلُهُ قَالُوا يَا مَرْيَمُ لَقَدْ جِئْتِ شَيْئًا فَرِيًّا. يَا أُخْتَ هَارُونَ مَا كَانَ أَبُوكِ امْرَأَ سَوْءٍ وَمَا كَانَتْ أُمُّكَ بَعْثًا. فَأَشَارَتْ إِلَيْهِ قَالُوا كَيْفَ نُكَلِّمُ مَنْ كَانَ فِي الْمَهْدِ صَبِيًّا. قَالَ إِنِّي عَبْدُ اللَّهِ آتَانِيَ الْكِتَابَ وَجَعَلَنِي نَبِيًّا. وَجَعَلَنِي مُبَارَكًا أَيْنَ مَا كُنْتُ وَأَوْصَانِي بِالصَّلَاةِ وَالزَّكَاةِ مَا دُمْتُ حَيًّا. وَبَرًّا بِوَالِدَتِي وَلَمْ يَجْعَلْنِي جَبَّارًا شَقِيًّا وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَيَّ يَوْمَ وُلِدْتُ وَيَوْمَ أَمُوتُ وَيَوْمَ أُبْعَثُ حَيًّا. ذَلِكَ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ قَوْلَ الْحَقِّ الَّذِي فِيهِ يَمْتَرُونَ. مَا كَانَ لِلَّهِ أَنْ يَتَّخِذَ مِنْ وُلْدٍ سُبْحَانَهُ إِذَا قَضَىٰ أَمْرًا فَإِنَّمَا يَقُولُ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ﴾

*Then carrying him (Isa), she (Maryam) brought him to her people. They said, 'O Maryam, you have certainly come with an odd thing! O sister of Hārun! Your father was not an evil man nor was your mother unchaste.' So she pointed to him (the baby). They said, 'how can we speak to one who is yet a baby in the cradle?'*

*He (Isa) said, 'Indeed I am a servant of Allāh! He has given me a Book and made me a prophet. He has made me blessed, wherever I may be, and He has commanded me to the prayer (salāh) and to [give] the alms as long as I live, and to be good to my mother, and He has not made me harsh and wretched. Peace is on me the day I was born, and the day I die, and the day I am raised alive.'*

*That is Isa, son of Maryam.... It is not for Allāh to take a son. Glory be to Him! When He decides a matter, He just says to it, 'Be!' and it is.*

- Surah Maryam, 19:27-35

All the people were shocked to hear the baby speak. This was a miracle.

When Nabi Isa ('a) grew up and Allāh revealed the **Injil** to him, he began preaching to people and telling them to worship Allāh only and not to love the world. Allāh also gave Nabi Isa ('a) some very special miracles and abilities. For example, he could bring the dead back to life, he could cure those who were very sick (like the lepers and the blind), he could walk on water, he could create birds out of clay and breath life into them, and he could tell people what they had hidden in their homes and what food they had eaten or were going to eat the next day.

Nabi Isa ('a) was an ascetic. This means he lived a very, very simple life. His clothes were very simple and he ate very basic and little food. He would go from place to place telling people to prepare themselves for the hereafter, which is the permanent place of stay. He also gave people the good news that after him there would come a final prophet, who would be the best of Allāh's messenger and his name would be Ahmad (which is the other name of Rasulullāh (s) and means the same as Muhammad).

Some people began listening to the message of Nabi Isa ('a) and many of the priests from Banu Isrāil became very jealous of Nabi Isa ('a). A small group of people became very close followers of Nabi Isa ('a) and went with him wherever he went. In the Qur'ān, these followers are called the *hawāriyun* (disciples) of Nabi Isa ('a).

During those days, the Banu Isrāil were ruled by the Romans and so the priests of Banu Isrāil asked for help from the Roman rulers and soldiers to arrest Nabi Isa ('a) and to have him crucified. Allāh however told Nabi Isa ('a) that he was going to rescue him.

One of the people from the Banu Isrāil, took a group of Roman soldiers with him to the place where Nabi Isa ('a) was, so they could arrest him. Instead Allāh raised Nabi Isa ('a) to the heavens and saved him and the man who came into the room to confirm Nabi Isa ('a) was there, his face was changed and he was made to look like Nabi Isa ('a). When he came out of the room to call the soldiers, they thought he was Nabi Isa ('a) and so they arrested him and took him away and had him crucified. Allāh says in the Qur'ān:

﴿وَقَوْلِهِمْ إِنَّا قَتَلْنَا الْمَسِيحَ عِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَمَا قَتَلُوهُ وَمَا صَلَّبُوهُ وَلَكِنَّهُ  
شُبِّهَ لَهُمْ وَإِنَّ الَّذِينَ اخْتَلَفُوا فِيهِ لَفِي شَكٍّ مِنْهُ مَا لَهُمْ بِهِ مِنْ عِلْمٍ إِلَّا اتِّبَاعَ الظَّنِّ وَمَا  
قَتَلُوهُ يَقِينًا بَلْ رَفَعَهُ اللَّهُ إِلَيْهِ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَزِيزًا حَكِيمًا﴾

*And their saying (boastfully), 'Indeed we killed the Messiah, Isa son of Maryam, the Messenger of Allāh.' But they did not kill him, and they did not crucify him. But it was made to appear to them (that they had)... and they most certainly did not kill him. Rather Allāh raised him up to Himself; and Allāh is All-mighty, All-wise.*

- Surah an-Nisā, 4:157-158

We are told in hadith that towards the end of the world when Imām al-Hujjah b. al-Hasan al-Mahdi ('atfs) returns to establish peace and justice in the world, Nabi Isa ('a) will also come back from the heavens to the earth and he will help Imām al-Mahdi ('a).

After Nabi Isa ('a) was raised to the heavens, some people began believing that he was crucified, and that he came back to life after being dead for three days, and that because he was born without a father therefore he must be the son of God, and so on. These ideas spread throughout the Roman Empire until it became part of a new religion – the Christian religion. Most Christians today believe that Nabi Isa ('a) (whom they call Jesus) is the son of God. Allāh condemns this very strongly in the Qur'ān because Allāh is One, He has no partner or son. He can create a child without a father very easily just as He created Nabi Adam ('a) without a father or a mother.

During the time of Rasulullāh (s) a Christian group with their highest priests came from Najrān to Madina to debate with Rasulullāh (s) about Nabi Isa ('a).

Rasulullāh (s) was told to tell them:

﴿إِنَّ مَثَلَ عِيسَىٰ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ كَمَثَلِ آدَمَ خَلَقَهُ مِنْ تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ قَالَ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ﴾

*The example of Isa to Allāh is like the example of Adam. He created him (Adam) from dust (without a father or mother) then He said to him, 'Be!' and he was!*

- Surah Al-i Imrān, 3:59

But they refused to accept this and finally Rasulullāh (s) offered to engage in Mubāhala (asking Allāh under the open sky to curse the liars). At first the Christians agreed but when they saw Rasulullāh (s) coming with his Ahl al-Bayt ('a), they realized they will be destroyed by Allāh so they refused to engage in mubāhala and returned to Najrān.

When Nabi Isa ('a) returns, he will inform all the Christians that he was never crucified and that he is not the son of God. And thereafter most of the Christians will accept the message of Islam and the Qur'ān and the whole world will follow Islam and Imām al-Mahdi ('atfs) as their leader.

## Lesson 3

# Migration to Abyssinia & Sanctions against Muslims

### The Persecution of Early Muslims

After inviting his close relatives to Islam, Rasulullāh (s) began to tell all the people of Makkah about his mission. He called all the tribes to the mountain of Safa, and then said to them, 'If I tell you that an enemy is hiding behind this mountain ready to attack you all, would you believe me?'

All of them replied, 'Yes, because you are as-Sādiq (the Truthful) and we have never heard you tell a lie.' Then Rasulullāh (s) said, 'Save yourselves from the punishment of Hellfire. Believe that there is no god but Allāh, and you will be successful.' When they heard this message, there was confusion amongst the people and Abu Lahab, the uncle and enemy of Rasulullāh (s) tried to stop people from paying attention to Rasulullāh (s). He said loudly, 'You have wasted our time with all this nonsense.'

Now the people of Makkah forgot that they themselves used to call Rasulullāh (s) 'as-Sādiq' (the Truthful) and 'al-Amin' (the Trustworthy). Instead they began to call him a liar and a madman. They began to make life difficult for him by spreading thorns on his



path and getting children to throw stones at him. Sometimes they would throw rubbish on him as he passed under their windows.

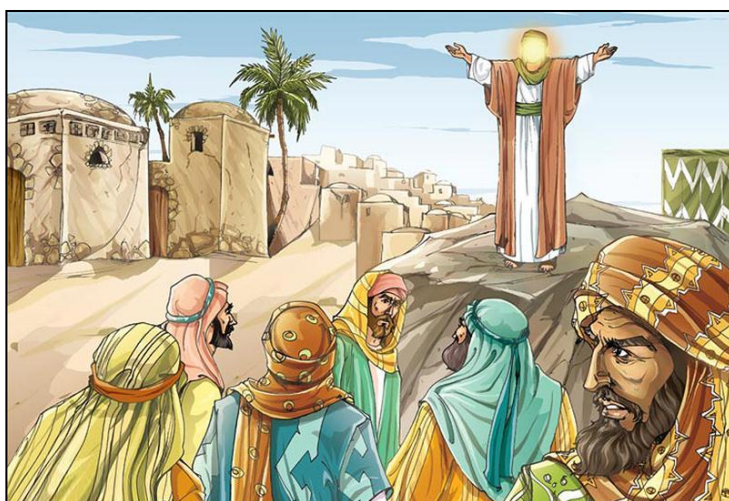
All these acts had no effect on Rasulullāh (s), and he did not give up preaching the worship of One God (Allāh) against the countless gods worshipped by the Makkans. When the number of Muslims began to slowly increase, the chiefs of some tribes became worried, and they came



to Hadrat Abu Tālib ('a), the uncle and guardian of Rasulullāh (s), and asked him to stop his nephew from preaching his religion.

They offered to give Rasulullāh (s) money, power or anything he wanted, as long as he would give up talking against their gods. When Hadrat Abu Tālib ('a) told Rasulullāh (s) about their message, he said, 'By Allāh, even if these people put the sun in my one hand and the moon in the other, I would not give up what Allāh has commanded me to do.'

The leaders of Makkah therefore began harassing Rasulullāh (s) all the



time. The main troublemakers included Abu Sufyān, Abu Jahl, and Utba bin Rabi'. Although they could not attack him openly because of the power and influence of Hadrat Abu Tālib ('a), they took every opportunity to create difficulties for him.

Once, when Rasulullāh (s) was offering prayers next to the Holy Ka'bah, Abu Jahl got some members of Quraysh to throw the intestines of a goat on his shoulders while he was in sajdah. After Rasulullāh (s) finished his prayers, he prayed to Allāh to curse each one of them. History tells us that all the people who had taken part in this act, including Abu Jahl and Utba bin Rabi', were killed in the battle of Badr, the very first battle of Islam.

When the Makkans saw that they could not stop Rasulullāh (s), they turned their attention to the new Muslims, especially those who were poor or weak and could not defend themselves. Many of the early Muslims were poor or did not come from powerful tribes who would protect them and so they began to face the most terrible cruelties at the hands of the Quraysh tribal leaders.

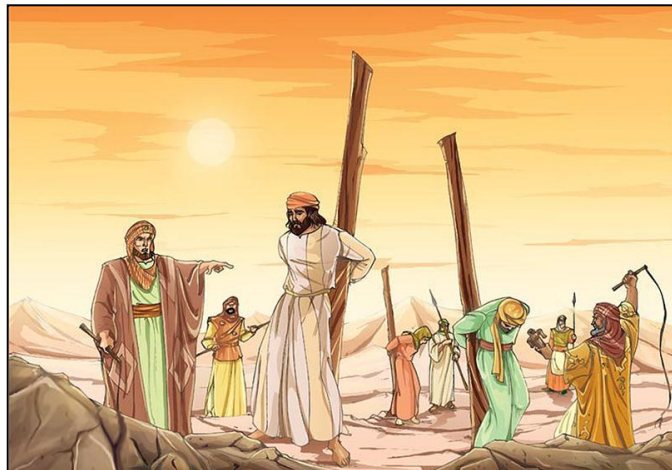
Abu Dhar al-Ghifāri, for example, was one of the early Muslim converts. When he declared that he had accepted Islam, the Quraysh beat him up so badly that he was half dead. When the uncle of Rasulullāh (s), Abbās bin

Abd al-Muttalib, passed by and saw what they were doing, he reminded the Quraysh that Abu Dhar was from the tribe of Banu Ghifār who used to live next to the route of the trade caravans. If they learnt that the Quraysh had tortured a member of their tribe, they would not let the Makkan trade caravans pass safely. On hearing this, the greedy Quraysh left Abu Dhar alone.

Bilāl al-Habashi (the Ethiopian) was the Muadhhdhin (prayer caller) of Rasulullāh (s). Before he became a Muslim, he was the slave of Umayya bin Khalaf. When Bilāl embraced Islam, his cruel master was very angry and began to torture him mercilessly. He would make Bilāl lie on the hot sands of the desert without a shirt and place a large stone on his chest so that he could not escape the burning sand. At other times he would tie a rope around his neck and have him dragged around the hills of Makkah. Despite these cruelties, Bilāl continued to say 'Ahad! Ahad!', meaning 'Only One (God)! Only One (God)!' Finally, Rasulullāh's (s) uncle Abbās convinced Umayya to free Bilāl in exchange for some gold coins.

Lubeena was the slave-maid of Umar bin al-Khattāb (who was later made the 2<sup>nd</sup> Caliph of the Muslims). When Lubeena first became a Muslim, Umar bin al-Khattāb was an enemy of Islam and he would beat her so much that he himself would get tired.

Ammār bin Yāsir and his parents - Yāsir and Sumayya - were also amongst the first Muslims. The Quraysh disbelievers tried to make them change their minds but they refused. So they took Ammār and his parents to the desert and started beating and torturing them. This was



repeated many times until Ammār's father, Yāsir died. When his pregnant wife Sumayya complained to Abu Jahl about this inhuman treatment Abu Jahl took his spear and thrust it into her heart. Yāsir and Sumayya are therefore the first martyrs of Islam. They died for the sake of their faith and because they refused to worship idols.

Then they turned to Ammār and beat him so terribly that he nearly died. They threatened to kill him unless he declared that he was no longer a Muslim. To save his life, Ammār agreed to give up Islam. Later on, Ammār came to Rasulullāh (s) and cried that he had rejected Islam under force and torture. Rasulullāh (s) said that Ammār was full of faith (*imān*) from head to toe and that he should not be afraid to hide his faith in order to save his life. Rasulullāh (s) then told Ammār that if he is tortured again, he should repeat his words of disbelieving in Allāh once again. As long as in his heart he remains convinced of Islam and that there is no god by Allāh.

## Migration to Abyssinia

When the number of Muslims grew and life became very difficult for them in Makkah, Rasulullāh (s) advised a group of his followers to migrate to Abyssinia (Ethiopia), which was ruled by a kind and just Christian king named Najjāshi.

This was the first migration (hijrah) in Islam that included 10 Muslims only. It took place five years after the bi'thah (when Rasulullāh (s) began receiving revelation and preaching Islam). A second, larger group of Muslims also migrated soon afterwards, under the leadership of Ja'far bin Abu Tālib, the brother of Imām Ali (a). The Muslims were welcomed with much kindness in Abyssinia and found the life there very pleasant and comfortable.

When the chiefs of Makkah found out that a group of the Muslims had migrated and were living peacefully in Abyssinia, they were angry that the defenceless Muslims had actually managed to escape their torture. They also became worried that the Muslims might turn King Najjāshi of Abyssinia towards Islam and against them. They decided to send two men with gifts for the King and his ministers in order to convince him to send the Muslims back to Makkah.

When the two men reached Abyssinia, they first met the ministers and gave them expensive gifts. They convinced the greedy ministers to support them when they meet the King. The following day, they met King Najjāshi in his court. After presenting him with gifts, they said, 'a group of our young men have gone against the beliefs of our forefathers and have invented a

new religion. These people have now fled to your country. I request you to hand them over to us so that we can take them back to Arabia.'

As soon as this speech was over, the ministers loudly declared their support for this request. However, King Najjāshi was a wise man. He took no notice of them and asked whether the Muslim refugees had killed anyone, or stolen anybody's property or had committed any crimes in Makkah. And there was no reply.

The King then announced, 'if they are living under my protection, I cannot hand them over to you without a proper investigation.'

He sent a message to the Muslims that their leader should come to the court. Ja'far bin Abu Tālib came with a group of Muslims to present the case for the Muslims. The King turned to Ja'far and asked, 'why have you given up the beliefs of your forefathers and started a new religion?'

Ja'far replied, 'We used to be ignorant people who worshipped idols. We fought amongst ourselves over petty things. We buried our daughters alive and ill-treated our women. We had no respect for other people's property. The strong amongst us oppressed the weak. We lied and cheated all the time. Until Allāh sent amongst us a messenger to guide us to the truth and invite us to worship one God. He taught us to be truthful, honest and just.

He taught us to respect other people's property, to behave well with our relatives, to respect our neighbours and women and to avoid lying. He ordered us to offer prayers, to fast and to pay religious tax on our wealth. We have believed in him and worship Allāh. However, the Quraysh have behaved very cruelly towards us. We resisted them for some time, but now we have come to live here to save ourselves. The fame of your kindness has brought us to your country and we have perfect faith in your justice.'

The two men from Quraysh then tried to turn the King against Islam and said, 'these people don't believe Jesus is the son of God. They say he is only a slave of God!'

The King questioned Ja'far about what they believed about Jesus and his mother Mary. Ja'far then recited some āyāt from Surah Maryam and the King was so impressed, he began to weep. He was convinced that these

were the words of Allāh and that Muhammad (s) was the Messenger of Allāh.

King Najjāshi then told the two men from Quraysh to take their gifts back and to return to Makkah. He told them that he would never surrender the Muslims to them and he told Ja'far and the Muslims that they were free to live in Abyssinia for as long as they wished.

Ja'far and the Muslims with him lived in Abyssinia for a long time. After preaching for 12 years in Makkah, Rasulullāh (s) migrated to Madina. Ja'far bin Abu Tālib and the Muslims were still in Abyssinia. Thereafter in the year 7 AH (i.e. 7 years after Rasulullāh (s) migrated to Madina), when the Muslims had just won the Battle of Khaybar, Ja'far bin Abu Tālib arrived in Madina with the other Muslims.

When Rasulullāh (s) saw Ja'far after so many years, he wept with joy and said he didn't know whether to rejoice and thank Allāh for the victory at Khaybar by Imām Ali ('a) or to rejoice and thank Allāh for the return of Ja'far, the brother of Imām Ali ('a).

Hadrat Ja'far b. Abi Tālib was later martyred in a battle and his arms were cut off and he was killed. Rasulullāh (s) cried for Ja'far and said that Allāh had given Ja'far two wings in paradise where he was able to fly wherever he pleased.

