



IMAMIA
SUNDAY
SCHOOL



SIRAAT

Name: _____

Class: _____

Teacher: _____

BOOK : 7

AGES: 11 Yrs

IMAMIA SUNDAY SCHOOL
Proposed School Calendar 2013-2014

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

DATE	HOMEWORK DETAIL	PARENT'S INITIALS

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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 Islāmic Beliefs (Aqāid), Islāmic Laws (Fiqh), Islāmic History (Tārikh), and Islāmic 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 Islāmic 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 Islāmic education.

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

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

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- Br. Khalil Jaffer : For the creation of the ISSC West Madrasah’s Diniyat Syllabus and the production of all the initial Textbook and Workbook drafts and updates.
- 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 Islām, 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 7

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 – Belief in One God (Tawhid) as a Natural Instinct (Fitra) – Meaning of Shirk and why it is Unforgivable	SALĀH - Types of obligatory prayers - Importance of fulfilling Qadā Salāh - Salāt al-Jumu'ah
2	ADALAH – Allāh’s Glad Tidings for Paradise and Warning of Punishment – Concept of Sin and Temptation – How much influence does Shaytān have on us?	Salāt al-Ayāt
3	NUBUWWAH – Similarities and differences between the Qur’ān, Hadith and Hadith al-Qudsi – We do not believe in Tahrif of Qur’ān – The Qur’ān as a miracle	Salāt al-Jamā'ah [●]- method of joining, rules and conditions
4	NUBUWWAH – Infallibility ('Ismah) of Anbiya and Aimmah - Tark al-Awla	Salāt al-Jamā'ah (continued) [●]
5	IMAMAH – Taqiyya and how it differs from Nifāq – Examples from Qur’ān, Hadith and History	SAWM - kaffāra - those exempt from fasting - Qadā of fast – Types of fast (wājib, mustahab, harām)
6	QIYAMAH - Events of the Day of Judgement: Blowing of the Trumpet – The Resurrection – Mahshar - The Accounting (Hisāb) – The Book of Deeds – The Questioning of Rasul and their Nations - The Scales (Mizān) – The Testimony of the Limbs - The Bridge (Sirāt)	Gender-specific (Revision from Book 6): Boys Class - istibra - respect for women - Girls Class - signs of bulugh - wājib ghusl - haid & istihādha - basic info on how it affects salāh and sawm
7	QIYAMAH - Events of the Day of Judgement (Cont'd)	Hijāb - as modesty in dress, thought and deed. Hijāb in eyes (lowering gaze) and speech as well as online (chatting, webcam, etc.)

Lesson	Tārikh	Akhlāq
1	QASAS AL-ANBIYA – Nabi Dāwud ('a) and Nabi Sulaymān ('a)	Rights of Neighbours – Visiting the sick (iyādah) – Helping orphans, needy
2	QASAS AL-ANBIYA – Nabi Khidr ('a) and Nabi Musa ('a)	Volunteering and helping the community - Altruism (ithār) vs. Selfishness - Charity (sadaqa)
3	SIRAH – Mi'rāj – a narrative account	Bribery (rishwa) – Usury (ribā) – Interest-Free Loan (qard al-hasana)
4	SIRAH – Pledges of Aqabah and Hijrah to Madina	Never Support the Unjust
5	AIMMAH – al-Hasan b. Ali az-Zaki al-Askari ('a)	Practising witchcraft and magic (sihr) – belief in astrology and psychic sciences (tarot cards, etc.)
6	AIMMAH – Imām al-Hujjah b. al-Hasan al-Mahdi ['atfs]	Thanking Allāh (shukr) vs. Ingratitude
7	AIMMAH – Imām Husayn ('a) Karbala & Ashura	Sins of the Tongue: Backbiting (ghibah) – False Accusation (tuhmah) - Flattery - Lying

Objectives for Book 7

At the end of the year the student should:

For Aqāid

- understand why the belief in God is natural and atheism is unnatural
- know the difference between kufr and shirk and why shirk is unforgivable
- understand the meaning of sin in Islām and the limited influence of Shaytān
- know the differences between Qur'ān, hadith and hadith al-Qudsi
- understand that the Shi'ah do not believe in tahrif of the Qur'ān
- understand the concept of infallibility and why it is necessary
- understand the concept of taqiyya in Islām
- know the major events (at a high level) to occur from death to one's final abode in the hereafter

For Fiqh

- (a) know the types of salāh that are obligatory and rules regarding salāt al-Jumu'ah
- (b) know when and how to pray salāt al-āyāt
- (c) be aware of the importance of praying in jamā'ah and the rules regarding it
- (d) know how to join salāt al-jamā'ah midway
- (e) know the importance of fasting and the rules of kafara as well as the common types of wājib, haram and mustahab fasts
- (f) understand the philosophy of hijāb

For the gender specific class (as a revision from the previous book):

- (g) 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
- (h) in the boys class know the rules of istibra, and basic laws regarding girls such as their being bāligha sooner, gender-mixing laws, respect for women and that girls who are bāligha do not pray/fast at certain times of the month

For Tārikh

- (a) know the brief history of Nabi Dāwud ('a) and Nabi Sulaymān ('a)
- (b) know the story of Nabi Musa ('a) and Khidr ('a) and the lessons to derive from that story
- (c) be aware of the significance of Mi'rāj as a physical event
- (d) know the events in the sirah of Rasulullāh (s) that led to the Hijrah, including the Pledges of Aqabah
- (e) know the brief biography of the 11th and 12th Imāms ('a)
- (f) know the key events in the tragedy of Karbala and the Day of Ashura

For Akhlāq

- (a) know the rights of neighbours in Islām, the importance of visiting the ill and helping orphans and the poor
- (b) understand the importance of being selfless and volunteering in the community
- (c) know the sin of bribery and taking advantage of others
- (d) know the importance of not siding with the unjust
- (e) understand the sin of practising occult sciences
- (f) understand the importance of giving thanks to Allāh and being content in life
- (g) know of the various sins related to the tongue such as backbiting, false accusations, flattery and lying

Aqáid **(Beliefs)**

Lesson 1

The Fítira of Tawhíd

Belief in God a Natural Instinct

If we study the history of human beings we will realize that humans have always had faith in a Higher Power and a Creator. This is a part of our instinct (*fitra*) built into our consciousness so much so that we can say that those who deny the existence of God hold an unnatural belief.