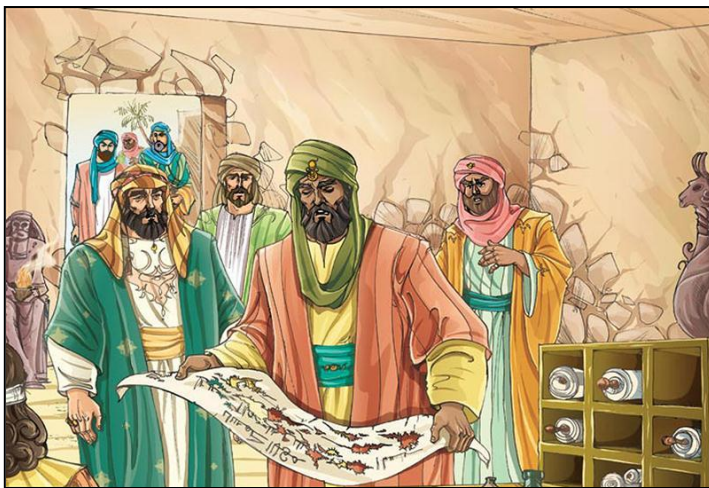
Class Activity: Watch the clip from the movie 'The Message' of Ja'far b. Abi Tālib (r) debating with the Makkan ambassadors in the court of King Najjāshi of Abyssinia and Ja'far reciting āyāt of Surah Maryam before the King and the King's response.

## Sanctions Against Muslims

When the two men of Quraysh returned to Makkah from Abyssinia, humiliated and defeated, the chiefs of Quraysh were very disturbed and alarmed to see that the religion of Islam was gaining strength in spite of all their efforts. By now, well-respected people like Hamza bin Abd al-Muttalib, the uncle of Rasulullāh (s), and some powerful men of Quraysh had become Muslims. The chiefs could not bear to stand by and watch Islam spread in this manner and so they held a meeting to plan a way to stop it.

They decided to impose sanctions on all the Muslims and in this way stop their activities. An agreement was drafted and hung on the walls of the Ka'bah, and the community of Makkah was told to act according to it. The agreement stated that:

- All trade and business with the supporters of Muhammad shall be banned.
- Any association with them is strictly prohibited.
- No one is allowed to marry the daughters or sons of the Muslims.
- All those who oppose Muhammad should be supported in all circumstances.



This agreement was signed by all the chiefs of the Quraysh and was put into action straight away. Abu Tālib, the uncle of Rasulullāh (s), however pledged to support the entire Banu Hāshim clan to his nephew. And Sayyida Khadija ('a), the wife of

Rasulullāh (s) also promised to spend her wealth to help the Muslims. Abu Tālib advised all the Muslims to move out of Makkah into a valley in the mountains. Thus, the Muslims moved out of their homes into the place known as the 'Valley of Abu Tālib' (Shi'b Abu Tālib), and set up small houses and tents.

To protect themselves from a sudden attack from the Quraysh, some men were posted as guards. The Muslims were forced to remain in the valley for three years. During this time they suffered terrible hardships. Food was in very short supply, and many had to survive on a single date or less per day. The Banu Hāshim were only allowed out of the valley during the special months of Rajab and Dhul Hijjah when fighting was not allowed. But because no one was willing to do business with them, they depended on the wealth of Sayyida Khadija ('a) to purchase their necessities at very high costs.

Enemies like Abu Lahab, made things more difficult for them by encouraging the shopkeepers to raise the price of food so that the Banu Hāshim could not afford to buy very much. Throughout these difficult times, the Muslims did not lose heart and remained strongly attached to Islam and Rasulullāh (s). Finally some of the Makkans began to regret their shameful action against the Muslims, who were their relatives. They became ashamed for having signed the agreement and began to look for a solution to the problem. They called a meeting of the Quraysh proposing to end the sanctions and allow the Muslims to return home.

Although Abu Jahl was not in favour of allowing them back, when the chiefs decided to look at the agreement they had signed and hung in the Ka'bah, they found that termites had eaten up the entire agreement and only the words 'In the Name of our Lord' remained. The other leaders therefore pressured Abu Jahl to remove the sanctions and allow the Muslims back into society.

The patience and reliance on Allāh in the face of hardships by these early Muslims is a great lesson to us all.

## Lesson 4

# 'Aam al-Huzn & Journey to Táif

Although the Muslims were relieved to return home from 'the Valley of Abu Tālib', the plotting against them did not stop. Soon thereafter, in that same year, both Hadrat Abu Tālib ('a) and Sayyida Khadija ('a) passed away.

In part this was due to the three years of hardships in *Shi'b Abu Tālib*. The wealth of Sayyida Khadija ('a) was all gone. And with Hadrat Abu Tālib ('a) gone too, the Quraysh thought Rasulullāh (s) was now without anyone to protect him so they could even



assassinate him. Soon Rasulullāh (s) would have to leave Makkah, his birthplace and hometown, for good and migrate to Madina.

Rasulullāh (s) was very sad to lose both his uncle and guardian Abu Tālib as well as his wife Sayyida Khadija ('a) just a month later. Because of his sorrow and grief, the Muslims named that year, '*Aam al-Huzn*', which means 'the Year of Sorrow'.

### Hadrat Abu Tālib ('a)

Of all the sons of Abd al-Muttalib (who were the uncles of Rasulullāh (s)), Hadrat Abu Tālib ('a) had been the greatest supporter and defender of Rasulullāh (s).

When Rasulullāh (s) was still a young child, Hadrat Abu Tālib ('a) took him in as his own child despite his extreme poverty and he treated Rasulullāh (s) better than his own sons. When there was not enough food to eat in the house, Hadrat Abu Tālib ('a) would feed Rasulullāh (s) with his own hands and keep his own sons hungry. And when Rasulullāh



(s) began preaching Islam, in order to protect him from being attacked by his enemies, Hadrat Abu Tālib (‘a) would order one of his sons, usually Imām Ali (‘a), to sleep in the place of Rasulullāh (s) and he would move Rasulullāh (s) around to sleep elsewhere.

Hadrat Abu Tālib (‘a) believed so much in the excellence of Rasulullāh (s) that he used to request the blessings of Allāh by using his nephew's name. Once, when the Quraysh were faced with a terrible drought, they came to Abu Tālib begging him to pray for rain. Abu Tālib (‘a) held the hand of Rasulullāh (s), who was then only a young boy, and raised his head to the skies, saying, ‘O Lord, send down rain for the sake of this young boy, and favour us with your blessings.’ His prayer was hardly over when rain began to fall heavily.

As Rasulullāh (s) grew older, Hadrat Abu Tālib (‘a) involved him in trade caravans, giving him experience in dealing with people. When he was 25 years old, it was Hadrat Abu Tālib (‘a) who arranged for a proposal of marriage to be sent to Sayyida Khadija (‘a).

During the marriage ceremony, Hadrat Abu Tālib (‘a) declared the superiority of his nephew compared to all other youth and recited the marriage formula (nikāh) himself.

When Rasulullāh (s) declared his mission, Hadrat Abu Tālib (‘a) stood faithfully by his side and never stepped back from the defence of his nephew. Although Hadrat Abu Tālib (‘a) began to lose his position amongst the Quraysh as a leader of Makkah because of his support for his nephew, he did not for one moment stop defending Rasulullāh (s) and what he preached.

At the first meeting called Da’wat Dhul ‘Ashira where Rasulullāh (s) announced his mission to his family, Abu Lahab kept trying to stop Rasulullāh (s) from speaking and it was Hadrat Abu Tālib (‘a) who stood up and stopped Abu Lahab and then asked Rasulullāh (s) to stand and say whatever he pleased. Hadrat Abu Tālib (‘a) even encouraged his son Imām Ali (‘a) to always follow Rasulullāh (s) and to pray with him publicly.

The actions of Hadrat Abu Tālib (‘a) throughout his life confirm that he was a Muslim and believed in the religion of Allāh. The non-Shi’ah

Muslims believe that Hadrat Abu Tālib (‘a) was not a Muslim because he never recited the kalima and even refused to do so at his deathbed. But these are lies that were spread by the Banu Umayya later on out of their hatred for Imām Ali (‘a) (because Hadrat Abu Tālib (‘a) was the father of Imām Ali (‘a)). For example, the Umayyad Caliph Mu’āwiyā, the son of Abu Sufyān and father of Yazid ordered all the Muslim Imāms during his rule to curse Imām Ali (‘a) before every sermon and in every Friday prayer. This continued for 70 years. Mu’āwiyā also ordered a lot of lies to be forged as ‘hadith’ against Imām Ali (‘a) and his family, which included Imām Ali (‘a)’s father, Hadrat Abu Tālib (‘a).

Hadrat Abu Tālib (‘a) of course could not openly say he was a Muslim because then he would not be able to defend and protect Rasulullāh (s) from the Quraysh leaders. As long as the Quraysh leaders did not know his faith, they had to respect Hadrat Abu Tālib (‘a) as a leader of Makkah and could not touch Rasulullāh (s). If Hadrat Abu Tālib (‘a) had not been a Muslim, he could not have recited the marriage formula (‘aqd) of Rasulullāh (s) and Sayyida Khadija (‘a). Rasulullāh (s) would also have refused to take his help in the Valley (Shi’b) of Hadrat Abu Tālib (‘a) and on so many other occasions. The Qur’ān clearly forbids Rasulullāh (s) from taking any help from the polytheists and disbelievers. Furthermore, the Qur’ān praises an individual in the court of Fir’aun who used to hide his faith in Allāh so that Fir’aun would not harm him but he could protect Nabi Musa (‘a) from the plots of Fir’aun:

﴿وَقَالَ رَجُلٌ مُؤْمِنٌ مِنْ آلِ فِرْعَوْنَ يَكْتُمُ إِيمَانَهُ أَتَقْتُلُونَ رَجُلًا أَنْ يَقُولَ رَبِّيَ اللَّهُ  
وَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ...﴾

*Said a man of faith from Pharaoh’s clan, **who concealed his faith**, ‘Will you kill a man for saying, “My Lord is Allāh,” while he has already brought you manifest proofs from your Lord? ...*

- Surah al-Ghāfir, 40:28

This man is called *Mu’min Aal Fir’aun* (the Faithful from the Family of Fir’aun). Hadrat Abu Tālib (‘a) was like *Mu’min Aal Fir’aun* during the 12 years in Makkah that Rasulullāh (s) preached Islam.

Allāh has also commanded Rasulullāh (s) not to pray for the disbelievers and hypocrites after they die and not to stand at their grave and ask for

their forgiveness. But we know that Rasulullāh (s) always continued to remember Hadrat Abu Tālib (‘a) and to praise him; and because of his sorrow for his loss, the Muslims named the year that Hadrat Abu Tālib (‘a) died as ‘Aam al-Huzn’.

Every Muslim also believes that Sayyida Fatima bint Asad, the wife of Hadrat Abu Tālib (‘a) and mother of Imām Ali (‘a) was a Muslim. A Muslim woman cannot remain married to a man who is not a Muslim after she accepts Islam. So this is another proof that Hadrat Abu Tālib (‘a) could not have been a polytheist.

In his will, Hadrat Abu Tālib (‘a) instructed his children to always stand by Rasulullāh (s) and to never leave him. He also advised them to follow Islam, so that they would be successful.

### Exercise

If someone tells you that Hadrat Abu Tālib (‘a) was not a Muslim, how would you try to convince him that he was? Write a few sentences on the arguments you would use.

## Sayyida Khadija (‘a)

Sayyida Khadija (‘a) was the first and the most beloved wife of Rasulullāh (s). She is the mother of Sayyida Fatima al-Zahra (‘a), the only daughter of Rasulullāh (s) and whom Rasulullāh (s) loved the most and who is the leader of all the women of the world. Sayyida Khadija (‘a) had been the richest woman in Arabia when she married Rasulullāh (s). When Rasulullāh (s) declared his prophethood 15 years later, she was the first woman to believe in him and accept Islam.

Thereafter, she gave her entire wealth for the sake of Islam. Rasulullāh (s) used her wealth to spread Islam and to buy the freedom of many slaves who had become Muslims. Rasulullāh (s) always used to remember Sayyida Khadija (‘a) after her passing away, even when he had migrated to Madina and married other wives. He would always talk about how she believed in his message when everyone around him was calling him a liar and how she gave all her wealth and support to Islam when others were denying it.

Rasulullāh (s) said that the four most excellent women in this world and in paradise are:

1. Sayyida Fatima az-Zahra (‘a), the daughter of Rasulullāh (s).
2. Sayyida Khadija bint Khuwaylid (‘a), the wife of Rasulullāh (s).
3. Sayyida Aasiya bint Mazāhim (‘a) the wife of Fir’aun. She supported and believed in Nabi Musa (‘a) and was killed by her husband for that.
4. Sayyida Maryam bint Imrān (‘a), the mother of Nabi Isa (‘a).

The loss of Hadrat Abu Tālib (‘a) and Sayyida Khadija (‘a) was not only ‘The Year of Sorrow’ for Rasulullāh (s) but also a great loss of support in Makkah that resulted in Allāh commanding Rasulullāh (s) to migrate to Madina.

## The Journey to Tāif

After the passing away of Hadrat Abu Tālib (‘a), Rasulullāh (s) was faced with increasing difficulties and problems in Makkah. Without his uncle's protection, his life was in constant danger, and there wasn't much of an opportunity to spread Islam.

Rasulullāh (s) decided to try and preach Islam outside Makkah. In those days the town of Tāif was a busy and important centre of trade. Rasulullāh (s) went to Tāif alone and contacted the tribe of Banu Thaḳif with a view to invite them to Islam.

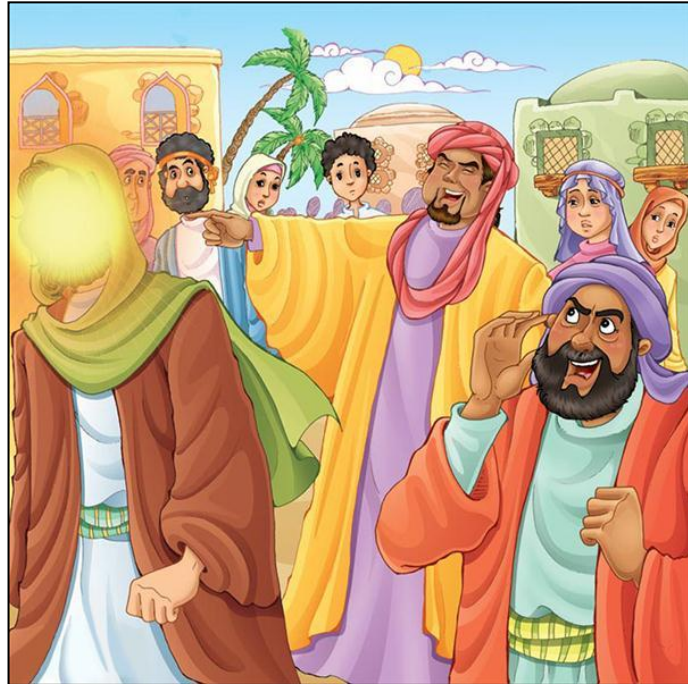
After arriving in Tāif, he met the chief and elders of that tribe and explained to them the belief in One God and asked them for their support. However, his words did not have any effect on them and they rejected his message. Rasulullāh (s) realised that the people of the town could become a threat to him because he was alone and away from his hometown. He therefore took a promise from the Banu Thaḳif that they would not talk about his presence in Tāif.

The elders of Banu Thaḳif did not keep their promise to Rasulullāh (s) and instead asked the hooligans of the town to harass him. Rasulullāh (s)

found himself suddenly surrounded by a mob that began to insult him. When they began to throw stones at him, he took refuge in a garden.

The garden belonged to two wealthy people of the Quraysh. Rasulullāh (s) had sweat on his face and parts of his body were hurt and bleeding from the cruel attack. He sank down under a tree for some rest, and prayed: 'O Lord! I present my weakness and lack of strength before You. You are the kind Nourisher and the Helper of the weak. To whom are You abandoning me?'

Although the owners of the garden were idol worshippers, they were moved by the condition of Rasulullāh (s) and felt sorry for him. They told a Christian slave to take a plate of grapes to him.



When the Christian presented the grapes to Rasulullāh (s), he took one and ate it, saying, 'In the Name of Allāh, the Beneficent, the Most Merciful'. The Christian was very surprised to hear these words and remarked that he had not heard the Arabs pray to anyone but Laat and Uzza, the great idols.

Rasulullāh (s) asked him about his birthplace and his religion. He replied that he came from Nineveh and was a Christian.

On hearing his answer, Rasulullāh (s) said, 'That is the place where my brother Yunus (Jonah) son of Mata (Matthew) lived.' The Christian was very surprised to hear these names. He asked, 'How do you know Yunus son of Mata (the Nabi who was swallowed by a big fish)? Nobody in this country has heard of him.' Rasulullāh (s) then said, 'Yunus was a Prophet of Allāh like myself.'

The words of Rasulullāh (s) had a great effect on the slave and he immediately bowed and kissed the hands of Rasulullāh (s) and expressed his faith in him.

When he returned to his masters, they asked him what the conversation was all about. He replied, 'The person who is sitting in your garden is the chief of all humanity. He has told me things that only a Prophet can know.' This reply annoyed them very much but all they said to him was that his own religion was better than Islam.

Rasulullāh (s) left Tāif disappointed that he had not been successful in bringing its people to the right path. He decided to return to Makkah.

Soon afterwards, Rasulullāh (s) migrated to Madina. In the later years, the Muslims took over Tāif and defeated the Banu Thaḳif. However, Rasulullāh (s) forgave the people of Tāif and never took revenge.

The journey of Rasulullāh (s) to Tāif in difficult circumstances shows us how committed he was to his duty to spread the religion of Islam and how much he suffered for the sake of preaching the Truth.

## Lesson 5

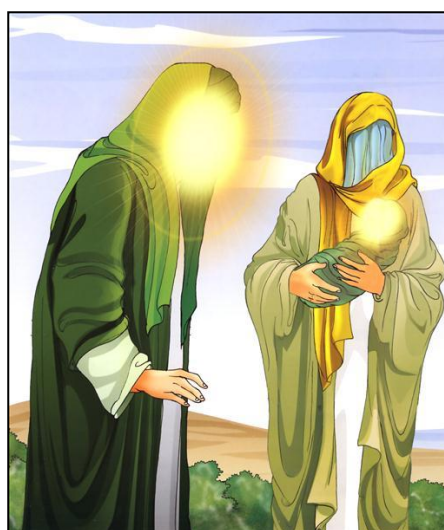
# Imām ‘Alí ar-Rída (‘a)

### His Birth

On 11<sup>th</sup> Dhul Qa’ada 148 AH, the eight Imām of Islam, Imām Ali b. Musa ar-Rida (‘a) was born in the city of Madina al-Munawwara.

His father is Imām Musa b. Ja’far al-Kādhim (‘a) and his mother was a very pious lady called Sayyida Najma who used pray and recite tasbih excessively.

As he grew up, Imām Ali ar-Rida (‘a) came to be known for his magnificent character. He was unmatched in his noble akhlāq and everyone talked about it.



A famous man of the time called Ibrāhim b. al-Abbās said, ‘I never heard ar-Rida (‘a) say anything hurtful to anyone. He would never interrupt anyone who was speaking until the person finished. He would never turn away anyone who came to him for help. When he sat with others, he never stretched his legs or leaned back lazily. He never even scolded his servants or workers. I never saw him spit or laugh loudly. His laughter was only a smile. When he sat down to eat, all his family and servants would sit with him at the same dining table including the labourers. If anyone imagines he has seen anyone like Imām ar-Rida (‘a) in excellence and character then don’t believe him!’

One man accompanied the Imām on his journey to Khorāsān and when he saw the Imām was sitting to eat with his servants and labourers, he said to him, ‘Son of Rasulullāh, why don’t we keep a separate table for them?’

Imām ar-Rida (‘a) refused and said to him, ‘The Lord is one. Our father (Adam) is one and the same. Our mother (Hawwā) is one. We will be rewarded according to our actions only.’

Then someone said, 'By Allāh, there is no one on the earth whose ancestors were more honourable than you!'

But the Imām did not like to be flattered either. So he replied, 'It is because they were so conscious of not disobeying Allāh (i.e. their taqwa) that they were so honourable.'

The man swore in the name of Allāh and said, 'I swear by Allāh, you are the best of people.'