Rasulullāh (s) said:

كُلُّ مَوْلُودٍ يُوَلَّدُ عَلَى الْفِطْرَةِ ثُمَّ أَبَوَاهُ يَهُودَانَهُ أَوْ يُنَصْرَانَهُ أَوْ يُمَجْسَانَهُ

Every child is born on the natural instinct (fitra of Islām i.e. to believe in One God only); then it is the child's parents who make the child a Christian or a Jew or a Magian (and so on).

It is also this natural instinct to believe in One God only - the fitra of Tawhid – that the Qur'ān refers to when it says:

﴿فَأَقِمْ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّينِ حَنِيفًا فِطْرَةَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي فَطَرَ النَّاسَ عَلَيْهَا لَا تَبْدِيلَ لِخَلْقِ اللَّهِ ذَٰلِكَ الدِّينُ الْقَيِّمُ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ﴾

So set your heart on the religion as a people of pure faith, the instinct (fitra) of Allāh according to which He originated mankind. There is no altering Allāh's creation; that is the upright religion, but most people do not know.

- Surah ar-Room, 30:30

In other words, no matter what we do, as human beings, we will always instinctively want to believe in God because that is how Allāh made us and the belief in Tawhid is built into us as a natural instinct. Even when an atheist tries to argue using 'science' (such as believing in the evolution theory), you can see that they are forcing themselves to ignore the obvious signs all around them.

For example, those who believe humans evolved from apes and other creatures have never found a single fossil evidence to prove this. In other words, no one has ever found any remains of any creature that was in between two creatures to prove the evolution theory.

Even the atheist who believes the universe started with a 'Big Bang' does not know what caused the Big Bang in the first place or who created the small mass that first exploded. So when asked how something could ever come into existence out of nothing, the atheist has no answer except, 'one day science will find out'.

This stubborn refusal to acknowledge God as the Creator of the universe could be for various reasons. It could be because some people came from religions that taught God was in the form of a body like man and sits somewhere in the heavens on a throne. Obviously such beliefs make no sense to people today so when they reject this idea, they reject God altogether. Other people may reject God because they believe religion causes hatred and war. Others may not believe in God because it would mean they would have to do certain things (that are wājib) or keep away from what is harām.

If people understand God the way Rasulullāh (s) and the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) explained God, very few would reject God. We shall discuss this in later books but in this lesson, we wish to understand the need for religion and why humans cannot live without religion and the belief in God.

At the end of this lesson, there are several anecdotes to show why the belief in One God is a natural human instinct. These anecdotes show how simple it is for anyone to realize that faith in God is as natural as any instinct can be. Even when people don't know who God is, they worship stars, the sun, the moon, animals, fire, trees, idols, etc. This shows that as a natural instinct, people have a need to worship their Creator and Lord and to surrender themselves to a Higher Power. You can read these anecdotes as homework.

Meaning of Tawhid & Shirk

Believing in God is not sufficient. We must also believe that God is One and Only and there is no other god besides Him. He has no partners, He

is the Only Creator and the Sustainer of the whole universe and He has power over all things. He is Ever-Living and never dies. This belief is called Tawhid (monotheism). In Arabic, God is called Allāh.

The opposite of Tawhid is *Shirk*. It means to believe in or worship anything or anyone besides Allāh. *Shirk* is the greatest sin in Islām. To believe Allāh has a partner means to believe someone or something is equal to Allāh.

The most important message of every Nabi and Rasul was Tawhid – to have faith in One God only and to worship no one but Him. Every time people forgot this or started making idols in memory of their prophets and becoming superstitious, believing that other powers can benefit or harm them, Allāh sent another Nabi to remind people that no one can benefit or harm you without Allāh’s permission and there is no one worthy of being worshipped except Allāh.

Here are some verses of Qur’ān that tell us clearly that *shirk* is a major sin.

﴿وَاعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَلَا تُشْرِكُوا بِهِ شَيْئًا...﴾

Worship Allāh and do not ascribe any partners to Him...

- Surah an-Nisā, 4:36

﴿لَقَدْ كَفَرَ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْمَسِيحُ ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ وَقَالَ الْمَسِيحُ يَا بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ
اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ رَبِّي وَرَبَّكُمْ إِنَّهُ مَنْ يُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدْ حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ الْجَنَّةَ وَمَأْوَاهُ النَّارُ وَمَا
لِلظَّالِمِينَ مِنْ أَنْصَارٍ﴾

They are certainly faithless who say, ‘Allāh is the Messiah (Jesus), son of Maryam.’ But the Messiah had said, ‘O Children of Israel! Worship Allāh, my Lord and your Lord. Indeed whoever ascribes partners to Allāh, Allāh shall forbid him [entry into] paradise, and his refuge shall be the Fire, and the wrongdoers will not have any helpers.’