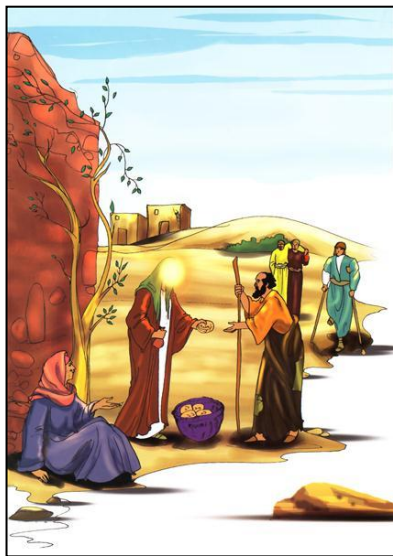
Imām Ali ar-Rida ('a) replied again and said, 'Do not swear! The best of people is the one who is most conscious of not disobeying Allāh because Allāh says in the Qur'ān:

﴿...إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ...﴾

*...indeed the most honoured of you in the sight of Allāh is the most Godwary among you...*

- Surah al-Hujurāt, 49:13

Imām Ali ar-Rida ('a) was always concerned about the poor and the needy. He would help remove their difficulties and give generously to those in need; so much so that he came to be known as *al-Imām ar-Raūf* ('the kind and merciful Imām').



### His Imāmah

Imām Ali ar-Rida ('a) was 30 years old when his father Imām Musa al-Kādhim ('a) was taken away from Madina in the year 179 AH and imprisoned. But Imām al-Kādhim ('a) had

already informed some of his companions in Madina that the Imām after him would be his son Ali.



One of the Shi'ah named Ali b. Yaqtin who worked as a vizier in the court of Hārun ar-Rashid reported that, 'One day I was with al-'Abd as-Sālih Imām al-Kādhim ('a) when his son Ali ar-Rida ('a) entered the room. Imām al-Kādhim ('a) said to me, "Ali b. Yaqtin, this boy is the master from my children."'



Another man asked Imām al-Kādhim ('a) who would be the Imām after him and he pointed to his son ar-Rida ('a) and said, 'he is your master after me.'

But because of the danger in those days from the caliphs, Imām al-Kādhim ('a) told his companions to keep this a secret.

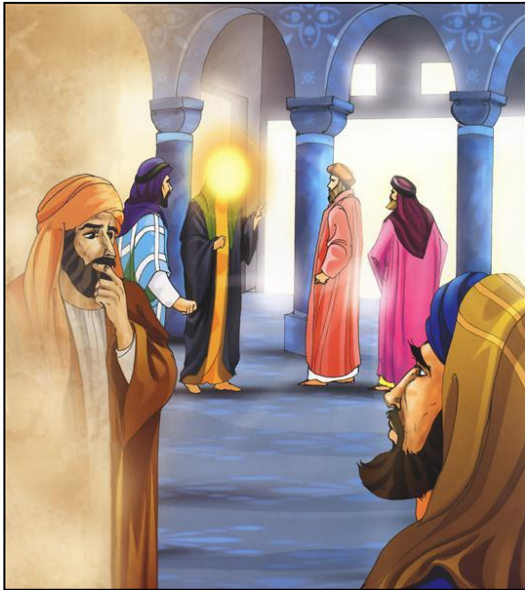
### **Giving in Secrecy**

Imām Ali ar-Rida ('a) became famously known that he never turned anyone away who asked him for help. One day, when he was sitting with his companions in Madina and they were asking him about the laws of shari'ah and what was *halāl* and *harām*, a man from Khorāsān came in his presence and said:

"As-salām 'alaykum O son of Rasulullāh! I am a man who loves you and your fathers and ancestors. I have just returned from Hajj but I have run out of money and don't have the means to go back home. If you see it fit to help me, it will be a blessing from Allāh. When I return home, I will give in charity on your behalf the same amount that you give me because I am rich in my city and don't deserve to take *sadaqa* (alms).'

The Imām told him politely, 'Sit for a bit, may Allāh have mercy on you.' Then the Imām continued speaking to the people until they left. Then the Imām entered his room and then he stuck his hand out from behind the door and called out, 'where is the man from Khorāsān?'

The man came closer and the Imām gave him a bag without coming out and said, ‘This is 200 dinārs. Use it for your journey and you don’t have to give any charity on my behalf.’



The man from Khorāsān took it and thanked the Imām and bade him farewell. After that the Imām came out again and one of his companions asked him, ‘why did you hide your face from him, O son of Rasulullāh?’

And Imām ar-Rida (‘a) said, ‘I did not want to embarrass him or see his face while he is ashamed of taking the money from me.’

Then the Imām said, ‘Have you not heard the hadith of Rasulullāh (s) that “a person who hides his good deeds gets the reward of 70 Hajj. A person who publicizes his sin will be humiliated by Allāh and a person who hides his sin will be forgiven by Allāh”?’

### **During the Rule of Hārūn**

When the Caliph Hārūn ar-Rashid had poisoned Imām Musa al-Kādhim (‘a), he ordered that anyone who was appointed by Imām al-Kādhim (‘a) as the successor should also be killed. His spies came to Madina and tried hard to find the successor of Imām al-Kādhim (‘a) but they couldn’t identify him and only a few close companions of the Imām knew that it was Imām Ali ar-Rida (‘a).

In the meantime in the year 192 AH Hārūn went with a military expedition from Baghdad (in Iraq) to Khorāsān (in North East of Iran) and when he was in Khorāsān, he fell sick and died and was buried there.



Hārūn had two sons. One was Muhammad al-Amin the son of his Arab wife Zubayda and he was in Baghdad. The other was his younger son Ma'mun, the son of a Persian wife and he was in Khorāsān. At first Muhammad al-Amin became the ruler. Then Ma'mun found out that Muhammad al-Amin was planning to make his own son his successor instead of letting him (Ma'mun) become the next Caliph. So Ma'mun took his own army from Khorāsān to Baghdād and attacked the city. He killed his own brother Muhammad al-Amin and had his body thrown into the river Dajla. And so Ma'mun became the new Banu Abbās Caliph.

### **The Khilāfah of Ma'mun**

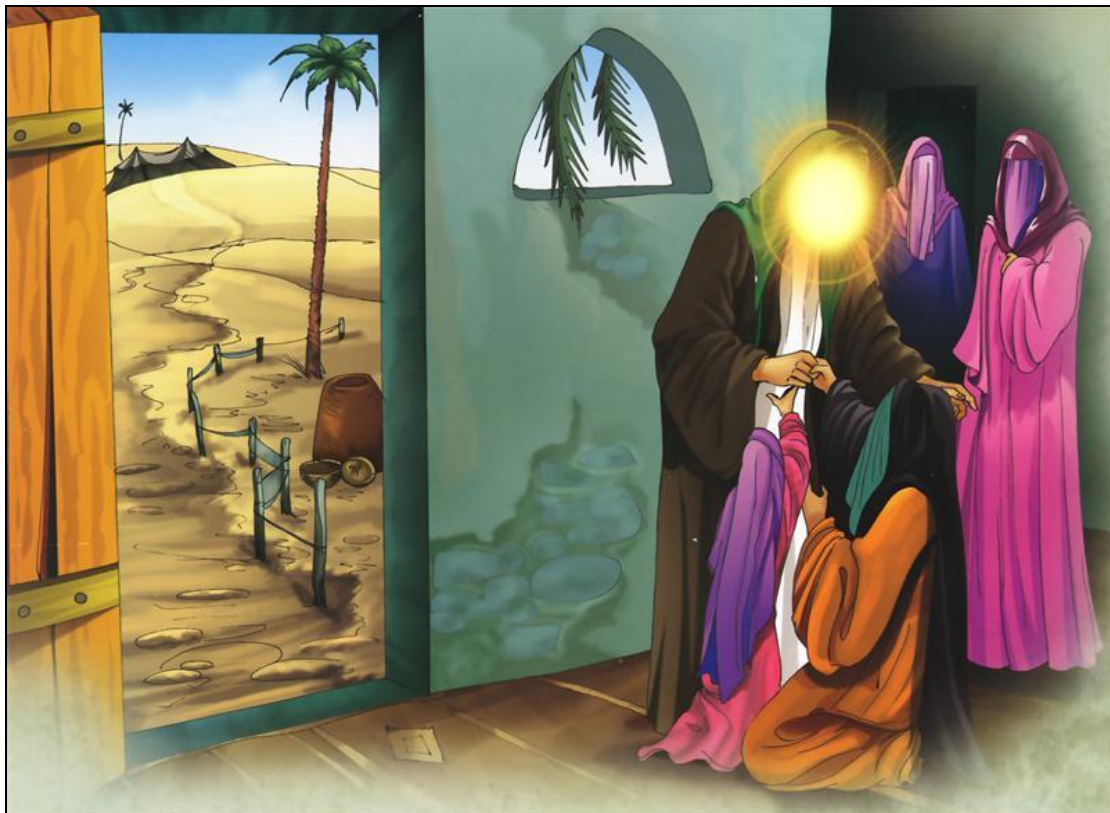
When Ma'mun returned to his capital city of Marw in Khorāsān, he realized that he was not popular and people really hated him because he had killed his own brother.

Ma'mun also knew that people all over the Muslim world loved Imām Ali ar-Rida ('a) because he was the descendant of Rasulullāh (s) and also because he was well-known for his knowledge and piety.

Ma'mun therefore decided to use Imām ar-Rida ('a) to make people like him. He sent orders to Madina to force Imām Ali ar-Rida ('a) to be brought to Marw in Khorāsān and then he declared that Imām Ali ar-Rida ('a) was going to be his successor. In this way Ma'mun succeeded in fooling the people and keeping them from fighting and opposing him.

Imām ar-Rida (‘a) tried hard to refuse but in the end he was threatened with his life if he refused and he decided it was the Will of Allāh that he goes to Marw. Imām Ali ar-Rida (‘a) was very sad to leave Madina, the city of Rasulullāh (s), and he also knew that he will never be allowed to come back to Madina.

So the Imām had a special gathering (*majlis*) with his family and a very sad farewell. Everyone was crying as Imām ar-Rida (‘a) left and he told them that he would be killed in Khorāsān when he is all alone and that they would never see him again.



Class Activity: See video clip in the movie ‘Gharib Tus’ of Imām ar-Rida (‘a) leaving Madina for the last time.

### **The Golden Chain Hadith**

After Imām Ali ar-Rida (‘a) bade farewell to his family and to Madina for the last time, the long journey to Khorāsān began. First he was taken to Basra and then to Baghdad and thereafter to Qum and from there to Nisābur.



Map showing the final journey of Imām ar-Ridā (‘a) from Madina to Makkah, Basra, Baghdad, Qum, Nisābur and finally Marw (today Mashad).

When Imām ar-Rida (‘a) got to Nisābur, he was welcomed by a large number of scholar (‘*ulama*) and experts of hadith and they all insisted that he should address them and tell them some hadith from his ancestors that they can benefit from.

And so Imām ar-Rida (‘a) began saying: ‘I heard my father Musa b. Ja’far saying: I heard my father Ja’far b. Muhammad saying: I heard my father Muhammad b. Ali saying: I heard my father Ali b. al-Husayn saying: I heard my father Husayn b. Ali saying: I heard my father Amir al-Mu’minin Ali b. Abi Tālib saying: I heard Rasulullāh (s) saying: I heard (the angel) Jibrāil saying: I heard Allāh, the Mighty and Glorious, saying: “***La ilāha ilallāh***<sup>6</sup> is My fort. Whoever enters My fort will be saved from My punishment”.’

Then the Imām (‘a) added, ‘...**but with certain conditions. And I am one of the conditions.**’ What he meant was that his Imāmah must be accepted in order to enter Allāh’s “fort of safety”.

Thousands of scholars wrote down this hadith and because it has been narrated from Imām ar-Rida (‘a) all the way to Allāh with a perfect chain of the most pure and perfect narrators, this hadith became famous as

<sup>6</sup> ‘There is no god by Allāh’

'the Hadith with the Golden Chain of Narrators' (*Hadith Silsilat adh-Dhabi*).

### Heir to the Throne

Imām ar-Rida ('a) finally arrived in Marw and the Caliph Ma'mun pretended to welcome the Imām very warmly and began offering him to take over the Khilāfah. Imām ar-Rida ('a) refused that outright. He knew Ma'mun was a man who had killed his own brother just to become the Caliph. There was no way he would actually let the Imām take over and become the Caliph.



Furthermore, Allāh appoints an Imām and it would be wrong for Imām ar-Rida ('a) to let history record that he got his khilāfah from a Banu Abbās Caliph like Ma'mun. Imām ar-Rida ('a) said to Ma'mun:

*If Allāh has made you His khalifa, then it is wrong to give up what Allāh has given you.*

*And if this khilāfah is not yours and was never given to you by Allāh, then how can you give me what is not yours in the first place??*

But Ma'mun still needed to show people that he loved the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) so that people would stop hating him and opposing him. So he began

insisting that Imām ar-Rida (‘a) should be his successor and heir. Of course that made no sense either because Imām ar-Rida (‘a) was much older than Ma’mun and a successor has to be someone younger who will live after the ruling caliph dies.

Again Imām ar-Rida (‘a) refused but this time Ma’mun forced him and said if he would not agree than he would have the Imām killed. That was, after all, the reason why he had brought the Imām all the way to Khorāsān.



Imām Ali ar-Rida (‘a) finally accepted the position but set conditions for it. He told Ma’mun that he would not get involved in any decisions of the government and he would not hire or remove anyone from any position. This of course meant that the Imām was not really going to take any position at all but Ma’mun agreed to all these conditions because he could still use the Imām’s name.

To show that the Imām was on his side, Ma’mun then got coins made with the name of Imām ar-Rida (‘a) and he ordered all his men in the court to stop wearing black clothes all the time, which was the colour of the Banu Abbās, and to start wearing green clothes, which was the colour of the Banu Hāshim.

Ma’mun of course succeeded in some ways to fool people that he was a good person who loved the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) but he was also hoping that

he could blame the Imām for some of his bad deeds. But because Imām ar-Rida (‘a) knew Ma’mun’s intentions and had refused to take part in government activities, therefore Ma’mun could not really use the Imām.

### The Prayer for Rain

In the year 201 AH there was a drought in Khorāsān. No rain fell and people began suffering from thirst and hunger as they could not grow any crops. By then Imām ar-Rida (‘a) had become very popular in Khorāsān and Ma’mun was worried that people respected the Imām even more than him.

Ma’mun decided to ask Imām ar-Rida (‘a) to go out in public and pray for rain. Ma’mun was sure it would not rain because of the drought but he hoped when people saw Imām ar-Rida (‘a) praying and no rain falling it would damage the reputation of Imām ar-Rida (‘a) in the eyes of the people.

The next day, a Monday morning, all the people gathered under the open sky and Imām ar-Rida (‘a) came and led them in a special prayer for rain called *salāt al-istisqā*. Then Imām ar-Rida (‘a) called out and prayed to Allāh: ‘O Allāh! O Lord! It is You who has given greatness to us the Household (Ahl al-Bayt) of Your Prophet. Therefore for the sake of this Household, give us of Your Grace and Mercy and quench our thirst!’





Suddenly the clear skies began to change. First there was a gentle breeze and then white puffy clouds began appearing. Soon they increased in number and there were dark clouds all around. The people saw lightning and thunder and it began raining heavily and the earth was soaked once again after a drought.

Imām Ali ar-Rida (‘a) thanked Allāh and said to the people who had gathered, ‘Be wary of Allāh with regards to His blessings on you. Do not drive away the blessings of Allāh by disobeying Him and with sins. Instead keep the blessings of Allāh constantly with you by obeying Him and thanking Him for His blessings.

And as it continued to pour, the people returned to their homes for shelter and everyone began talking of the miracle and how special Imām Ali ar-Rida (‘a) was and how closely connected he was to Allāh.

All this of course made Ma’mun very angry. He was hoping to humiliate the Imām and instead the Imām had become even more popular and now the people loved the Imām and paid him even more attention than Ma’mun.

### **Interfaith Debates**

Ma’mun was now very worried. Day by day, Imām ar-Rida (‘a) was becoming more popular than he was. He now thought of another ploy. He invited the priests and scholars of different faiths and asked them to debate with Imām ar-Rida (‘a) and to ask him the most difficult questions they could. By this Ma’mun hoped to lower the image of the Imām in the eyes of the people. And so a day was set and the court was filled with people.

Imām ar-Rida (‘a) said to his companion an-Nawfali, ‘Do you know why Ma’mun has gathered all the leaders of other faiths and of the polytheists?’

‘He wants to test you,’ replied Nawfali.

‘O Nawfali,’ said the Imām then, ‘do you want to know when Ma’mun will regret this the most?’

‘Yes,’ said Nawfali.

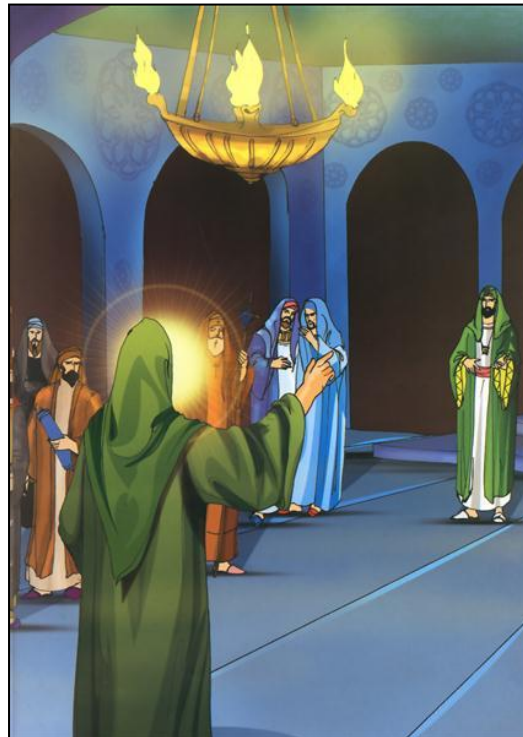
And Imām ar-Rida (‘a) said to him, ‘when he hears me debating with the Christians using the Injil and with the Jews using the Tawrāt and with everyone group using their own religious text.’

And so Imām ar-Rida (‘a) did wudu and set out to the palace of Ma’mun with his companions and the debate began.

The leaders of different faiths began saying, ‘we don’t want to argue using the Qur’ān or words of the Prophet Muhammad (s) because we don’t believe in them.’

‘Will you then accept,’ offered Imām ar-Rida (‘a), ‘if we debate using your own books?’

They agreed to this. And so Imām ar-Rida (‘a) began reciting passages from the Tawrāt, Injil and Zabur and the scholars of other faiths were amazed at the Imām’s knowledge of their own books.



Some of them converted to Islam and others were just spellbound and said, ‘we had no one idea that someone like you existed amongst the Muslim scholars!’

### **The Poisoning of the Imām**

Ma’mun felt intense regret when the debates were over. He had planned to hurt the Imām’s image but the opposite had happened. The love of people for the Imām increased even further and became widespread.

Ma'mun now decided to remove the Imām as soon as possible. At first he kept guards to watch the Imām's every move and he forbade people from visiting Imām ar-Rida ('a) any more.

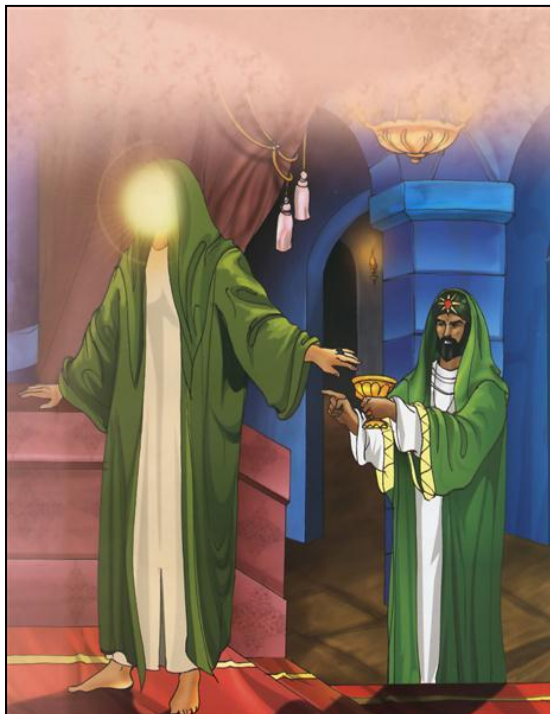
In the meantime, the Banu Abbās in Baghdad began revolting against Ma'mun and they started following Ibrāhim b. al-Mahdi, another member of the Banu Abbās. Imām ar-Rida ('a) advised Ma'mun to free him from the position of being his heir and to go back to Baghdad where the Banu Abbās always lived and had their capital.

Ma'mun refused to let the Imām go and instead decided he would go to Baghdad but he would take the Imām with him. But soon after they left and they came to Tus, where Hārūn ar-Rashid, the father of Ma'mun was buried, Ma'mun had Imām ar-Rida ('a) poisoned.

Some say Ma'mun had the poison filled in grapes and others say he put the poison in pomegranate juice that he forced the Imām to drink. As soon as the Imām drank a little, he stood up and left for his room. Imām ar-Rida ('a) remained in a lot of pain because of the poison and he finally took his last breath in the same place (Tus) where he was buried. His martyrdom was on the 29<sup>th</sup> of Safar 203 AH.

Ma'mun pretended he was shocked and grieved at the passing away of the Imām. He showed the people that he was mourning for the Imām and he arranged for him to be buried in the palace of his father's army commander Hamid b. Qahtiba right next to where his father Hārūn ar-Rashid was buried.

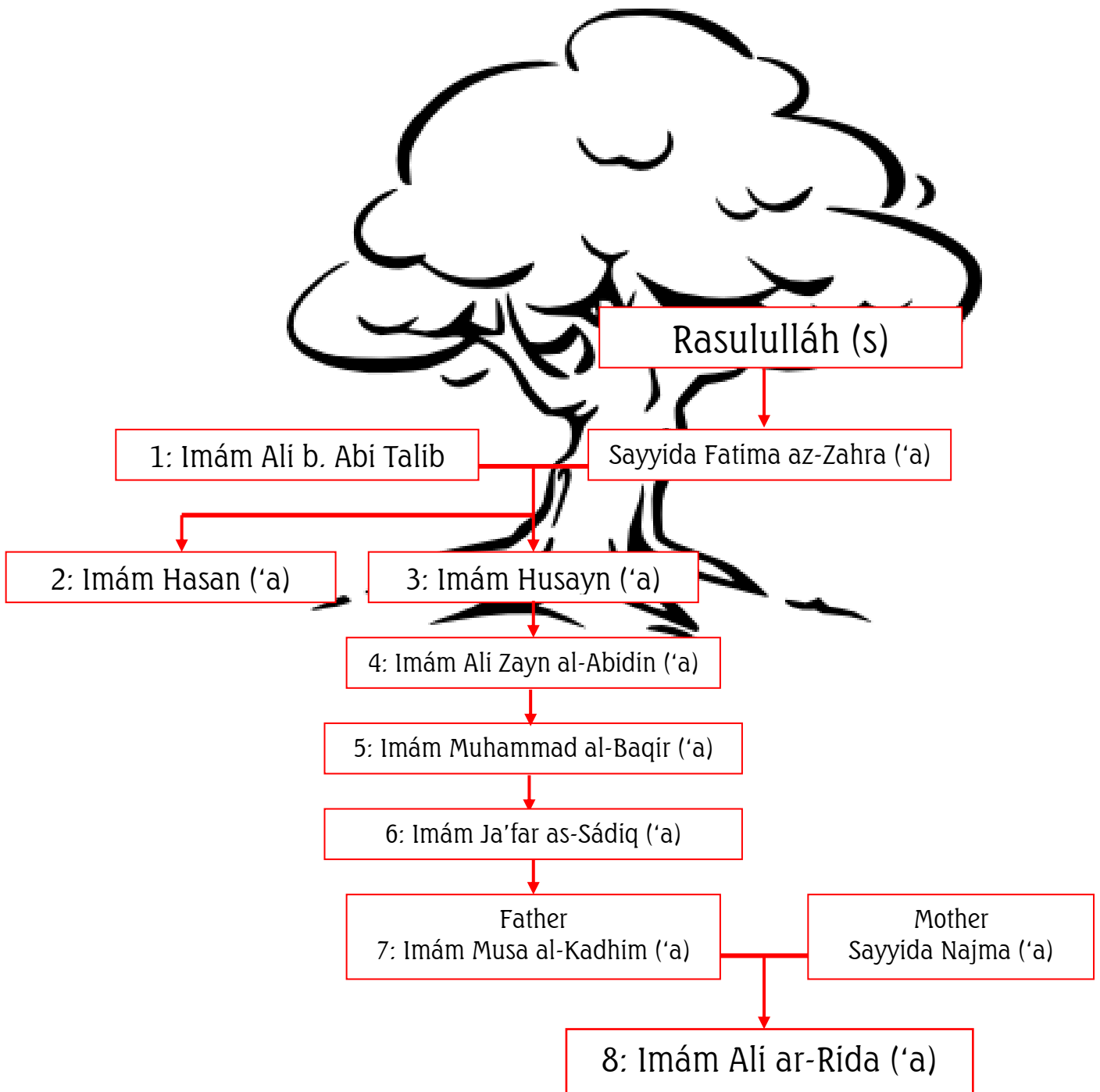
This place is today called Mashad. No one remembers Hārūn or knows the exact location of his grave. But a magnificent shrine and masjid stand over the grave of Imām Ali b. Musa ar-Rida, alayhi salām.



Some of the ahādith of Imām Ali ar-Rida (‘a) are:

- A person who does not thank his or her parents has not thanked Allāh.
- A person who accounts for his soul will succeed and a person who ignores his soul will lose.
- Allāh hates gossip, wasting money and asking too many questions just for the sake of asking.
- Always hold on to the weapon of the prophets: du’a!
- If a person opens a way out for a believer who is in trouble, Allāh will open his heart for him on the Day of Judgement.
- Your elder brother is like your father.

## Imām Ali b. Musa al-Ridā ('a)'s Family Tree



**Wilādah :** Madina, 11<sup>th</sup> Dhul Qa'ada 148 AH  
**Shahādah:** Mashad, 29<sup>th</sup> Safar 203 AH

## Lesson 6

# Imām Muhammad al-Jawād (‘a)

### Birth

On the 10<sup>th</sup> of Rajab 195 AH, Imām Muhammad al-Jawād (‘a), the ninth Imām from the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) was born in a village called Surayya, just outside Madina.

His father is Imām Ali b. Musa ar-Rida (‘a) and his mother is Sayyida al-Khayzurān. She was a descendant of Umm al-Mu‘minin, Māriya al-Qibtiya, the wife of Rasulullāh (s).

The ninth Imām was addressed by many praiseworthy titles the most famous ones were at-Taqi (the Godconscious) and al-Jawād (the generous).

Imām Muhammad al-Jawād (‘a) was the only child of Imām Ali ar-Rida (‘a). For a long time Imām Ali ar-Rida (‘a) had no children and everyone wondered who the next Imām would be. Imām ar-Rida (‘a) used to say, ‘By Allāh, before the end of my life, Allāh will bless me with a son who will separate truth from falsehood.’ And people used to be amazed at this prophecy and wonder if it will come true.



When Imām Muhammad al-Jawād (‘a) was born, Imām Ali ar-Rida (‘a) said, ‘Allāh has blessed me with a son who is like Nabi Musa (‘a) and Nabi Isa (‘a); blessed is the mother who gave birth to him.’

### Miracle at Birth

Sayyida Hakima the daughter of Imām Musa al-Kādhim (‘a) and sister of Imām ar-Rida (‘a) says that when Imām al-Jawād (‘a) was born she saw him with a delicate cover over him that lit up the room even in the night. She took the baby in her lap and removed the cover and Imām Ali ar-Rida (‘a) came in. He took the baby and placed him in the cradle and said to her, ‘Hakima, keep him in his cradle.’

Sayyida Hakima says, on the third day after he was born, Imām



Muhammad al-Jawād (‘a) raised his eyes towards the heavens and said: ‘*ash-hadu an lā ilāha ilallāh wa ash-hadu anna Muhammadan Rasulullāh*’ (I bear witness that there is no god by Allāh and I bear witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allāh).

Hearing this, Sayyida Hakima was frightened. She stood up and ran to her brother Imām ar-Rida (‘a) and told him what had happened. Imām ar-Rida (‘a) said to her, ‘Hakima, you will still see more wonders from him!’

### His Father’s Love for Him

One of the companions of Imām Ali ar-Rida (‘a) says, ‘I was with ar-Rida (‘a) when his young son came and Imām ar-Rida (‘a) said: “No child has been born who is a greater blessing for our Shi’ah than this child.”’

Even when Imām al-Jawād (‘a) was a child, his father Imām ar-Rida (‘a) loved him and showed him so much respect that he would call him with

the title 'Abu Ja'far'. For example, he would point to the child and tell his Shi'ah, 'Abu Ja'far is my successor from my family after me.'

### The Farewell

When Imām Muhammad al-Jawād ('a) was only six years old, Imām Ali ar-Rida ('a) was forced to leave Madina and go to Khorāsān on the orders of the Caliph Ma'mun. Before leaving for Khorāsān, Imām Ali ar-Rida ('a) took his son Imām al-Jawād ('a) and went to Makkah for Umra and to see the Ka'bah for the last time. He did a farewell tawāf of the Ka'bah with his son. Imām al-Jawād ('a) realized this was the time for farewell and felt very sad.

Imām Ali ar-Rida ('a) then asked his close companions to take his son Imām al-Jawād ('a) back to Madina and he left for Khorāsān with the men of Ma'mun.



### His Imāmah

Imām Muhammad al-Jawād ('a) was only nine years old when he became the Imām after his father Imām ar-Rida ('a) was poisoned.

He had an uncle named Ali bin Ja'far who showed him a lot of respect even though he was much older. And whenever Imām Muhammad al-



Jawād ('a) would enter the masjid, Ali bin Ja'far would stand up out of respect and wait until he sat down.

Some people doubted that Imām Muhammad al-Jawād ('a) was the Imām because of his young age but as he answered questions from the Qur'ān and showed the knowledge he had inherited from Rasulullāh (s) through his fathers, they realized it did not matter that he was so young. On one occasion, Imām al-Jawād ('a) himself said that the first person to follow Rasulullāh (s) was Imām Ali bin Abi Tālib ('a) when he was a young boy. And Rasulullāh (s) declared Imām Ali ('a) to be his successor even when he was a young boy. So why should age matter?

### **The Martyrdom of Imām Ali ar-Rida ('a)**

Abu as-Salt, a companion of Imām ar-Rida ('a) narrates that after Imām ar-Rida ('a) was poisoned, he was at his home when he heard the door knock and when he opened it, he saw a young boy who resembled Imām ar-Rida ('a). He asked him, 'how did you get here past all the guards?' and the boy said, 'the One who brought me from Madina to Khorāsān also brought me past the guards and the locked gates.'

'Who are you?' asked Abu as-Salt and boy replied, 'I am the proof (*hujjah*) of Allāh over you, O Abā as-Salt! I am Muhammad b. Ali al-Jawād.'



Then the young Imām went close to his father who hugged him and kissed him between his eyes. Imām al-Jawād (‘a) sat besides his father at the last moments of his life until Imām ar-Rida (‘a) took his last breath.

The Caliph Ma’mun realized that Imām al-Jawād (‘a) was as special as his father Imām ar-Rida (‘a) so he decided he would marry his daughter Umm al-Fadl to Imām al-Jawād (‘a). Ma’mun was now hoping that if they have a child then the next Imām would also be his grandson and successor. Ma’mun also wanted to do this because everyone knew that he had poisoned Imām



ar-Rida (‘a) and even though Ma’mun had pretended to cry for Imām ar-Rida (‘a) and attended his funeral barefoot, he still wanted to convince the public that he loved Imām ar-Rida (‘a). So by marrying his daughter to Imām ar-Rida (‘a)’s son, he hoped people would believe his lies.

But the Banu Abbās were against this idea. To show how special Imām al-Jawād (‘a) was, Ma’mun arranged a debate between the young Imām and the most learned man in the court of the Banu Abbās who was called Yahya bin Aktham.

First Yahya tried asking a difficult question to Imām al-Jawād (‘a) but the Imām answered it in detail and very easily and then Imām al-Jawād (‘a) asked Yahya a question and he was unable to answer it.

The Banu Abbās were now still concerned that the khilāfah would pass from their hands to the children of Imām al-Jawād (‘a) if he marries the daughter of Ma’mun. But they could not argue after seeing how knowledgeable the Imām was.

Imām al-Jawād (‘a) agreed to marry Umm al-Fadl but she did not have any children and therefore Ma’mun’s plans for grandchildren who would succeed him failed. Imām Muhammad al-Jawād (‘a) married other wives and had many children from them.

Ma'mun had insisted that Imām al-Jawād ('a) should stay close to him in Baghdad but the Imām was not happy to live in palaces and in Baghdad. He longed to go back to Madina and be near the grave and masjid of Rasulullāh (s). In the year 218 AH, Ma'mun died after falling sick on his way back from a battle against the Romans. Imām al-Jawād ('a) then announced that he was returning to Madina. Many people came out to say farewell to him.



### The Return to Baghdad

After Ma'mun, the next Caliph was Mu'tasim. He openly disliked Imām al-Jawād ('a) and did not want him living in Madina where he could not watch him closely. So he forced the Imām to come back to Baghdad where he could constantly spy on him and ensure he is not a threat.



Even in Baghdad, Imām Muhammad al-Jawād ('a) was loved by people more than Mu'tasim because of his *akhlāq* (character) and *'ilm* (knowledge) and this made Mu'tasim very jealous. Mu'tasim was the brother of Ma'mun and a son of Hārūn ar-Rashid but his mother was Turkish and he never liked studying, so he was ignorant and illiterate. This made him even more fearful of Imām al-Jawād ('a).

In due course, Mu'tasim brought many Turks to come and live in Baghdad and they became very powerful and he built a new city for the Turkish soldiers further north and called it Surra-man-ra-a (which is today called Sāmarra). Mu'tasim then decided to move his capital from Baghdad to Sāmarra but before moving, he wanted to remove Imām al-Jawād ('a) permanently. He plotted with Ja'far the son of Ma'mun and Ja'far came to his sister Umm al-Fadl, the wife of Imām al-Jawād ('a) and convinced her to poison her husband.



### **Martyrdom**

One day, Umm al-Fadl poisoned some grapes and gave to Imām al-Jawād ('a). As soon as he ate some, the poison spread in his body and he felt extreme pain. Umm al-Fadl pretended to cry and Imām Muhammad al-Jawād ('a) said to her, 'what are you crying for? Allāh will curse you with poverty and suffering from which you will never recover!' And so she was cursed just like Ju'da bint al-Ash'ath who poisoned her husband Imām Hasan al-Mujtaba ('a) (the 2<sup>nd</sup> Imām). Umm al-Fadl later died of a very painful and difficult illness.

Of all the Imāms, Imām Muhammad al-Jawād ('a) was martyred the youngest. He was only 25 years old. This was the 29<sup>th</sup> of Dhul Qa'ada 220 AH. He was buried next to his grandfather Imām Musa al-Kādhim ('a) in Baghdad (in the area called Kādhimiyya today).

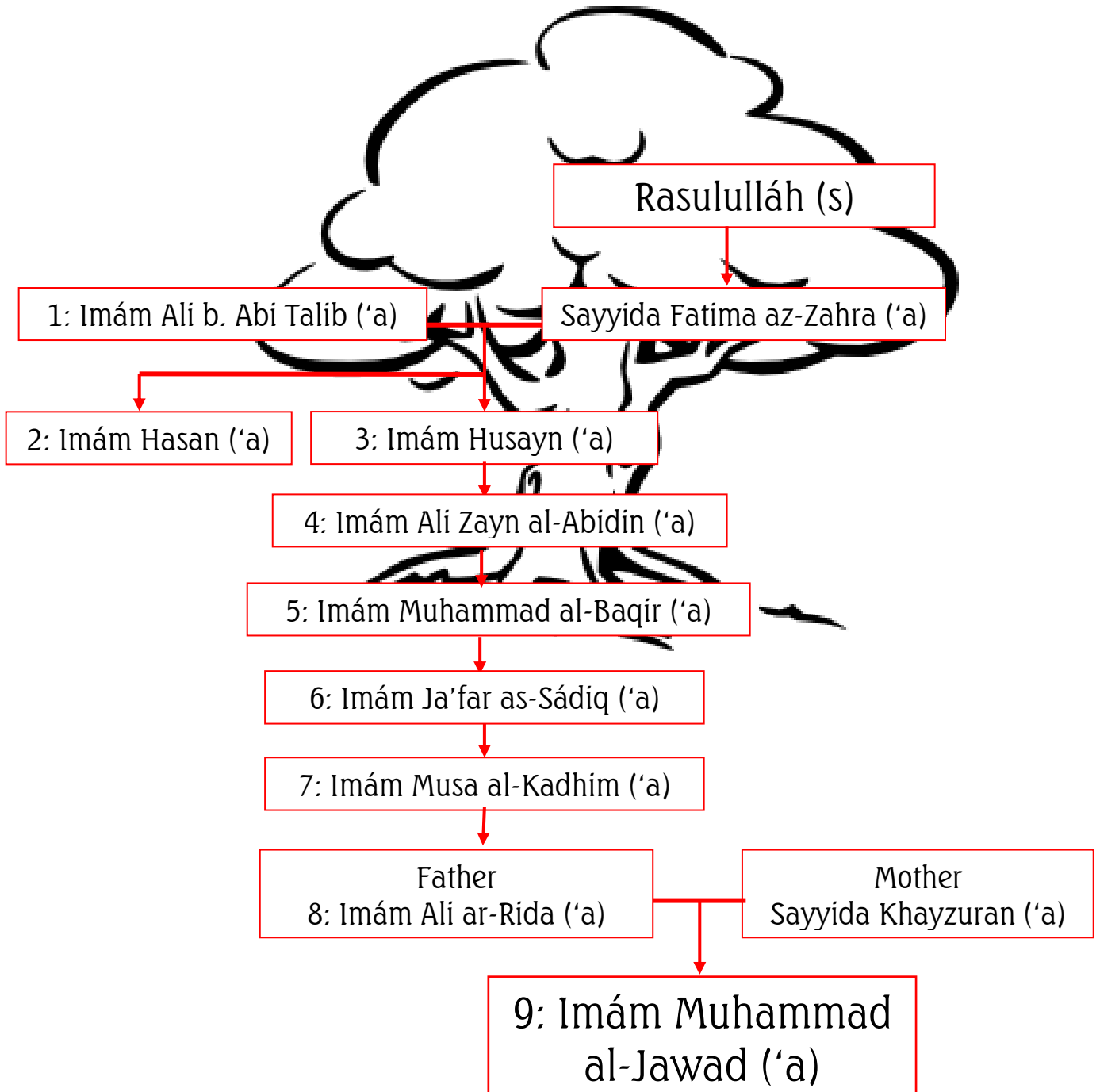
Imām Muhammad at-Taqi al-Jawād ('a) dedicated his life to Islam and to teaching people the true meaning of tawhid and the Qur'ān. Peace be on him the day he was born, peace be on him the day he was martyred and peace be on him on the day when all of mankind is raised again! Amen.