- Surah al-Māidah, 5:72

﴿وَإِذْ قَالَ لُقْمَانُ لِابْنِهِ وَهُوَ يَعِظُهُ يَا بُنَيَّ لَا تُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ إِنَّ الشِّرْكَ لَظُلْمٌ عَظِيمٌ﴾

And (remember) when Luqmān said to his son, as he advised him: 'O my son! Do not ascribe any partners to Allāh. Polytheism is indeed a great injustice.'

- Surah Luqmān, 31:13

The Unforgivable Sin

﴿إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَغْفِرُ أَنْ يُشْرَكَ بِهِ وَيَغْفِرُ مَا دُونَ ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَمَنْ يُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدْ

افْتَرَىٰ إِثْمًا عَظِيمًا﴾

Indeed Allāh does not forgive that any partner should be ascribed to Him, but He forgives anything besides that to whomever He wishes. And whoever ascribes partners to Allāh has indeed fabricated [a lie] in great sinfulness.

- Surah an-Nisā, 4:48

The verse above tells us clearly that a person who does *shirk* cannot be forgiven. Now we know that Allāh is most kind and most merciful and that Allāh does not need anyone's worship or obedience. So why does Allāh not forgive *shirk*?

The reason is because a mushrik (person who commits *shirk*) is not able to accept Allāh's forgiveness or guidance even if it is offered to him or her. *Shirk* takes away a person's ability to receive Allāh's blessings and grace. It is not that Allāh does not want to forgive a mushrik or allow him or her into paradise but actually the mushrik himself or herself is incapable of living in paradise or accepting Allāh's forgiveness. That is why Allāh says He does not forgive *shirk*.

Once we have become Muslims and firmly believe "lā ilāha ilallāh, Muhammadun Rasul Allāh, Aliyyun Waliyullah" (*There is no god but Allāh, Muhammad is the Messenger of Allāh, Ali is the Wali of Allāh*), we must still be careful not to have "Hidden Shirk" (*Shirk al-Khafiyy*) in our hearts. *Hidden shirk* is when a person worships Allāh on the outside but in his or her heart, he or she loves other things more than Allāh and relies on others more than Allāh for security and happiness.

Imām Ja'far as-Sādiq ('a) once said that if a person said, 'I was only saved because of so-and-so' or 'If it was not for so-and-so I would have been ruined' or 'If it was not for so-and-so I don't know what I would have done' then all these statements means the person has "hidden shirk" in his heart. But a person who truly relies on Allāh only and is free from *shirk* completely should say, "If it was not for Allāh's help through so-and-so, I don't know what I would have done'. Or he should say, 'All thanks be to Allāh who helped me through so-and-so.'

In other words, even when we are sick and we take medicine or we are hungry and we eat food or we have a need and someone or something helps us, we should know and realize that the blessing is actually from Allāh but He gives it to us through someone or something. So we should first thank Allāh and then thank the person through whom Allāh helped us. Allāh tells us:

﴿...وَأَعْتَصِمُوا بِاللَّهِ هُوَ مَوْلَاكُمْ فَنِعْمَ الْمَوْلَىٰ وَنِعْمَ النَّصِيرُ﴾

... and hold fast to Allāh. He is your Master - an excellent Master and an excellent Helper.

- Surah al-Hajj, 22:78

Read the following anecdotes as homework. Your teacher may ask you to tell one of these stories in class or to organize skits for some of them:

Anecdotes on Belief in God a Natural Instinct

The Spinning Wheel

One day, Rasulullāh (s) was out with some of his companions (*ashāb*) when they came across an old woman working at a spinning-wheel. As she was spinning yarn, she was praising Allāh for all His blessings. Rasulullāh (s) stopped to ask her about her health.

Then he said to her, 'Tell me, what made you believe in Allāh?'

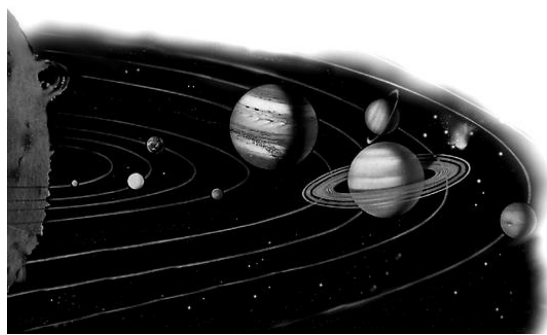


On hearing this, the woman stopped working on the spinning-wheel, thought for a while and then replied:

‘O Messenger of Allāh! You see this spinning-wheel? As long as I move it, it spins. As soon as I stop turning it, it stops. If such a simple thing cannot function unless someone keeps it going, how is it possible for the whole universe to work so well without Someone driving it? There must be Someone to run it. Someone

who must be controlling every detail. That can only be Allāh, who is the Creator and the Master of Everything!’

Rasulullāh (s) was very pleased with the old woman's reply and told his companions to learn from her faith and to have as strong a faith in Allāh as she did.



Imām Ja'far as-Sādiq ('a) and the Atheist

An atheist asked Imām Ja'far as-Sādiq ('a) to convince him of the existence of Allāh. When Imām as-Sādiq ('a) came to know that the man sailed in the seas very often, he asked him, ‘Have you ever been caught in a fierce storm in middle of nowhere, and thought you were going to drown and lose your life?’ ‘Yes!’ replied the man. Then the Imām ('a) asked again, ‘And at that time, when there was complete despair, was there not a glimmer of hope that perhaps someone or something, by some miracle, could still save you?’

‘Yes,’ said the man again. ‘That Power,’ said the Imām ('a), ‘in which you had a glimmer of hope and that saved you, is Allāh!’