Some of the sayings (ahādith) of Imām Muhammad al-Jawād (‘a) are:

- The honour of a believer lies in not begging from others.
- The Day of Justice on the oppressor will be more severe than the day of injustice on the oppressed.
- A human being dies more with sins than with physical death. And he or she lives more with good deeds than with physical life.
- Beware of sinful and evil friends. They are like a poisoned sword. It may look shiny and beautiful but its effect when it touches you is harmful and evil.
- The best worship is sincerity (*ikhlas*).
- Not thanking Allāh for a blessing is like not asking forgiveness for a sin.
- The oppressor, the one who helps him, and the one who is ok with it, are all partners in the act of oppression.

## Imām Muhammad b. Ali al-Jawād ('a)'s Family Tree



**Wilādah :** Madina, 19<sup>th</sup> Rajab 195 AH

**Shahādah:** Baghdad, 29<sup>th</sup> Dhul Qa'ada 220 AH

## Lesson 7

### Imām ‘Alí al-Hādí (‘a)

Our tenth Imām, Imām Ali al-Hādí an-Naqi (‘a) was born on 15<sup>th</sup> Dhul Hijjah 212 AH in Madina. His father is Imām Muhammad al-Jawād (‘a) and his mother was a pious and noble woman from Morocco called Samāna.

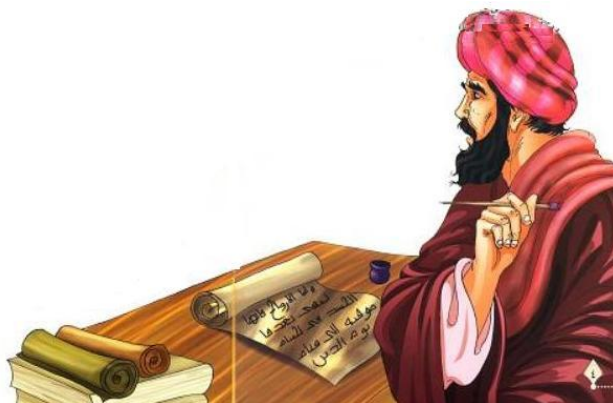
When his father Imām Muhammad al-Jawād (‘a) was poisoned in Baghdad in the year 220 AH, Imām Ali al-Hādí (‘a) was only 8 years old. Among the many titles he was known by are al-Murtada, al-Hādí, an-Naqi, al-‘Aalim, al-Faqih, al-Mu’tamin, and at-Tayyib. His most popular title was al-Hādí (the guide) and the titles like at-Tayyib (the good) and an-Naqi (the pure) all show that he was well known for his piety, his character (*akhlāq*) and his knowledge and guidance to others.

#### Wisdom as a Child



After the martyrdom of Imām al-Jawād (‘a), the caliph appointed a teacher called al-Jundi to educate Imām al-Hādí (‘a) and to supervise his education. Al-Jundi wanted to teach the Imām to recite 10 surahs of Qur’ān. Instead Imām al-Hādí (‘a) asked him, ‘tell me, what surah would you like me to recite for you?’

‘Surah Aal Imrān,’ said al-Jundi with doubt. But to his amazement, the young Imām began reciting the surah so beautifully that al-Jundi was moved and speechless. He began thinking to himself, ‘Imām al-Jawād was in Baghdad and passed away there; this boy has been alone in Madina – who taught him all this?’



Imām Ali al-Hādí (‘a) then said to al-Jundi, ‘would you like to hear some of what I have learnt from my

father and ancestors?’ And al-Jundi just nodded with surprise. And again the Imām began reciting ahādith that he heard from his father who heard from his father, all the way up to Amir al-Muminin (‘a) who heard from Rasulullāh (s). Al-Jundi felt the light of the Imām’s knowledge penetrate his heart and began saying to himself, ‘indeed, Allāh knows where to keep His message!’ i.e. in which household.

Imām Ali b. Muhammad al-Hādi (‘a) lived a very simple life. He used to quote a hadith from Amir al-Muminin Imām Ali (‘a) that, ‘one whose greatest concern is the hereafter (*ākhirah*), will be content with life even without wealth.’



The Caliph, as well, made sure that the Imām did not have a lot of wealth accessible and tried to keep the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) in poverty. He also kept the Imām under house arrest and watched every move he made through his spies.

Imām Ali al-Hādi (‘a) therefore lived the life of an ascetic worshipper. He had an empty room that had no furniture or worldly possessions except for a straw mat on which he prayed salāh. He used to spend most of his time in reciting the Qur’ān and reflecting on its meanings.

He would welcome people warmly and with a smile and he loved to help the poor. Sometimes the Caliph would send him money to see what he would do with it (as a bribe) but the Imām would distribute all of it to the poor and the needy.



## The Transfer to Samarra

The Banu Abbās caliph Mu'tasim died in 227 AH and after him came his son Hārūn al-Wāthiq who ruled for 5 years before he died too. By then the Turks whom Mu'tasim had brought to Baghdad and Samarra became very powerful and influential. They made a lot of the decisions in the government and they supported Ja'far al-Mutawakkil as the new Caliph.

Mutawakkil was a cruel and brutal man who was well known for his hatred of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a). In particular he would kill anyone who went for the ziyārah of Imām al-Husayn ('a) in Karbala and he even tried to change the direction of the river Furāt so that it would flood and drown the grave of Imām al-Husayn ('a) but he failed to do so.

Mutawakkil knew that the Shi'ah loved and followed Imām al-Hādi ('a) so he set up spies in Madina to watch every move of the Imām and if anyone went to visit the Imām, the spies would note his name and report it back to Mutawakkil. In the end, Mutawakkil felt threatened by the presence of the Imām in Madina so he sent one of his men called Yahya bin Harthama to Madina and told him to bring Imām Ali al-Hādi ('a) to his capital in Samarra.



Imām Ali al-Hādi ('a) went to Samarra with his son Imām Hasan al-Askari ('a), his family members and some of his followers. Mutawakkil tried many ways to humiliate the Imām but failed. On one occasion when the Imām was being brought to Samarra, Mutawakkil ordered that the Imām should be kept in a very dirty and run-down inn. A Shi'ah came to visit the Imām and cried when he saw the condition of the place. But the Imām smiled and told him not to cry because no one can humiliate an Imām. Then he told the Shi'ah to look again and he saw the Imām was actually sitting in

a garden surrounded by beautiful maids and there was a river flowing besides him. 'This is where we are!' said the Imām.



No matter how hard Mutawakkil tried, the personality of the Imām always won people over and they felt weak and humble before him or they began loving and following him.

Finally the Imām was kept in a home in Samarra under strict watch and very poor conditions. But even then Mutawakkil harassed the Imām. One day one of his spies told Mutawakkil that Imām Ali al-Hādi ('a) was collecting weapons and money to fight against him. So Mutawakkil sent one of his men called Sa'id to attack the house of Imām Ali al-Hādi ('a) in the middle of the night and take any weapons and money he finds.

Sa'id came with a group of soldiers and entered the home of Imām al-Hādi ('a) without permission and began searching room by room. Imām al-Hādi ('a) was busy praying and he showed them he only had a personal sword and a bag of money that had 10,000 dinars.

Sa'id took all that and went to Mutawakkil. The Caliph saw that the bag of money still had a seal on it and it was the seal of his own mother. So Mutawakkil called his mother and asked her about it. His mother scolded him for taking the money back and said, 'when you were very sick and almost dying, I asked Ali bin Muhammad (Imām al-Hādi) for help and he gave me something to cure you. So I sent him this money as a gift.'



Mutawakkil therefore sent the money and sword back to the Imām. When Sa'id brought it back, he was very embarrassed. He said to the Imām, 'Forgive me, but I was ordered to carry out the home invasion and I hope you can excuse me.'

But Imām Ali al-Hādi ('a) was very sad because of how he was being treated. He recited the āyah of Qur'ān:

﴿... وَسَيَعْلَمُ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا أَيَّ مُنْقَلَبٍ يَنْقَلِبُونَ﴾

*...and the wrongdoers will soon know how they will be overturned!*

- Surah ash-Shu'arā, 26:227

### **Du'a is the Weapon of the Prophets**

One day, Mutawakkil wanted to show off his power and strength to the Imām so he took Imām Ali al-Hādi ('a) to a hilltop from where tens of thousands of armed soldiers could be seen marching in formation.

Mutawakkil said to Imām Ali al-Hādi ('a), 'I called you to see my army and weapons.' What he meant was that he was afraid of the Imām rising against him so he wanted to frighten the Imām with this show of power.

Imām Ali al-Hādi ('a) said to Mutawakkil, 'Now look at my weapons' and he raised his eyes to the heavens and prayed to Allāh humbly and

suddenly, the sky was filled with angels all armed as warriors. Mutawakkil fell down and fainted out of fear of what he saw.



### The Curse of an Imām

On the 1<sup>st</sup> of Shawwāl (the day of 'Id al-Fitr) 247 AH, Mutawakkil had now ruled for 15 years and it had been 13 years since Imām Ali al-Hādi ('a) had lived in Samarra since he was brought there in the year 234 AH. Mutawakkil decided that for this 'Id al-Fitr, the *Salāt al-'Id* will be held in a place that was 8 kms outside Samarra and he ordered that everyone should walk to the place and only he would ride on a horse.

The intention of Mutawakkil was to humiliate the Imām and make him walk while he was on a horse. All the Muslims hated Mutawakkil for this because it was tiring to walk for 8 kms on a hot day to go and pray *Salāt al-'Id*.

As Imām al-Hādi ('a) walked he sweated and one of the Caliph's men tried to make up an excuse for the Caliph and he said to the Imām, 'The Caliph does not wish to cause you trouble!'



Imām Ali al-Hādi ('a) said to him angrily, 'Go away from me!' Then he recited the āyah of Qur'ān:

﴿...تَمَتُّعُوا فِي دَارِكُمْ ثَلَاثَةَ أَيَّامٍ ذَلِكَ وَعَدُّ غَيْرِ مَكْذُوبٍ﴾

*...enjoy yourselves in your homes for three days: that is a promise not to be belied!*

- Surah Hud, 11:65

One of the Muslims who had also come out to pray and was a follower of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) heard the Imām recite this āyah. He knew immediately that the Imām was making a prediction and that something big was going to happen in 3 days. 'I wonder what will happen in three days?' he said to himself.

After 3 days, on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of Shawwāl, Mutawakkil had a feast in his palace. He ate a lot of roast meat and drank a lot of wine. In the meantime, his son Muntasir was outside with a group of soldiers planning to kill his father. This was because Muntasir found out that his father was planning to make his younger brother Mu'tazz the next Caliph.

Soon Muntasir and a group of Turkish soldiers attacked the palace and came in. They killed Mutawakkil and his vizier al-Fath bin Khāqān and people all around began running away.



That same night, Muntasir announced that his father had died a natural death and that he was now the Caliph! Muntasir was not harsh with the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a). He even gave them back the land of Fadak outside Madina that was once given to Sayyida Fātima az-Zahra (‘a) by her father Rasullullāh (s).

The whole Muslim world felt relieved when they found out that the evil Mutawakkil was dead and Muntasir was now the Caliph. But Muntasir ruled for 6 months only before he died.

### **Imām al-Hādi (‘a) and the Banu Abbās Caliphs**

Imām Ali al-Hādi (‘a) lived to see the rule of six different caliphs. After Mutawakkil, all the caliphs ruled for short periods of times from 6 months to a maximum of 10 years.

After Mutawakkil and his son Muntasir, the next Banu Abbās Caliph to rule was Musta’in Billāh. He ruled for 5 years and he was very weak as a ruler. The Turks were running the government and were the power behind the scenes.

Mu’tazz, the second son of Mutawakkil ruled next for 4 years and after him Mutassil Billāh. He was followed by Mu’tamid, the third son of Mutawakkil.

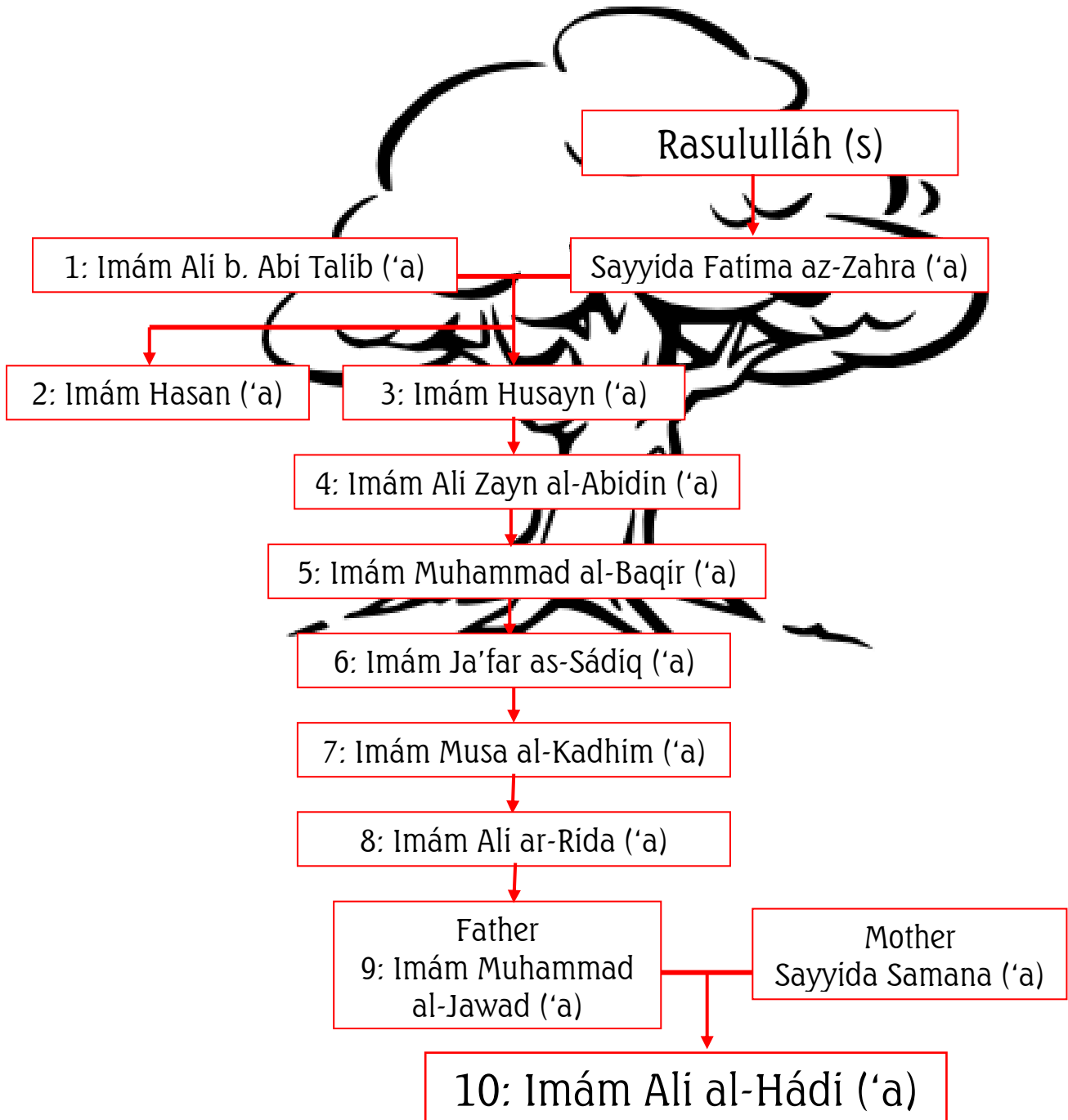
It was the Banu Abbās Caliph Mu'tamid who poisoned Imām Ali al-Hādi (‘a) on 3<sup>rd</sup> Rajab 254 AH. All the market places and shops were closed on that day and a large number of Muslims gathered at the main masjid in Samarra for the funeral prayers of Imām Ali al-Hādi (‘a). And thereafter he was buried in his house as he had requested in his will and that is where his grave stands today in Samarra.



Some ahādith of Imām Ali al-Hādi (‘a) are:

- Better than good is the doer of the good and worse than evil the doer of it.
- The world is a marketplace. Some people profit from it while others lose.
- A person who is patient suffers once during an affliction. An impatient person suffers twice (once due to the affliction and secondly due to his impatience).
- A greedy person is never at ease.
- People are ranked in this world by their wealth (*amwāl*) and in the hereafter by their deeds (*a'māl*).
- During a time when justice prevails over injustice, it is forbidden to suspect a person of wrong without any certain proof.

## Imām Ali b. Muhammad al-Hādi ('a)'s Family Tree



**Wilādah :** Madina, 15<sup>th</sup> Dhul Hijjah 212 AH  
**Shahādah:** Samarra, 3<sup>rd</sup> Rajab 254 AH





# **AKHLAQ** **(Ethics)**



# Lesson 1

## Dressing and Bedtime Manners

### Dressing

The Qur'ān tells us that dressing is to cover us from being naked and to make us look good. So we dress in order to hide our nakedness, to protect ourselves (e.g. from the cold or injury) and to make ourselves presentable before others.

Islam also asks us to dress modestly. Modest and decent clothing means clothes that are not too tight or short to reveal the shape of the body. We should also not dress to imitate people who are associated with being irreligious like musicians, movie stars and other celebrities.

Rasulullāh (s) has said, 'It is not right for a person to stay naked whether during the day or night.' This means we should never be without clothes for no reason, even when we sleep. This prevents shaytān from making us think sinful thoughts.

When putting on clothes or removing them, always seek refuge with Allāh from shaytān by saying '*a'udhu billāhi min ash-shaytani rajeem*' and '*Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim*'.

Having many clothes is ok if we are using them all. But we should not hoard clothes and keep buying and collecting new ones while our cupboards are full of clothes we no longer wear. Instead we should give away clothes we don't wear to charity so that others can benefit from them.

Our clothes should be clean. Imām Ali ('a) has said, 'Clean clothes removes sorrow and makes our salāh more acceptable.'

But our clothes should also be simple. Wearing expensive clothes even when there is no occasion, just to show off or to keep up with the latest fashion, is not recommended because it encourages us to give more importance to our body than our soul and it makes others jealous and

even hurts the feelings of the poor who cannot afford such clothes. When we dress modestly and simply, others are also encouraged to dress simply and there is no 'competition' in the community of who is more fashionable, etc.

And instead, we should 'adorn' ourselves with good manners and a lot of knowledge so that even the poor may imitate our behaviour. People should love us because of our character and not our money.

## Indecent Dressing

Indecent dressing means to dress disrespectfully by wearing clothes that reveals the shape of the body and attracts wrong attention from others. Even if the body is covered, if what we are wearing is tight and/or see-through than according to Islamic standards, it is classified as indecent.

If we see someone dressed indecently, the Qur'ān commands us to look down or turning our gaze elsewhere:

﴿قُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَغُضُّوا مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِمْ وَيَحْفَظُوا فُرُوجَهُمْ ذَلِكَ أَزْكَى لَهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا يَصْنَعُونَ . وَقُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنَاتِ يَغْضُضْنَ مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِنَّ وَيَحْفَظْنَ فُرُوجَهُنَّ وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَلْيَضْرِبْنَ بِخُمُرِهِنَّ عَلَىٰ جُيُوبِهِنَّ وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا لِبُعُولَتِهِنَّ...﴾

*Say to the believing men that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty: that will make for greater purity for them: and Allāh is well aware with all that they do.*

*And say to the believing women that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty; that they should not display their beauty and ornaments except what (must ordinarily) appear; that they should draw their veils over themselves and not display their beauty except to their husbands..."*

- Surah an-Nur, 24:30-31

## **What is wrong with exposing our bodies when everyone does it?**

When we live in countries where the majority are not Muslims and hijāb is only worn by a minority, we sometimes feel that dressing indecently or without hijāb is 'normal'.