The atheist was an intelligent man. He knew the truth when he heard it.



A Boat Out of Nothing

Long ago there lived a wise King who ruled over a kingdom in which some of the people believed in Allāh and some did not.

To resolve the argument once and for all, the wise king arranged for a debate between the believers in God and the non-believers.

When the time arrived for the great debate, the people representing the non-believers arrived at the court but a wise old man who was going to represent the believers did not show up.

Everyone waited and waited but the old man still did not come. The non-believers said that he would not turn up because he had no arguments for his belief in God.

At last, the wise old man arrived. Everyone wanted to know why he was so late. So the King asked him to explain the reason for his delay.

The man explained that he had left home in time but in order to get to the King's court he had to cross a river. When he reached the river there was no boat to cross.

Everyone in the court listened attentively. The man continued with his story.

He then told everyone that while he was waiting for a boat, some planks of wood and some nails suddenly started coming out of the water by themselves and floating around. Then just by coincidence, all the pieces of wood moved into just the right position and the nails also went into the wood in just the perfect places until a boat formed all by itself.

But it took a while for this boat to make itself and the old man had to wait, so he was late.

All the non-believers were very angry and called the old man a liar.

The wise old man asked the non-believers why they did not believe his story of the boat being made by itself, while they wanted everyone to believe that this whole world and everything in it had been made by itself, since they did not believe in Allāh as the Creator?

None of the non-believers could answer the wise old man, and so the believers in Allāh won the debate!

Do Barbers Exist?

One day a man went to a barber's shop to have his hair cut and his beard trimmed as always. He began to talk to the barber and somehow they began talking about religion and God.

'Look man,' said the barber, 'I don't believe that God exists.' 'Why is that?' asked the man and the barber said, 'Well, it's so easy. You just have to go out into the streets and look to realize that God does not exist. Tell me, if God exists, would there be so many sick people? Would there be abandoned children? If God exists, there would be no suffering or pain. I can't think of loving a God who allows all of these things.'

The man thought for a moment but he did not respond immediately because he did not want to start an argument. When the barber finished cutting his hair and trimming his beard, the man paid him and left the shop.

Just after he left the barber shop, he saw a man in the street with long hair and a beard. It was very untidy and a long time since he had his hair cut. He looked dirty and unkempt.

The customer rushed back into the barber shop again and said to the barber, 'Guess what? Barbers don't exist!'

'How can you say they don't exist?' asked the surprised barber, 'I am here and I am a barber. Why I just worked on you?!'

'No!' the customer exclaimed. 'Barbers don't exist, because if they did there would be no people with long, dirty hair and beards like that man who is outside.'

'Ah!' said the barber, 'you are wrong. Barbers do exist. What happens is that people do not come to me so I can help them.'

'Exactly!' said the man. 'That's the point! God does exist. What happens is that people refuse to go to Him and do not look for Him. They pretend they are independent and do not need Him; and when they suffer, instead of going to Him they turn away from Him and insist He does not exist!'

The Tiger's Footprints

There once lived a farmer who always prayed all his salāh on time. One day he saw a sick man lying on the roadside. He helped him up and took him home to look after him.

The next morning when the farmer woke up to pray salāh, he woke up his guest who said he did not want to pray. The man said that he could not see Allāh so how could he pray to One whom he could not see. The farmer did not say anything.

The next day the man was feeling better and wanted to go home. The farmer walked with him across the fields. Suddenly they saw footprints. The man told the farmer that they were the footprints of a tiger.

'Nah! I don't believe that!' said the farmer, 'I can't see a tiger here!'

The man looked surprised and said, 'you are just being stubborn and silly. Aren't these footprints enough to tell you that a tiger was here not long ago?'

The farmer said, 'Dear brother! When you saw the footprints you believed that a tiger had passed here; so are not the moon, the sun, the flowers, and the trees enough signs to make you believe that there must be One who made them?'

The man thought for a while and said, 'Yes! You are right! We cannot see Allāh with our eyes because He doesn't have a physical body. But we can understand from all the things around us that He has created them and that He exists. Every creation of Allāh is a sign pointing to Him!'

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EVIDENCE OF THE CREATOR

Sufi Comics
Arif & Ali

O IMAM ALI, WHAT EVIDENCE IS THERE OF AN ALMIGHTY CREATOR?

THE FECES OF A CAMEL LEADS ONE TO BELIEVE...

... THAT A CAMEL HAS PASSED ALONG WAY

FOOTPRINTS ON SAND ...

INDICATES A MAN HAS TREKED ON THE PATH

LOOK AT THIS GRAND UNIVERSE! WITH ALL ITS CREATURES...

BOTH BIG....

AND SMALL...

IT IS EVIDENCE OF AN ALMIGHTY CREATOR!

Lesson 2

Shaytán & Sín

Allāh's Good News and Warning

One of the most important messages of the Qur'ān (and in fact of every Nabi) is Allāh's Promise to allow into Paradise (Jannah) for eternity, those who have faith in Allāh, who do not associate partners with Him, who believe in all His Books, Prophets, Angels and who keep away from all that is harām and do all that wājib.

Another important message from Allāh is His Warning to punish the evil. Their punishment is to live forever in the Fire of Hell (Jahannam) and it will be the abode for every proud and arrogant person who refuses to believe in Allāh despite knowing the truth and who prefers this world's life instead of the Hereafter.