Islam believes that when we dress in such a way, we may think we are only dressing to look good but we in fact spread sin in society. People look at our bodies and this leads them to temptation and to commit sins and disobey Allāh.

A society that encourages women to dress indecently takes away the dignity of women and uses them as objects to make money by portraying them on magazine covers, TV commercials, websites, and so on.

Every Muslim, male or female, should strive to change the image of women in society so that they are not seen as object. One way to do this is to wear hijāb very well and to reject the temptation to dress indecently. Wearing a scarf with a tight T-shirt and pair of tight jeans that reveals the shape of the body is not hijāb! The only purpose it serves is to spoil the name of Islam because then everyone knows that the indecently-dressed girl is a Muslim!

Besides wearing clean and decent clothing, men should not dress like women and women should not dress in male clothing. Some scholars say the reason why a beard is wājib for men is for the same reason: Allāh does not want men to resemble women. There is no beauty in a man who imitates women or a woman who imitates men. And this is not how men and women become 'equal'. Instead men and women should complement each other by proudly being who they are meant to be.

In particular when we go to the masjid, we should wear our finest clean clothes. It is not respectful to go to the masjid in casual, dirty or even torn clothes. We should also dress modestly at all times even when we are at home in the presence of our parents and siblings. Even for boys, it is very poor akhlāq to walk around the home without a shirt or to dress indecently.

## Ornaments and Jewellery

By ornament we mean what we wear besides our clothing to make ourselves look beautiful, such as a bracelet, ring or chain.

It is harām for men to wear gold ornaments or jewellery and also to wear silk clothing. Women are allowed to wear gold and silk. But Muslims should not wear ornaments or jewellery to imitate others who have no Islamic values and in particular they should avoid passing trends such as tattoos, piercings, dyeing the hair in shocking colours, hairstyles to imitate unislamic and sinful icons and personalities, and so on.

How we dress has a strong influence on how we see ourselves, our thoughts and feelings, our values, our understanding of God and religion, and even our goals and ambitions in life.

## Sleep

It is makruh to sleep at the time of fajr. It is mustahab to stay awake and worship Allāh until sunrise. During summer days when fajr time is too early and a person cannot stay up until sunrise, they should try and at least recite some Qur'ān, tasbih, and ad'iyā (pl. of du'a) after their fajr salāh (as *ta'qibāt*) before going back to bed again. It is also makruh to be asleep at Maghrib time.

When the days are long and it is hot, it is also recommended to take a short nap closer to noontime, before the time of salāt adh-dhuhr.

Praying and worshiping Allāh at Fajr and Maghrib time also increases a person's *rizq* (sustenance) and protects them from Hellfire.

Allāh says in the Qur'ān:

﴿وَقُرْآنَ الْفَجْرِ إِنَّ قُرْآنَ الْفَجْرِ كَانَ مَشْهُودًا﴾

*...and [observe particularly] the dawn recital. Indeed the dawn recital is witnessed [by angels].*

- Surah al-Isrā, 17:78

It is makruh to sleep too much and unnecessarily. Sleep is to allow the body to rest and re-energize. Islam encourages us to sleep early and rise early instead of sleeping late and waking up late.

The following are some of the etiquette of sleeping and waking up in Islam:

- Before going to bed, use the washroom, brush your teeth and do wudu.
- Say '*Fi Amānillāh*' to everyone at home or around.
- Before sleeping, think of your day and all the things you did. If there were any bad deeds or sins committed, ask Allāh for forgiveness before falling asleep, with a resolution to make the next day better.
- Lie down on your right side. Never sleep on your stomach and face.
- Recite some surahs of Qur'ān that you know and recite the Kalima.
- Whenever Rasullāh (s) used to sleep, he would say:

اللَّهُمَّ بِاسْمِكَ أَحْيَيْ وَ أَمُوتُ

*O Allāh! In Your name I live and I die.*

- And when Rasullāh (s) would wake up, he would say:

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي أَحْيَانَا بَعْدَ مَا أَمَاتَنَا وَإِلَيْهِ النُّشُورُ

*Praise be to Allāh who gave us life after death and to Him we will return.*

By thanking Allāh for sending our souls back into our bodies we remind ourselves that one day we shall die and we should therefore strive to make each day special.

- When you wake up, after using the washroom and brushing your teeth, do wudu again.
- Greet those who are already awake with '*as-salāmu 'alaykum*'.



## Lesson 2

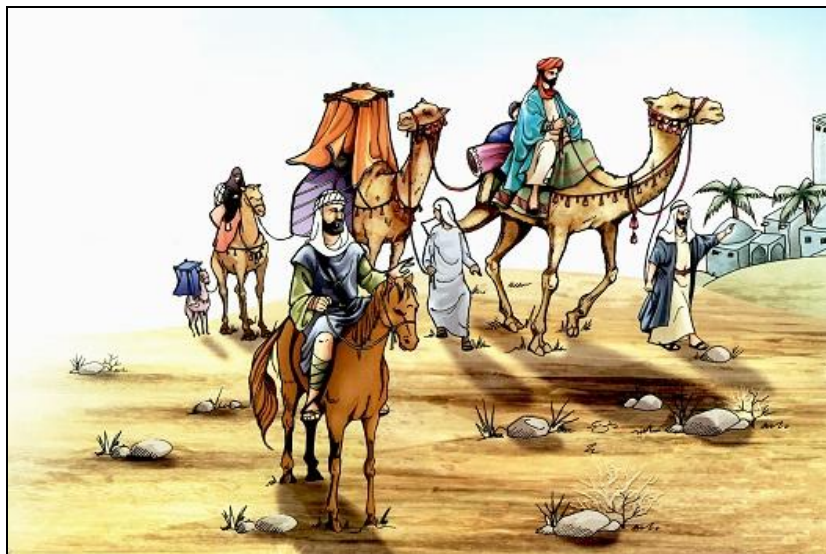
# Helping Others

Allāh loves Muslims who like to help others. The best Muslims are those who not only help others but also do not like to be praised for it. They help others only to please Allāh and don't want their name to be mentioned or to be given any reward.

We should always try and volunteer at the masjid and other places where people need help such as the food bank, hospitals and so on, but never for reward or praise. Always volunteer your time cheerfully and help others only for the sake of Allāh.

The following story is about our fourth Imām, Imām Ali Zayn al-Abidin ('a) and how he loved to serve people without being recognized.

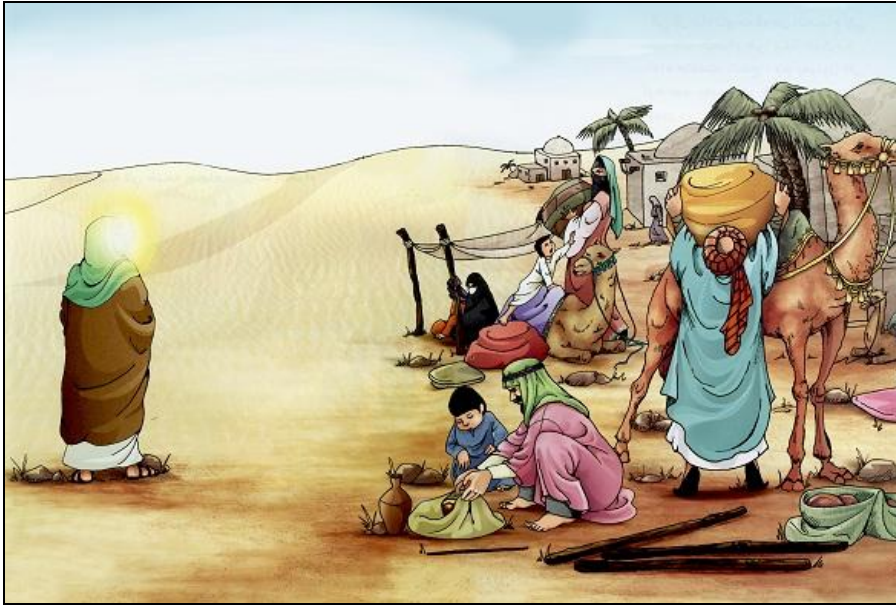
### The Hajj Caravan



Every year groups of people go to Makkah to visit the Ka'bah and to perform the Hajj. In the olden days, when people travelled with camels and horses only, they would return to their homes after many months.

And every Hajj caravan would need some people to help in the caravan during the journey, so as to make it as comfortable as possible. This of course was a very tiring job because in addition to helping and serving

others, the volunteers would also have to work for themselves and would get tired from the long journey.

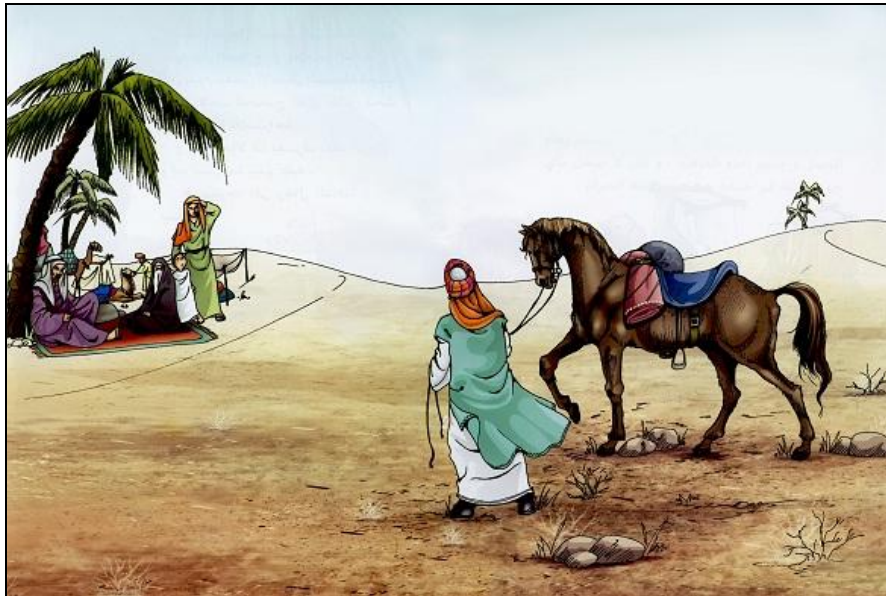


One of these groups once stopped outside Madina on their way to Makkah. And a man met them and said he intended to go for Hajj as well and asked to join the caravan. He looked like a very pious man and no one knew who he was. One of the travellers said, 'he seems like a pious Muslim who wants to go for Hajj. We should take him with us.'



After resting for a few days in Madina, the caravan set out for Makkah and the pious man joined them and helped everyone throughout the journey. He would hold the reins of the camel for some people and walk

in front of the group and he would not shy away from any hard work, always serving the pilgrims going to visit the House of Allāh (*subhānahu wa ta'āla*).



At one of the stops between Madina and Makkah, the caravan met a man who was travelling alone but whom they knew. So they greeted and welcomed him to stay for a bit. The man began talking to them and asking them about their journey and so forth. Just then....



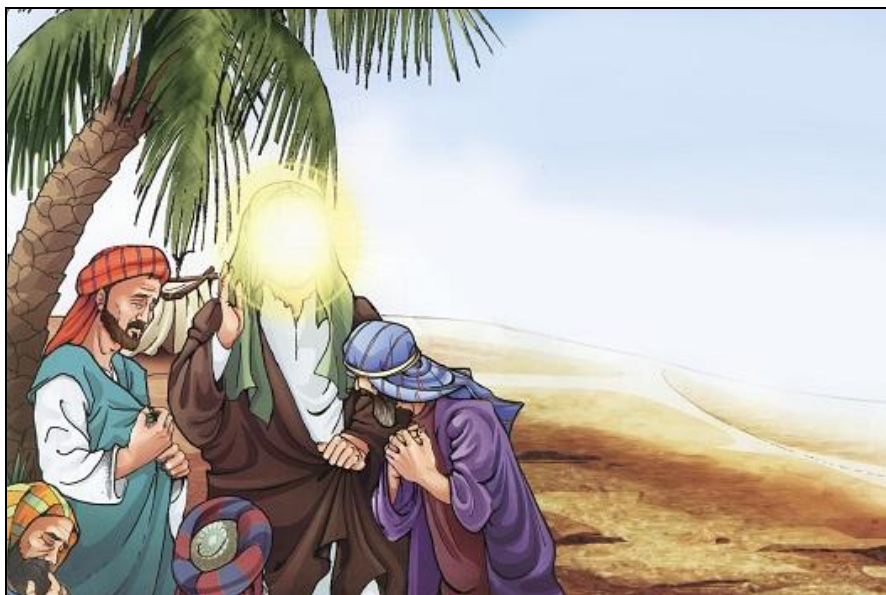
...the man who was travelling alone saw the pious man serving people and getting water for them while they were relaxing under the shade of trees.

The man recognized who this pious man was and said to the people in the caravan, 'do you know who this man is who is busy serving you and working so hard for you?'



'No,' they replied. 'We don't know him. He joined our group in Madina but he seems like a pious and religious man who loves to help others but doesn't take help from others.' The man said, 'No wonder you don't know him! If you knew who he was, you would never let him do the work he is doing for you.'

'Who is he?!' they asked. And the man said, 'He is Imām Ali Zayn al-'Abidin ('a), the son of Imām Husayn ('a).'



The men in the caravan stood up and went to the Imām feeling very embarrassed and ashamed because they let him do all the work without realizing who he was.

They apologized to him. But he said to them, 'I only wanted to join your caravan and be with your group *because* you didn't know me. When I travel with those who know me, they don't let me help or do any work. That is why I always travel with those who don't know me so I can get the *thawāb* of serving them!'

# Lesson 3

## Exercises

Practical Activity on Lesson 2. Possible ideas include:

- A Visit to the Hospital
- Helping at a Soup Kitchen
- Helping at the Muslim Food Bank
- Fund-Raising to Dig a Well in a poor country

## Lesson 4

# The Evils of Waste

﴿وَكُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا وَلَا تُسْرِفُوا إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُسْرِفِينَ﴾

...and eat and drink and do not be wasteful; He (Allāh) does not love the extravagant.

- Surah al-A'rāf 7:31

In Arabic, wastefulness is called *isrāf*. Islam teaches us that it is harām to do *isrāf*. *Isrāf* means to waste something that other people need or can use.

In Book 3, you learnt various ways on how to keep away from *Isrāf* such as:

1. When you are eating, don't put too much food on your plate.
2. When you drink water, don't fill the glass and then spilling what's left. And if you do fill your glass by mistake and cannot finish it, then keep the left-over water for later or use it somewhere else like watering a tree or plant in your backyard.
3. When you are showering, brushing or doing wudu, be careful not to waste water by letting it run continuously.
4. If you have clothes, toys, furniture and anything in the house that you don't want but others can use, don't throw them in the garbage or hoard them until they are of no value. Donate them to the masjid (if they are collecting used items to help others) otherwise donate them to a thrift store or give them away for free to others.
5. When you leave a room, always turn off the lights. Leaving the lights on all over the house is *isrāf* and therefore harām. If it is during the daytime, open the blinds or curtains to let in natural light.

We will now discuss *isrāf* in more detail.

## Isrāf in History

Before Islam, the Arabs in Makkah were very wasteful. When the rich among them invited someone for dinner, they slaughtered several extra camels just to show off their wealth. And whatever food was left was thrown in the garbage. Some people do this even today. Allāh hates such waste that is only to show off to others.

People don't just waste food, water and money. They even waste time. Wasting time is also harām in Islam. In the past, entertainment just for the sake of 'passing time' did not exist. But today it is widespread because of the profit that some people make by entertaining others and because of all the extra free time that many people have. Many will spend their entire evenings and weekends just having fun. Islam does not forbid relaxing and enjoying oneself in moderation. But when people are addicted to 'entertainment' for no other reason except passing time, then it is a waste of precious human life and a form of Isrāf.

Some people waste vast sums of money collecting expensive things as a hobby and only to show off, or even for a reason they don't know themselves. They may for example, purchase gold collars and leashes for their dogs and cats while people in other parts of the world are starving.

Rasulullāh (s) said even building a very expensive home or purchasing a very expensive means of transportation that is above a person's financial status – only to show off – is harām and a sign of pride and isrāf.

## Isrāf in Qur'ān and Hadith

﴿وَلَا تُبْذِرْ تَبْذِيرًا إِنَّ الْمُبْذِرِينَ كَانُوا إِخْوَانَ الشَّيَاطِينِ﴾

*...and do not waste. The wasteful are the followers of the devils...*

- Surah al-'Isrā', 17:26-27

Imām Ja'far as-Sādiq ('a) used to tell his companions that even after they eat dates, they should not throw the seeds in the garbage because it can be used as food for camels and Allāh does not like the wasteful. Muslims, and especially Shi'ahs, should therefore set an example in recycling and putting food wastes like peels, bones, etc. in special bins



for organic waste that can be converted into compost (e.g. 'green bins') instead of garbage bags.

Imām Ja'far as-Sādiq ('a) also taught his companions not to spill leftover water because it can be drunk later on or used to water plants.

The sign of a true believer is that he or she will neither be wasteful nor miserly. Instead, a *mu'min* is moderate in everything: shopping, wearing, eating, living, travelling, etc. Allāh describes them in the Qur'ān:

﴿وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا أَنْفَقُوا لَمْ يُسْرِفُوا وَلَمْ يَقْتُرُوا وَكَانَ بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ قَوَامًا﴾

*(The servants of Allāh are) those who when spending, are neither wasteful nor miserly, and moderation lies between these [two extremes].*

- Surah al-Furqān, 25:67

When Allāh blesses us with wealth, it is not all for us. Some of the surplus is wājib to give away as zakāh and khums. And in addition, Allāh makes us a means through which other people get help. When we waste money, we are wasting the surplus wealth that we don't need but is the share of others. So we are denying others their share.

According to Imām Ja'far as-Sādiq ('a), if a person is wasteful and later becomes poor because of this habit, Allāh does not answer his du'ās when he asks Allāh to help him out of poverty. In other words a person who is not moderate should not expect Allāh to keep giving him what he does not deserve or cannot spend wisely.

Even handing over something valuable to a child or a foolish person who does not understand its value and who will spoil it is a form of israf.

There once lived a Prophet called Nabi Daniyal ('a) and during his time, wastage of bread was rampant. The people used to throw away leftover bread and it could be seen lying everywhere on the streets. Prophet Daniyal ('a) prayed to Allāh to punish these people and they were inflicted with such a severe famine, that they were prepared to kill other humans and eat their flesh.

## Generosity vs. Wastefulness (Isrāf)

If a person is generous and gives a lot of money or gifts to other fellow Muslims, is it isrāf? Not necessarily.

Isrāf is when you give a person more than he or she deserves or when you give others and neglect a person who is more deserving. Generosity means to give with wisdom.

For example, when you have a family member who is poor and needy and you send money to charity, it is not generosity. Because your immediate family and relatives have a greater right and are more deserving to be helped first.

However if you have something that you need yourself yet you give it to another needy person i.e. you prefer them over yourself then that is generosity and highly praised because it shows a spirit of sacrifice. The Qur'ān mentions such believers and says:

﴿وَيُؤْتُونَ عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ وَلَوْ كَانَ بِهِمْ خَصَاصَةٌ﴾

*...and they give preference (to others) over themselves though they have a need (themselves).*

- Surah al-Hashr 59:9

When Imām Ali ('a), Sayyida Fatima ('a), Imām Hasan ('a), Imām Husayn ('a) and their maid Fidda (r.a.) fasted for three days and kept giving the little food they had to the poor and needy who kept knocking on their door, Allāh praised them in the Qur'ān in Surah al-Insān (76:8).