Rasulullāh (s) came to do both: give us good news of Allāh's promise and to warn us of Allāh's punishment. For this reason, the Qur'ān calls him "The Giver of Good News" (Bashir or Mubashshir) and the Warner (Nadhir):

﴿وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا كَافَّةً لِّلنَّاسِ بَشِيرًا وَنَذِيرًا وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ﴾

We did not send you except as a bearer of good news and warner to all mankind, but most people do not know.

- Surah Sabā, 34:28

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ شَاهِدًا وَمُبَشِّرًا وَنَذِيرًا﴾

O Prophet! Indeed We have sent you as a witness, as a bearer of good news and as a warner.

- Surah al-Ahzāb, 33:45

Concept of Sin and Temptation

A sin is any act of disobedience to Allāh. In Arabic this is called "Dhanb" and the plural is "Dhunub". Committing a dhanb is harām meaning

forbidden. And keeping away from a dhanb is wājib meaning obligatory (i.e. a must).

The reason why Allāh forbids us not do certain things and calls them “*Dhunub*” is because they are bad for our souls. When we commit *Dhunub*, we harm ourselves. It makes no difference to Allāh but it reduces our chances of making it to Jannah unless we repent. That is why Allāh says in the Qur’ān:

﴿...فَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيَظْلِمَهُمْ وَلَكِنْ كَانُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ﴾

So it was not Allāh who wronged them, but it was they who used to wrong themselves.

- Surah at-Tawbah, 9:70

Some scholars (‘ulama) divide all sins into two groups: major sins (*adh-dhunub al-kabira*) and minor sins (*adh-dhunub as-saghira*). They say any sin for which Allāh has clearly promised the Fire of Hell in the Qur’ān (such as murder or disobeying parents or *shirk*) is a major sin. And any sin for which the punishment is mentioned in hadith but not in Qur’ān is a minor sin.

However, all the scholars agree that committing a minor sin repeatedly is a major sin. In other words, a person who commits a minor sin should not take it lightly but should immediately repent and ask Allāh to forgive him or her.

Sometimes a person commits a sin because of temptation. Allāh however is always willing to forgive a person and to allow him or her to start all over again. To do this, we must first have regret in our hearts for committing the sin. Then we must pray to Allāh to forgive us.

Allāh loves a person who constantly asks Him to forgive his or her sins and is always afraid of disobeying Him. And Allāh does not love a person who is too proud to ask for forgiveness and just ignores the sins he or she commits.

How Much Influence Does Shaytān Have on Us?

We all know that Shaytān is our enemy and loves to see us commit sins so that we can all go to Hellfire with him. Many Muslims believe that it is Shaytān who makes us do evil and commit sins. But is that really true?

Allāh tells us in the Qur'ān to beware of Shaytān:

﴿يَا بَنِي آدَمَ لَا يَفْتِنَنَّكُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ كَمَا أَخْرَجَ أَبَوَيْكُم مِّنَ الْجَنَّةِ ... إِنَّا جَعَلْنَا
الشَّيَاطِينَ أَوْلِيَاءَ لِلَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ﴾

'O Children of Adam! Do not let Shaytān tempt you, like he expelled your parents (Nabi Adam ('a) and Sayyida Hawwa ('a)) from paradise ... We have indeed made the devils friends of those who have no faith.'

- Surah al-'Arāf, 7:27

But the Qur'ān also clarifies that Shaytān cannot force us to commit sins. Instead, what happens in this world is that when we forget Allāh, Shaytān is able to whisper ideas of sins in our ears and hearts. Then we think about it and feel tempted. At this point, we still have the choice to remember Allāh and ask Allāh for help and to ignore Shaytān. However if we love the world and its pleasures, we listen to Shaytān and he continues to embellish (i.e. decorate) the sin for us until we go ahead and commit the sinful act. Then we realize what we have done and feel very sorry that we disobeyed Allāh.

That is why Allāh teaches to seek His protection from the whispers of Shaytān:

﴿قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ النَّاسِ . مَلِكِ النَّاسِ . إِلَهِ النَّاسِ . مِن شَرِّ الْوَسْوَاسِ الْخَنَّاسِ . الَّذِي
يُوسَسُ فِي صُدُورِ النَّاسِ . مِنَ الْجِنَّةِ وَالنَّاسِ﴾

Say, 'I seek the protection of the Lord of humans, King of humans, God of humans, from the evil of the sneaky tempter who puts temptations into the chests of humans, from among the jinn and humans.'

- Surah an-Nās, 114:1-6

In other words, we have to remember that we are responsible for our actions. We cannot blame Shaytān for the sins we commit. Shaytān only acts like a ‘broker’ or a ‘salesman’. He packages a sin, “gift-wraps” it in our eyes and ears and makes it look beautiful to us so that if we love the world more than Allāh, we are tempted to go towards the sin:

﴿فَلَوْلَا إِذْ جَاءَهُمْ بَأْسُنَا تَضَرَّعُوا وَلَكِنْ قَسَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَزَيَّنَ لَهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ﴾

Why did they not plead (for forgiveness) when Our punishment overtook them?! But their hearts had hardened, and Shaytān had made to seem decorous to them what they had been doing.

- Surah al-An‘ām, 6:43

﴿وَإِذْ زَيَّنَ لَهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ أَعْمَالَهُمْ وَقَالَ لَا غَالِبَ لَكُمْ الْيَوْمَ مِنَ النَّاسِ وَإِنِّي جَارٌ لَكُمْ فَلَمَّا تَرَأَتِ الْفِئْتَانِ نَكَصَ عَلَى عَقَبَيْهِ وَقَالَ إِنِّي بَرِيءٌ مِنْكُمْ إِنِّي أَرَى مَا لَا تَرَوْنَ إِنِّي أَخَافُ اللَّهَ وَاللَّهُ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ﴾

And (remember) when Shaytān made their deeds seem decorous to them, and said, ‘No one shall overcome you today from among all mankind, and I will stand by you.’ But when the two armies sighted each other, he (Shaytān) fled, saying, ‘Indeed I am free of you. I see what you do not see. Indeed I fear Allāh, and Allāh is severe in punishment.’

- Surah al-Anfāl, 8:48

On the Day of Judgement, when we blame Shaytān for our sins, Allāh will allow Shaytān to say he had nothing to do with it and therefore we will have to take the blame ourselves:

﴿وَقَالَ الشَّيْطَانُ لَمَّا قُضِيَ الْأَمْرُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَعَدَكُمْ وَعَدَ الْحَقُّ وَوَعَدْتُكُمْ فَأَخْلَفْتُكُمْ وَمَا كَانَ لِي عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْ سُلْطَانٍ إِلَّا أَنْ دَعَوْتُكُمْ فَاسْتَجَبْتُمْ لِي فَلَا تَلُمُونِي وَلَوْلَا أَنفُسُكُمْ مَا أَنَا بِمُصْرِخِكُمْ وَمَا أَنْتُمْ بِمُصْرِخِيَّ إِنِّي كَفَرْتُ بِمَا أَشْرَكْتُمُونِي مِنْ قَبْلُ إِنَّ الظَّالِمِينَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ﴾

When the matter is all over, Shaytān will say, 'Indeed Allāh made you a promise that was true and I [too] made you a promise, but I failed you. I had no authority over you, except that I called you and you responded to me. So do not blame me, but blame yourselves. I cannot respond to your distress calls, neither can you respond to my distress calls. Indeed I reject your taking me for [Allāh's] partner before. There is indeed a painful punishment for the wrongdoers.'

- Surah Ibrāhim, 14:22

We may therefore conclude: Shaytān plays a role in sins but is not the primary cause of our sins. If Shaytān could force us to commit sins then it would be against the justice ('adālah) of Allāh to punish us for something we have no control over. But Allāh can punish us if we disobey Him and then refuse to do istighfār and tawbah because ultimately the decision is always ours. We have the freewill to act as we like in this world but we must know the role that Shaytān plays in our lives, the consequences of sinning and how to protect ourselves from the temptations of Shaytān by constantly seeking protection with Allāh.

Lesson 3

Qur'ān & Hadīth

Qur'ān, Hadith and Hadith al-Qudsi

Muslims rely on two major sources for their spiritual guidance and understanding of the Islām: the Qur'ān and hadith. Hadith is also further categorized as Hadith al-Qudsi or Hadith an-Nabawi.

- a) Qur'ān:** The Qur'ān is a divine Book whose words as well as meanings are revealed from Allāh. The Qur'ān is a miracle in itself. It is preserved by Allāh Himself from ever being corrupted or changed and it challenges all humans and jinns to ever produce anything like it. The Qur'ān was revealed to Rasulullāh (s) by the angel Jibrāil over a period of 23 years. It consists of 114 surahs (chapters). No Muslim can doubt in the authenticity of the Qur'ān and still remain a Muslim.
- b) Hadith:** Hadith is often translated as “Tradition” in English. It refers to the sayings of Rasulullāh (s). The words are Rasulullāh (s)'s but the meaning is Allāh's because Rasulullāh (s) was a Messenger (Rasul) from Allāh. The infallible (ma'sum) Imāms from the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) also narrated hadith but everything they said as hadith was from Rasulullāh (s) through the previous Imāms. For example, if we hear of a hadith from Imām Ali ar-Rida ('a) it means that the hadith is actually what Imām ar-Rida ('a) heard from his father Imām al-Kādhim ('a) who heard from his father and so on until Imām Ali b. Abi Tālib ('a) who heard it from Rasulullāh (s).

After Rasulullāh (s) passed away, the early caliphs and especially the Caliph Umar b. al-Khattāb did not allow people to record hadith and therefore a lot of the sayings of Rasulullāh (s) were lost. Thereafter the corrupt leaders from the Banu Umayya and Banu Abbās forged many hadith in the name of Rasulullāh (s) just to convince people to be in their favour and not to oppose their rule. The Umayyad Caliph Mu'āwiya was known to pay people to make up false 'hadith' especially against Imām Ali ('a). Therefore not every hadith is to be trusted.

When we hear of a hadith from Rasulullāh (s) or an Imām (‘a), we rely on hadith experts to look at who the hadith has come from and who are the people who narrated it and wrote it down, in order to be sure if the hadith is authentic (*sahih*) or not.

- c) **Hadith al-Qudsi:** Hadith al-Qudsi is a hadith in which Allāh Himself speaks in the 1st person. This means the words and the meanings are both from Allāh. However it is not a part of the Qur’ān and therefore not intended to be a part of the miracle. This means a hadith al-qudsi can also be authentic or forged and has to be studied carefully. You can tell a hadith al-qudsi right away because it always ends with “Rasulullāh (s) said that Allāh says:.....”. Any hadith in which you find Allāh speaking directly to a Nabi, such as “O Dāwud!...’ or ‘O Muhammad!...’, you should know immediately that this is a hadith al-qudsi.

It is very important that we don’t confuse hadith al-qudsi with the Qur’ān. Here is an example of a hadith al-qudsi:

Rasulullāh (s) has said that Allāh (s.w.t.) says:

One who tries to reach Me, knows Me.

One who knows Me, wants Me.

One who wants Me, seeks Me.

One who seeks Me, finds Me.

One who finds Me, serves Me.