Also, Imām Hasan ('a) on three occasions during his own lifetime gave half his wealth in charity to the poor and needy. The charitable deeds of Imām Husayn ('a) and other Imām ('a) are also well known.

These examples teach us that it is not wasteful to even give large sums in charity as long as we are not being unfair to those who have a right. Rasulullāh (s) said, 'There is no goodness in isrāf and there is no isrāf in goodness.'

## The Real Meaning of Isrāf

Isrāf can sometimes be more than just spending wastefully. For example, even spending one dollar or less on something useless is isrāf and therefore harām.

**Isrāf is not about quantity ('how much') – it is about taking and using what is unnecessary or spending where it is not appropriate.**

If you can buy decent clothes for a lower price and you buy the same thing but much more expensive only because it is a 'brand name' then it is isrāf.

Imām Ali ('a) said, 'Wasteful people have three qualities: they eat more than they need to, they wear more than what is suitable for their status and they buy things unnecessarily.'

We must therefore be very careful not to do 'impulsive shopping'. Before you buy something ask yourself: Do I really need this? And make a shopping list before you go to the mall. That way you have had more time to think about what you need and you don't just shop impulsively.

## Care for the Environment

When human beings live on the earth, they leave their mark or 'footprints' on it. In other words they use the earth's blessings until they die. Almighty Allāh says:

﴿وَعِبَادُ الرَّحْمَانِ الَّذِينَ يَمْشُونَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ هَوْنًا﴾

*The servants of the Merciful (Lord), are those who walk gently on the Earth...*

- Surah al-Furqān, 25:63

*Walking gently* can mean living a humble and gentle lifestyle in which we do not waste the precious resources of the earth like water and we do not pollute the environment.

Some countries use a lot of the earth's land and water and produce a lot of waste while other countries suffer with famine and poverty because they cannot produce and enjoy the blessings of the earth easily.

Not caring for the environment and wasting resources senselessly is also one possible meaning of the Qur'an āyah:

﴿ظَهَرَ الْفَسَادُ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ أَيْدِي النَّاسِ﴾

*Corruption has appeared on land and sea because of the doings of the people's hands...*

- Surah ar-Rūm, 30:41

To help the environment and our beautiful earth, we can do a lot individually and as a community. But we have to make sacrifices and we may have to change our lifestyle and give up conveniences that we have become accustomed to. It means a return to old-fashioned ways of doing things and a conscious choice of living simply and making do with less. The following are some examples that should become a part of every Muslim's lifestyle:

1. Carry a reusable mug or bottle with you instead of using disposable cups and bottles.
2. Use fabric bags for shopping. Avoid using plastic bags.
3. Spend less time in the shower. Reducing showering time by 2 minutes saves 10 gallons of water.
4. Don't print if you can email. Use less paper. Over 300 gallons of water are used to produce every kg of paper.
5. Clean without chemicals. Natural cleaners like vinegar and baking soda clean well without harming the earth.
6. Use energy-saving light bulbs.
7. Reduce usage of the dryer. Hang out clothes in the sun, or inside during cold weather and let clothes dry the old fashioned way. It is good for your clothes too!
8. Do not use weed killers and pesticides in your lawn and gardens. Use natural treatments if you have to.

This is how we can thank Allāh for all His blessings. Allāh asks in the Qur'ān after mentioning the favours He has created in Nature:

﴿أَفَلَا يَشْكُرُونَ﴾

*Will they not then give thanks?*

- Surah Yā Sin, 36:35

Allāh made human beings the inheritors of the earth. He gave us the world and all the creatures within it so that we may live and prosper by *using* them, not *abusing* them. We must therefore show our gratitude to Allāh and find ways of cleaning up the mess and damage we cause to the earth.

## Lesson 5

# Rights of Parents & the Sin of Disobedience to Parents

### Children as a Blessing

Islam views children as a blessing when they believe in Allāh, are dutiful to their parents and are well-mannered. Imām as-Sādiq (‘a) said that a man once said he didn’t see the need to have children until one day when he went for Hajj and saw a young boy praying near the mount of ‘Arafah and saying, ‘O Lord! (Bless) my father! My father!’ It was then that he wished he had a child who could pray for him like this.

Rasulullāh (s) advised parents and said, ‘Love your children and show mercy to them’ and Imām Ja’far as-Sādiq (‘a) said, ‘Allāh sometimes shows mercy to a person because of how much he loves his child.’

‘When a person kisses his child,’ Rasulullāh (s), ‘Allāh writes a good deed for him. If a person brings joy to his child, Allāh will bring joy to him on the Day of Judgement. And if parents teach their child the Qur’ān, they will be called on the Day of Judgement and given robes whose light will shine and give light to the faces of the people of Jannah.’

A cruel man once said to Rasulullāh (s), ‘I have never kissed my child’. When he turned, Rasulullāh (s) said, ‘This man is from the people of Hellfire.’

In one narration, Rasulullāh (s) was playing with his young grandsons Imām al-Hasan (‘a) and Imām al-Husayn (‘a) and kissing them, when a man said to him, ‘I have ten children but have never kissed even one of them.’ Rasulullāh (s) got so angry, the colour of his face changed. Then he said to the man, ‘If Allāh has removed mercy from your heart, what can I do? One who does not have mercy on the young and does not respect the old is not from us!’

But all such love for children is provided they are good and obedient to Allāh and His commands.

Rasulullāh (s) said, 'A righteous (*sālih*) child is a flower from paradise.'

And Imām as-Sādiq ('a) said, 'Daughters are gifts and a mercy from Allāh. Sons are blessings from Allāh. Allāh will reward you and not question you for what He gives you as a gift. But He will question you about His blessings.'

The rights of a child on parents is that they give their child a good name, provide them with the basic necessities of life such as food, clothes and shelter, and that they educate them, especially in how to recite the Qur'ān and in having religious knowledge of what is *halāl* and *harām*. It is also recommended to teach children swimming and a form of self-defence (especially for boys).

## Children as a Trial

Not all children are a blessing however. Sometimes, no matter how hard parents may try, a child may be rebellious and simply a test and a trial for their parents. They neither obey Allāh nor respect their parents.

Allāh warns the faithful of such children:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنَّ مِنْ أَزْوَاجِكُمْ وَأَوْلَادِكُمْ عَدُوًّا لَكُمْ فَاحْذَرُوهُمْ...  
 إِنَّمَا أَمْوَالُكُمْ وَأَوْلَادُكُمْ فِتْنَةٌ...﴾

*O you who have faith! Indeed among your spouses and children you have enemies; so beware of them.... Rather, your possessions and children are a trial...*

- Surah at-Taghābun, 64:14-15

Imām Ali ('a) advised the faithful in his time, 'Do not make all your life a pre-occupation for your spouse and children. Because if they are friends of Allāh then Allāh will not ignore and leave His friends uncared for. And if they are enemies of Allāh, then why are you so worried and occupied about the enemies of Allāh?'

## Rights of Parents

After the worship of Allāh, Islam lays great emphasis on the rights of parents. With parents, it is not ‘do good to them if they do good to you’. Rather they must be obeyed and respected regardless of how they treat you. Islam forbids us from even looking at our parents with anger even when they have been unfair to us.

Notice how, in the following āyah, the kindness to parents is mentioned along with and immediately after the worship of Allāh. And also how, when your parents upset you, instead of expressing displeasure, we are commanded to pray for them:

﴿وَقَضَىٰ رَبُّكَ أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا ۖ إِنَّمَا يُبَلِّغُنَّ عِنْدَكَ الْكِبَرَ أَحَدُهُمَا أَوْ كِلَاهُمَا فَلَا تَقُلْ لَهُمَا أُفٍّ وَلَا تَنْهَرْهُمَا وَقُلْ لَهُمَا قَوْلًا كَرِيمًا ۖ وَاخْفِضْ لَهُمَا جَنَاحَ الذُّلِّ مِنَ الرَّحْمَةِ وَقُلْ رَبِّ ارْحَمْهُمَا كَمَا رَبَّيَانِي صَغِيرًا﴾

*Your Lord has decreed that you shall not worship anyone except Him, and [He has enjoined] kindness to parents. Should they reach old age at your side—one of them or both—do not say to them, ‘Fie!’<sup>7</sup> And do not chide them, but speak to them noble words. Lower the wing of humility to them, out of mercy, and say, ‘My Lord! Have mercy on them, just as they reared me when I was [a] small [child]!’*

- Surah al-Isra, 17:23-24

When Rasulullāh (s) was asked about parents and their rights, he said, ‘They (i.e. your mother and father) are your paradise and your hell.’

This means depending on how you deal with them, they will become the means that will lead you to either paradise or hell.

Rasulullāh (s) was asked what action was loved most by Allāh and he said, ‘Praying on time.’ ‘What thereafter?’ he was asked again and Rasulullāh (s) said, ‘Doing good to your parents.’

<sup>7</sup> That is, do not grumble or speak to them in an ill-tempered manner. The Arabic word for ‘Fie!’ in the āyah is *Uff*. *Uff* is any expression of displeasure and being fed up.



Imām as-Sādiq (‘a) has said, ‘Being good to your parents and obeying them is wājib. If they are not Muslims then don’t obey them if they ask you do something harām. Otherwise obey them in everything else.’

A person who grows up and then forgets his or her parents and neglects them commits a major sin called *‘uquq al-walidayn*, which means ‘breaking ties with parents’ and such a person is called *‘āq al-walidayn* i.e. one who is disowned by his or her parents. The rights of parents are so great that it is wājib for a person to remember and to serve his or her parents all their lives and even after they die. Serving parents after they die can be done by praying for them, fasting for them, giving *sadaqa* on their behalf, going for hajj for them, and so on.

## Fathers

The right of a father is that you must never call him by his name. When you walk with him you must walk besides him or behind him but never in front of him, regardless of how old and weak he may have become. When he enters the room you must stand up for him out of respect. His right is also that you never raise your voice above his or talk back to him rudely or stare at him angrily. All his orders must be obeyed unless he orders you to disobey Allāh. And from his rights is that after he has passed away, you keep a relation with his friends and respect them. One of the rights of the father is that you fear him when he is angry.

A man came to complain to Rasulullāh (s) and said, ‘My father wishes to take my property.’. Rasulullāh (s) said to him, ‘Both you and your property belong to your father!’

Imām as-Sādiq (‘a) has explained that a father can take from his son whatever he needs without even asking, provided it is not wasteful and does not leave his son penniless.

## Mothers

The rights of a mother are similar: that you stand up in respect for her when she enters the room; that you obey her in everything except sin; that you never raise your voice above hers; that you show love and

respect for her and you protect her and support her when she is alone, and that you continue to pray for her even after she passes away.

Rasulullāh (s) has said, 'Jannah is under the feet of mothers.'

A man called Ibrāhim b. Mazāhim once had an exchange of words with his mother before he came to see Imām Ja'far as-Sādiq ('a). As soon as he came in Imām as-Sādiq ('a) said to him, 'Why did you speak to your mother in anger and rudely? Do you not know her womb was once your home where you lived? That her lap was your cradle? And she fed you from her own body?!' 'Yes' Ibrahim replied. 'Then don't argue with her and upset her' said the Imām and he asked him to go back and apologize to his mother.

A man said to Rasulullāh (s) once, 'I have committed many sins. Can I do anything besides *tawbah* to be forgiven?' Rasulullāh (s) asked him, 'Are any of your parents still alive?' And he said, 'my father is still alive.' So Rasulullāh (s) said, 'Go and be good to him.' Then when he turned and left, Rasulullāh (s) said, 'If only his mother was alive!'

This shows that the rights of mothers and the reward of serving her are greater. And in a famous hadith, Rasulullāh (s) said the rights of mothers are three times greater than that of fathers.

## Disobeying Parents

Imām as-Sādiq ('a) commented on the āyah of Qur'ān we saw earlier and said, 'Allāh has used *uff* in the Qur'ān (17:23) but if there was any word smaller than that in Arabic to show disgust, then Allāh would have used that.' Therefore don't even sigh or express displeasure with your parents with even a word less than that.

And as for the part in the āyah that says: '*but speak to them noble words*' Imām as-Sādiq ('a) said that even when we feel our parents are unfair, we should pray for them and say, 'O Allāh forgive them!'

Our fifth Imām, Imām Muhammad al-Bāqir ('a) said, 'my father saw a man and his grownup son walking and the son was leaning on the father

disrespectfully. My father was so angry that he never spoke to the son until he died.'

Rasulullāh (s) has said that Allāh says to one who displeases his parents and is disowned by them (*'āq*): 'Do as much good as you please. I will never forgive you!'

And Rasulullāh (s) also said, 'Anyone who prays to Allāh against his parents will be struck with poverty.'

Imām Ja'far as-Sādiq ('a) said, 'Part of *'uquq (al-walidayn)* is to stare back at your parents angrily.' And he also said, 'A person who looks at his parents angrily even while they have been unjust, his prayers are not accepted.'

They are very many other such ahādith to show that Rasulullāh (s) cursed a person who beats his or her parents and that a person who displeases his or her parents and then does not ask them for forgiveness will never enter Jannah, regardless of much good they do or how much else they worship Allāh.

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# MOTHER

Soft Comics  
Kaf & Ali

O PROPHET MUHAMMAD WHO HAS GREATER RIGHT OVER ME? MY MOTHER OR FATHER?



WHY DO YOU GIVE THE MOTHER THREE RIGHTS TO THE FATHER'S ONE?



HE REPLIED:  
YOUR MOTHER  
AND THEN?  
YOUR MOTHER  
AND THEN?

"YOUR MOTHER AND THEN YOUR FATHER"

## THE PROPHET REPLIED:

YOUR MOTHER CARRIED YOU FOR NINE MONTHS, AND GAVE BIRTH TO YOU



SHE GAVE UP HER SLEEP, SUCKLED YOU, CARRIED AND CLEANED YOU

FOR YEARS SHE COOKED FOR YOU FED YOU, AND SERVED YOU FOOD



WHEN YOU WERE 40, 50, 60 SHE STILL FOLLOWED YOUR PROGRESS WITH INTEREST



COULD I REPAY HER FOR ALL THAT SHE'S DONE FOR ME?



"NOT EVEN ONE NIGHT'S DUE!"

SUPPOSE I CARRY HER ON MY BACK FOR YEARS!



... COOK & FEED HER ...



CLEAN UP FOR HER



FOR AS LONG AS SHE LIVES!



## THE PROPHET SAID:

"THERE WILL STILL BE THIS DIFFERENCE: YOUR MOTHER LOOKED FOR YOU TO LIVE, WHILE YOU ARE WAITING FOR HER TO DIE."

## Lesson 6

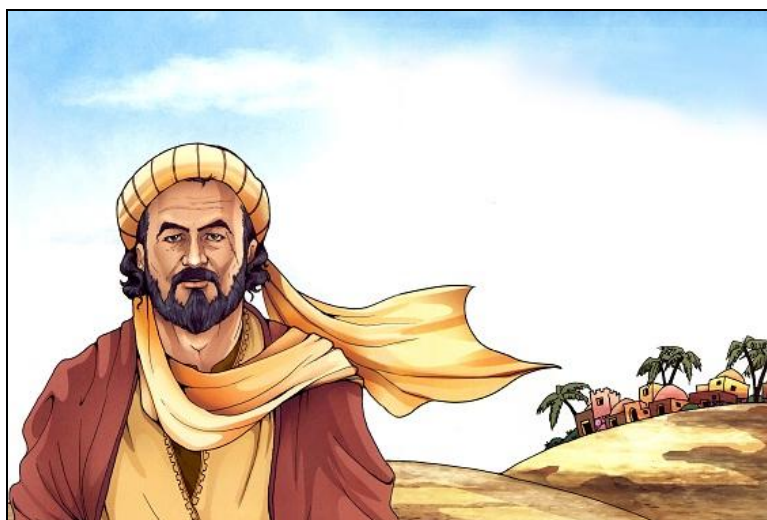
# Forgiving Others

When we make mistakes or disobey Allāh, we do *istighfār* and *tawbah*, meaning we ask Allāh to forgive and pardon us for our mistakes and to give us a second chance. And when we hurt other people, we say ‘sorry’ to them and we hope they will forgive us too.

But sometimes other people hurt us and do wrong *to us*. Allāh loves us to become kind and forgiving like Him so that instead of getting angry or taking revenge, we also should forgive others and give them a second chance.

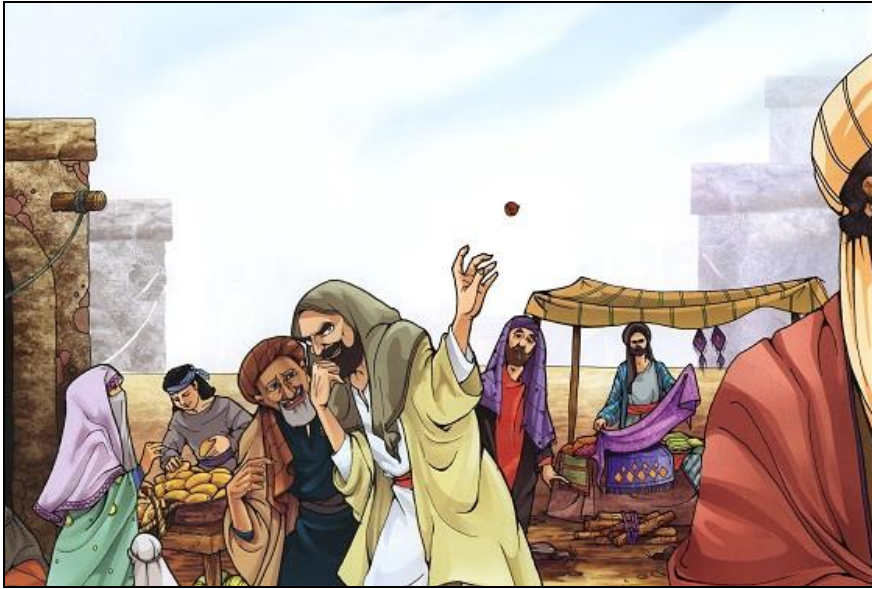
Remember not everyone is bad to us on purpose. Some people are ignorant and make mistakes. If someone is really cruel and bad, of course we should not be kind to him or her because that will encourage him or her to do more evil. But if someone is ignorant or just being silly, we should control our anger and pray to Allāh to forgive him or her and to guide him or her to become better. This is how a true Shi’ah behaves. One such Shi’ah was Mālik al-Ashtar, the famous companion of Imām Ali (‘a) and we will now read a story about him.

### The Shopkeeper and the Passer-by



Malik al-Ashtar was the commander of Imām Ali (‘a)’s army and was one of the bravest and most feared soldiers in battle. He was very tall and

strong. He loved to imitate his teacher, Imām Ali ('a), in all his behaviour and manners.



One day, Mālik was passing by the market in Kufa when one of the shopkeepers decided to make fun of him and threw a hazelnut at Mālik. Then he waited a little to see what this passer-by will do. The people in the marketplace were surprised to see what this man had done.