One who serves Me, remembers Me.

And one who remembers Me, I remember him with My Mercy.

Tahrif of Qur’ān

The word ‘Tahrif’ means ‘Distortion’ or ‘Change’. To believe in the tahrif of the Qur’ān means to believe that the Qur’ān we have with us at present is not the original, complete revelation of Allāh to Rasulullāh (s).

Some Muslims accuse the Shi’ah of believing in tahrif of Qur’ān. They say the Shi’ahs believe that the present Qur’ān is not complete and many things in it are missing or have been changed.

Now there are ahādith (plural of hadith) in many Sunni and Shi'ah books about tahrif but actually no Muslim believes in the authenticity of these ahādith and some scholars try and interpret the ahādith differently.

It is important for us to know and believe with absolute certainty that the Qur'ān is the final message to mankind and it is protected from tahrif i.e. it can never be altered, whether by adding something or removing something or deleting something.

Shi'ah Muslims therefore do **not** believe in the tahrif of Qur'ān. The belief of the Shi'ah Muslims is that the Qur'ān is complete with not a single letter added or missing.

Allāh says in the Qur'ān:

﴿إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ﴾

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

- Surah al-Hijr, 15:9

What the Shi'ahs do believe is that the present Qur'ān may not be arranged in the exact order that Rasulullāh (s) had arranged it. We know that Imām Ali ('a) had compiled a copy of the Qur'ān himself and it was arranged in the exact order as intended by Rasulullāh (s). Imām Ali ('a) also wrote his own comments and explanations to all the verses of the Qur'ān i.e. when each ayah was revealed, why it was revealed (called *sabab an-nuzul* in Arabic), and any explanations from Rasulullāh (s) about the āyāt of Qur'ān. This copy of the Qur'ān by Imām Ali ('a) is not with us and when Imām al-Mahdi ('atfs) returns, he will introduce it to mankind.

The Qur'ān as an Eternal Miracle

We have said the Qur'ān is an eternal miracle. It is unchanged and also unchallenged. The Qur'ān challenges people to bring its like if they dare and it also challenges people to find any faults in it:

﴿أَفَلَا يَتَدَبَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ وَلَوْ كَانَ مِنْ عِنْدِ غَيْرِ اللَّهِ لَوَجَدُوا فِيهِ اخْتِلَافًا كَثِيرًا﴾

Do they not ponder on the Qur'ān? Had it been from [someone] other than Allāh, they would have surely found much discrepancy in it.

- Surah an-Nisā, 4:82

﴿وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ فِي رَيْبٍ مِمَّا نَزَّلْنَا عَلَىٰ عَبْدِنَا فَأْتُوا بِسُورَةٍ مِثْلِهِ وَادْعُوا شُهَدَاءَكُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ. فَإِنْ لَمْ تَفْعَلُوا وَلَنْ تَفْعَلُوا فَاتَّقُوا النَّارَ الَّتِي وَقُودُهَا النَّاسُ وَالْحِجَارَةُ أُعِدَّتْ لِلْكَافِرِينَ﴾

And if you are in doubt about what We have sent down to Our servant, then bring a surah like it, and call your helpers besides Allāh, should you be truthful. And if you do not - and you will not - then beware of the Fire whose fuel will be humans and stones, prepared for the faithless.

- Surah al-Baqarah, 2:23-4

﴿أَمْ يَقُولُونَ افْتَرَاهُ قُلْ فَأْتُوا بِسُورَةٍ مِثْلِهِ وَادْعُوا مَنْ اسْتَطَعْتُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ﴾

Do they say, 'He has fabricated it?' Say, 'Then bring a surah like it, and call whomever you can, besides Allāh, should you be truthful.'

- Surah Yunus, 10:38

The Qur'ān is therefore a miracle in more than one way: language and style, prophecies, scientific revelations, the best code of life and its relevance today even 1400 years later.

Language

The language of the Qur'ān is of such high standard that even the Arabs in the time of Rasullāh (s) who took pride in their skills in language and literature, were unable to match it. Repeatedly they confessed when they heard the āyāt of the Qur'ān, 'these are not the words of a human being' (*mā hādha kalām al-bashar*). The Qur'ān has its own unique style that is neither poetry nor prose.

Some people try to find grammar mistakes in the Qur'ān but that is very silly. The fact is, the Arabic language has only survived because of the

Qur'ān and all Arabic grammar rules were created from studying the Qur'ān. So when we see our grammar rules do not agree with the Qur'ān, it is actually the fault of those who made the rules from the Qur'ān and not a mistake in the Qur'ān!

We should make an effort to study the Arabic language and to recite the Qur'ān in Arabic in order to appreciate the beauty and miracle of the Qur'ān and the power and conviction with which it speaks. When we read the Qur'ān in Arabic, it leaves no doubt in our minds and hearts that the Speaker is not human yet He knows the nature of human beings very well. In other words, we are convinced that the Author of the Qur'ān is none other than our Creator, the Mighty and Glorious Lord of the Universe!

Prophecies

The Qur'ān made several prophecies, all of which came true. For example, Surah 111 curses Abu Lahab and his wife and foretells that they will both be destined for Hell.

﴿تَبَّتْ يَدَا أَبِي لَهَبٍ وَتَبَّ. مَا أَغْنَىٰ عَنْهُ مَالُهُ وَمَا كَسَبَ. سَيَصْلَىٰ نَارًا ذَاتَ لَهَبٍ.
وَأَمْرَأَتُهُ حَمَّالَةَ الْحَطَبِ. فِي جِيدِهَا حَبْلٌ مِّن مَّسَدٍ﴾

May the hands of Abu Lahab perish, and may he perish! Neither his wealth will help him, nor what he had earned. Soon he will enter the blazing fire, and his wife [too], the firewood carrier, with a rope of palm fibre around her neck.