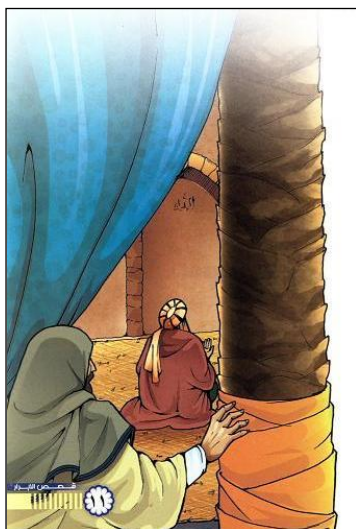
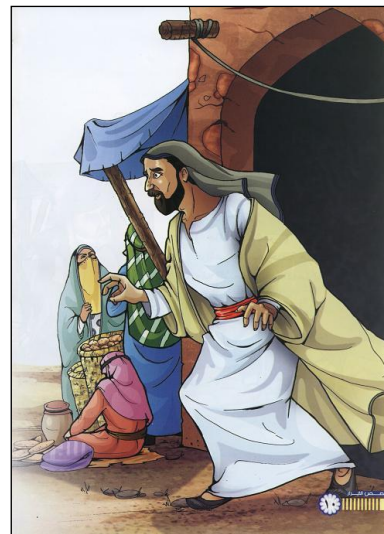
But Mālik al-Ashtar did not care about what this shopkeeper had done. He did not even look back or pay any attention to what the shopkeeper had done and continued walking on until he disappeared in the crowd of people. As he walked he just looked down with humility. What was Mālik al-Ashtar thinking? What was going on in his mind?



One of the other shopkeepers in the market said to this shopkeeper, ‘Do you know who was the man that you threw the hazelnut at?’ ‘No,’ said the man, ‘he was just a passer-by like all the other passers-by’.

‘No, he was not,’ said the other shopkeeper. ‘That was Mālik al-Ashtar, the follower of Amir al-Mu’minin Imām Ali (‘a) and the commander of his army.’

‘Was this really the same Mālik al-Ashtar from whom even the lions tremble in fear and the bravest of warriors flee from him in battle?’ asked the man in disbelief.



‘Yes, that was him,’ replied the other shopkeeper. The shopkeeper ran after Mālik al-Ashtar to apologize to him but he could not find him because Mālik had disappeared in the crowd and was now far away. But the shopkeeper kept asking about him until he was told that Mālik had gone to the masjid. The man then started looking for Mālik in the masjid and saw him praying to Allāh.

When Mālik finished praying, the man fell at his feet and wanted to kiss them and beg for forgiveness because he thought the commander of the Muslim army would punish him severely because of what he did to him in the marketplace.



But Mālik moved his feet away and held the man's hands and asked him, 'What is wrong?!'



The shopkeeper said, 'I am very sorry because of what I did at the marketplace. I am the one who threw a hazelnut at you to make fun of you but I have come to ask for your forgiveness.'

Mālik replied him politely and in a beautiful manner, 'Do not worry. It is not a problem. I only came to the masjid to pray to Allāh to forgive you... you are free to go and I have no hatred for you in my heart.'



## Lesson 7

# Controlling Our Anger

A Muslim should only get angry about something that Allāh or Rasullāh (s) or an Imām ('a) is angry. When a person gets angry for something personal, he or she is not able to think clearly or control himself or herself. Shaytān controls an angry person and makes him or her do harmful things like being rude to others, swearing, saying hurtful words, blaming others, and even fighting with others physically.

Anger is like fire or poison that harms the angry person more than it does others. Our seventh Imām, Imām Musa al-Kādhim ('a) is called 'al-Kādhim', which means 'One who controls his anger', because he never lost his temper. A Shi'ah never gets angry unnecessarily and always tries to resolve a problem with love, peace and calm thinking. Allāh does not like people who get angry easily nor people who cannot control themselves when they are angry.

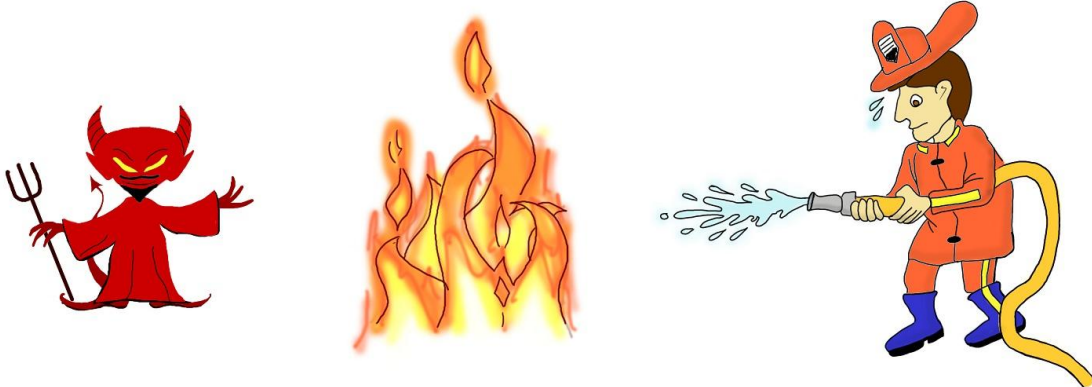


## Controlling Anger

Many tips are given to us in hadith on how to control anger. Here are some of the common ones:

- If you're standing when you get angry, immediately sit down. If you're already sitting, lie down. (And if you're lying down, stand up!)
- Recite salawāt loudly until your anger subsides.
- Do wudu.

Wudu is recommended because uncontrolled anger is from shaytān and shaytān is created from fire. Uncontrolled anger is therefore a form of fire and fire is extinguished with water.



This, however, does not mean that we should never get angry. Controlled anger is necessary to allow us to defend ourselves from danger and even to uphold justice such as in punishing a criminal or during jihād when we express anger for the sake of Allāh and Islam.

What is important however, is **how** we express our anger. It must always be done with control and forethought. For example, when others insults the Qur'ān or Rasulullāh (s), the solution is not for Muslims to burn buildings, throw stones, chant slogans and shout and abuse others or threaten to kill them. The solution may be to create awareness in public of why this is wrong and blasphemous and to find ways to stop the insults without harming the image of the Qur'ān or Rasulullāh (s) even further (with our own angry reactions)!

Allāh promises to forgive on the Day of Judgement a *mu'min* who forgives others when they anger him or her. And those who restrain their anger are praised in the Qur'ān:

﴿وَسَارِعُوا إِلَىٰ مَغْفِرَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَجَنَّةٍ عَرْضُهَا السَّمَاوَاتُ وَالْأَرْضُ أُعِدَّتْ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ  
الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ فِي السَّرَّاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ وَالْكَاطِمِينَ الْغَيْظَ وَالْعَافِينَ عَنِ النَّاسِ وَاللَّهُ  
يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ﴾

*And hasten towards your Lord's forgiveness and a paradise as vast as the heavens and the earth, prepared for the Godconscious - those who spend in ease and adversity, **and suppress their anger**, and excuse [the faults of] the people, and Allāh loves the virtuous.*

- Surah Al-Imrān, 3:133-134

﴿...وَمَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ وَأَبْقَىٰ لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ وَالَّذِينَ يَجْتَنِبُونَ  
كِبَائِرَ الْإِثْمِ وَالْفَوَاحِشَ وَإِذَا مَا غَضِبُوا هُمْ يَغْفِرُونَ﴾

*...what is with Allāh is better and more lasting for those who have faith and who put their trust in their Lord; those who avoid major sins and indecencies, **and forgive when angered**.*

- Surah ash-Shura, 42:36-37

## Abusive Language

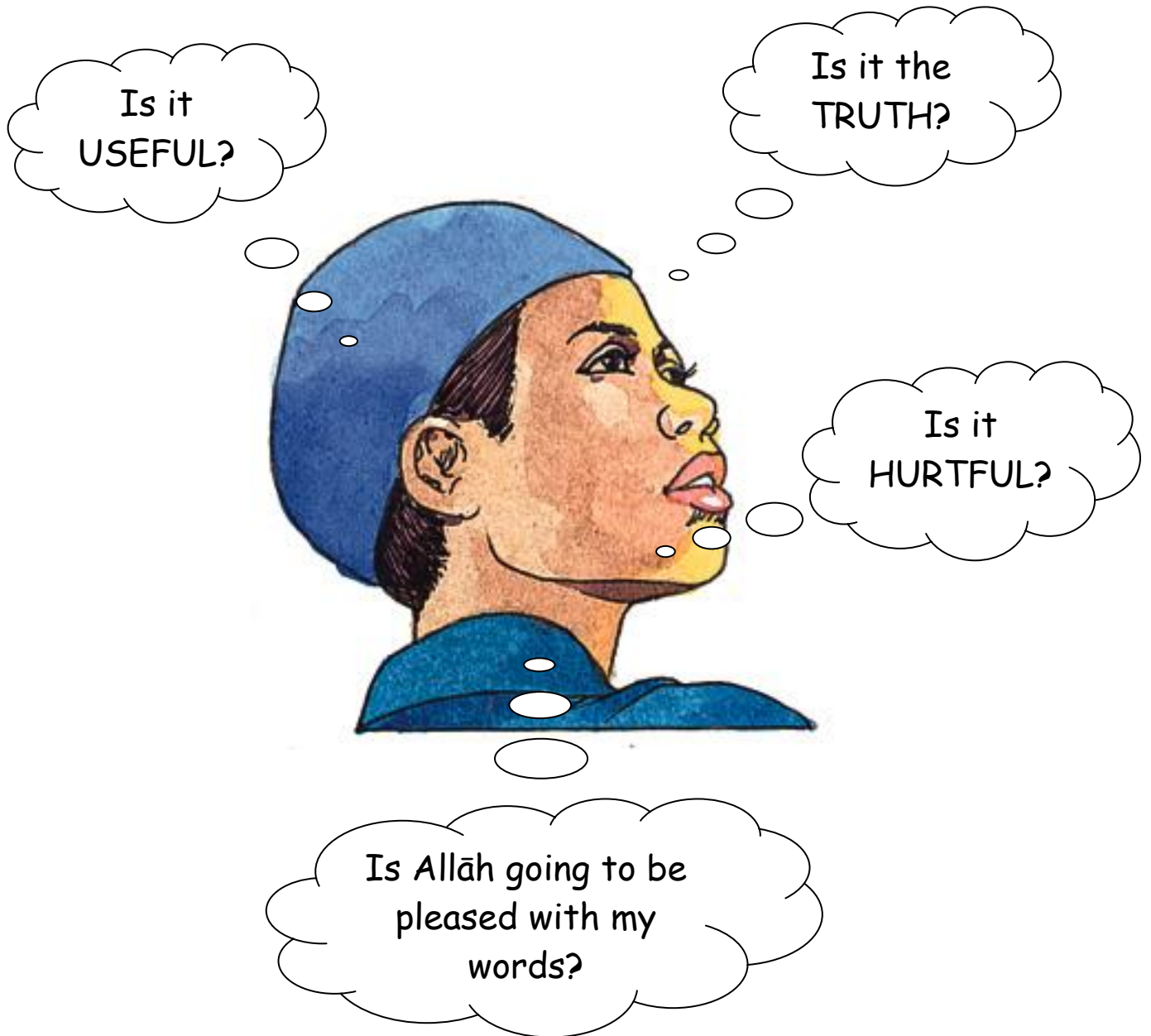
By abusive language we mean to swear or insult someone. Typically this is done in anger. Any sensible person knows this is wrong yet surprisingly it is a common habit especially amongst the youth.

Most people swear when something bad happens to them or when someone does something that they don't like. Swearing does not actually help a person calm down or feel better. It in fact makes them feel even worse.

Imām Ali ('a) said that a person from whose tongue others are afraid is from the people of Jahannam. The key to avoiding anger and saying or doing something we would regret later in life is to be patient and polite. No matter how upset we are, we must discipline ourselves to express our anger politely.

# The Mouth Test

Before you speak always take the Mouth Test:

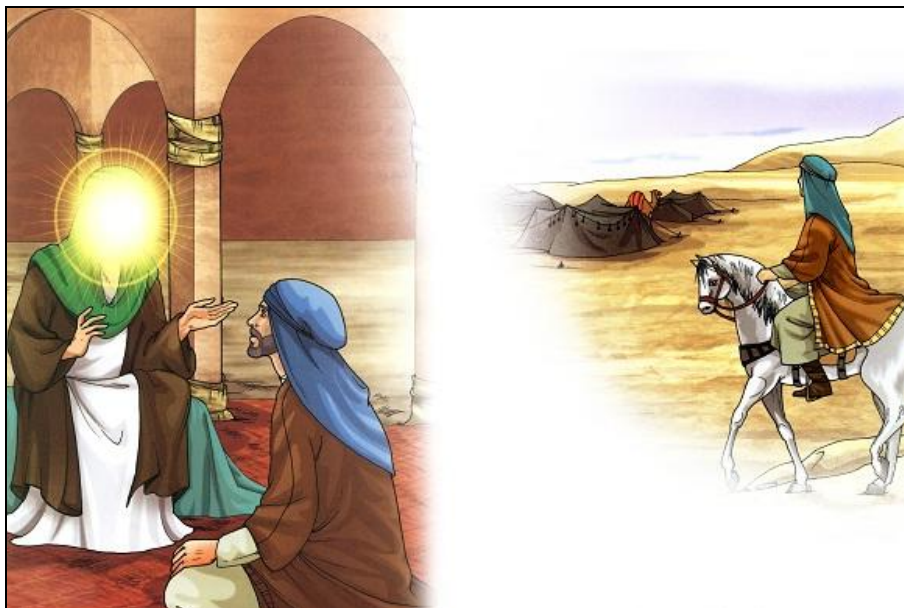


## The man Who Asked for Advice



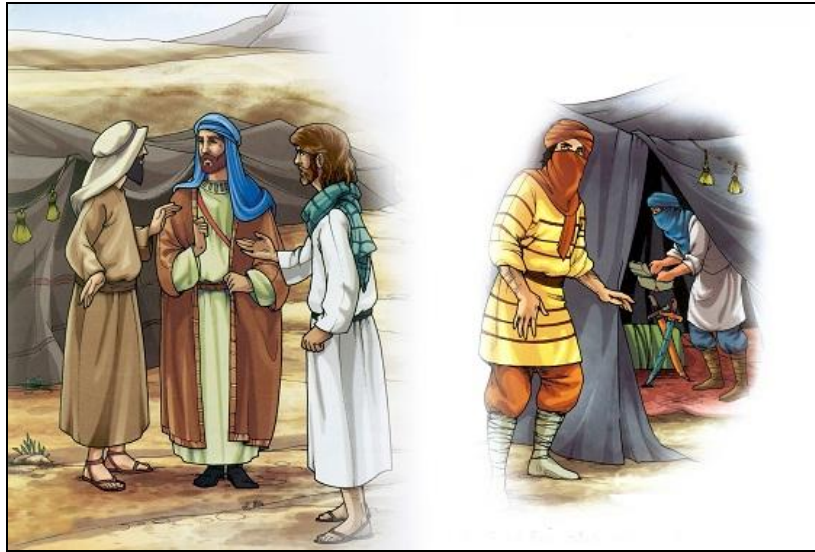
Sālim bade farewell to his family and brothers in the desert and set out with his horse towards Madina. Even though the sun was hot, every time Sālim thought of where he was going, he did not feel tired and he forgot the heat of the desert.

In Madina, the first thing Sālim did was to ask where the masjid of Rasulullāh (s) was and soon the people guided him to it.

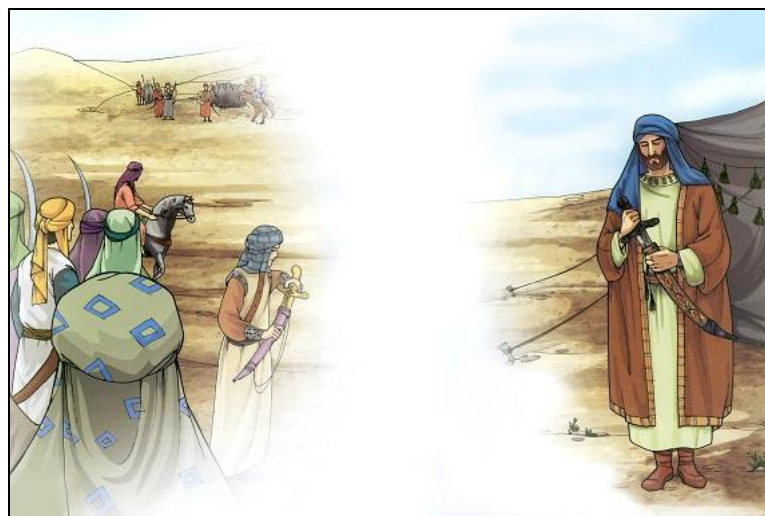


Sālim sat before Rasulullāh (s) and asked him for advice, listening attentively. Rasulullāh (s) said to him, 'Go back, dear Sālim, to your family and your people but remember: never get angry without reason or lose your temper.'

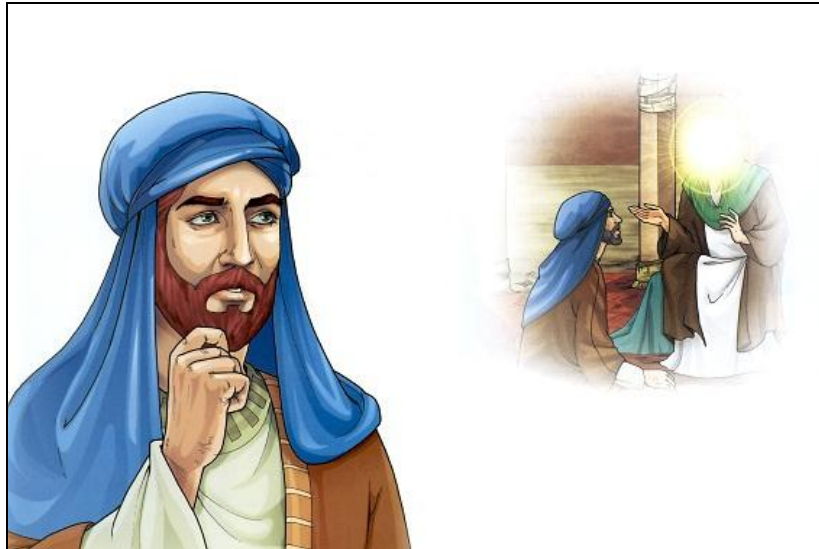
'This advice is sufficient for me, O' Messenger of Allāh!' said Sālim happily. Then he bade Rasulullāh (s) farewell and returned to his family and people in the desert carrying in his heart and mind the advice of Rasulullāh (s).



After Sālim had returned home, his people told him what had happened while he was away. Some children from his tribe had stolen some goods from another tribe. When the other tribe came to know of the theft and that the thieves were from the tribe of Sālim, they did the same thing and stole goods from Sālim's tribe.



The result of this was serious and the two tribes decide to go to war. The men from both tribes prepared themselves to fight with swords and even die. When Sālim heard of this, at first he got very angry, took his sword and headed towards the battlefield to support his people and fight against the other tribe.



As Sālim stood with the men in his tribe, he recalled what Rasulullāh (s) had told him in Madina and the advice given to him never to lose his temper because anger is the key to every evil. ‘Anger,’ Rasulullāh (s), had told him, ‘stands between a man and his reasoning.’

When Sālim had calmed himself down and his anger had left him, he came to his senses and began asking himself, ‘Why are we so angry? Why are we ready to kill each other? Is war the solution to our problem?’



Then Sālim went to the other tribe and said to them, ‘O People... why are we so angry? What are we fighting for? If you have lost any wealth or property, I will pay you back from my wealth and property. Can we not give up this fighting?’

Then he went back to his people and said the same thing until they too calmed down and he convinced them to find a better solution and not to fight.



When the men in the other tribe saw what Sālim did and what he said, they were affected by his words and they too calmed down and their anger went away.

They said to the tribe of Sālim, ‘We accept peace. Let us discuss a solution instead of fighting. Forgive us for your losses and we forgive you and will not take anything from you either.’

So the two tribes made peace and put away their swords. Every man returned to his tribe. All this was because of the advice Sālim heard from Rasullāh (s) that he followed and practiced.