- Surah al-Masad, 111:1-5

Abu Lahab was the uncle of Rasulullāh (s) but an ardent enemy of Rasulullāh (s) as well. Most Makkan polytheists accepted Islām before Rasulullāh (s) passed away. If Abu Lahab wanted to prove the Qur'ān wrong, the easiest way for him was to recite the Kalima. Even if he would have done this in pretension, it would have challenged the prophecy of the Qur'ān. Yet Abu Lahab and his wife died with hatred for Rasulullāh (s) and in opposition to Islām.

Another example was the Qur'ān's prediction about the Romans victory over the Persians. During the time of Rasulullāh (s) the Romans and the

Persians were seen as the world's 'superpowers'. The Persians were also polytheists. When they defeated the Romans, the Arab mushrikun (polytheists) were very happy because they thought they would now have the help of the Persians to stop the spread of Islām. But the Qur'ān predicted that even after defeat, in a few years the Romans would overcome the Persians; and that is exactly what happened:

﴿غَلَبَتِ الرُّومُ. فِي أَدْنَى الْأَرْضِ وَهُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ غَلَبِهِمْ سَيَغْلِبُونَ. فِي بضعِ سِنِينَ...﴾

Byzantium (i.e. the Romans) has been vanquished in a nearby territory, but following their defeat they will be victors in a few years....

- Surah Room, 30:2-4

Lack of Discrepancies

We have seen the āyah (verse) of Qur'ān challenging people to find a fault in the Qur'ān (4:82).

Think about this: The Qur'ān was revealed over 23 years. 12 years in Makkah and 11 years in Madina. If Rasulullāh (s) was not really a messenger from Allāh and if he was making the Qur'ān up himself, it would be impossible for him to remember everything he had said over 23 years and we would have found so many contradictions in the Qur'ān. But despite the gradual revelation, there is no contradictions in the Qur'ān. This in itself is a miracle for anyone who reflects!

Code of Life

The Qur'ān is a book of guidance. It gives the framework for humans to live on and how to be successful both in this world and the Hereafter. The central theme of Tawhid teaches humans to be free and to surrender to Allāh alone so that they are not submissive to anyone or anything else. The Qur'ān teaches humans to be free of superstitions and myths that hold them hostage. The Qur'ān teaches moderation and the perfect balance that ensures humans are not driven by greed and selfishness but also enjoy Allāh's blessings and benefit from the life of this world without losing the Hereafter. No other book or religion contains the perfect Code of Conduct for humans that remains relevant in all times and ages.

Science

Unlike religions that have a long history of being opposed to science and human progress, the Qur'ān in fact is ahead of science. The more humans research and discover scientific facts, the more they prove the Qur'ān to be a miracle. From human development to animal life, from how the universe functions to the ocean tides and the mountains.

Here are some examples from the Qur'ān of scientific nature. Though these verses were revealed 1400 years ago, science continues to prove the Qur'ān is right:

Stages in the Development of a Human Being

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا كُنْتُمْ فِي رَيْبٍ مِّنَ الْبُعْثِ فَإِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِّنْ تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ مِّنْ نُطْفَةٍ ثُمَّ مِّنْ عَلَقَةٍ ثُمَّ مِّنْ مُّضْغَةٍ مُّخَلَّقَةٍ وَغَيْرِ مُخَلَّقَةٍ لِّنُبَيِّنَ لَكُمْ وَنُقِرُّ فِي الْأَرْحَامِ مَا نَشَاءُ إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى ثُمَّ نُخْرِجُكُمْ طِفْلًا ثُمَّ لِنَبْلُغُوا أَشَدَّكُمْ ...﴾

O people! If you are in doubt about the resurrection, [consider that] We indeed created you from dust, then from a drop of fluid, then from a clinging mass (embryo), then from a fleshy tissue (fetus), partly formed and partly unformed, so that We may manifest [Our power] to you. We establish in the wombs whatever We wish for a specified term, then We bring you forth as infants, then [We rear you] so that you may come of age.

- Surah al-Hajj, 22:5

On Clouds, Hail and the Water Cycle

﴿أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يُزْجِي سَحَابًا ثُمَّ يُؤَلِّفُ بَيْنَهُ ثُمَّ يَجْعَلُهُ رُكَامًا فَتَرَى الْوَدْقَ يَخْرُجُ مِنْ خِلَالِهِ وَيُنزِلُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مِنْ جِبَالٍ فِيهَا مِنْ بَرَدٍ فَيُصِيبُ بِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَصْرِفُهُ عَنِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ يَكَادُ سَنَا بَرْقِهِ يَذْهَبُ بِالْأَبْصَارِ﴾

Have you not regarded that Allāh drives the clouds, then He composes them, then He piles them up, then you see the rain falling from its midst? And He sends down hail from the sky, out of the mountains that are in it,

and He strikes with it whomever He wishes, and turns it away from whomever He wishes. The brilliance of its lightening almost takes away the sight.

- Surah an-Nur, 24:43

﴿اللَّهُ الَّذِي يُرْسِلُ الرِّيَّاحَ فَتُثِيرُ سَحَابًا فَيَبْسُطُهُ فِي السَّمَاءِ كَيْفَ يَشَاءُ وَيَجْعَلُهُ كِسْفًا
فَتَرَى الْوَدْقَ يَخْرُجُ مِنْ خِلَالِهِ...﴾

It is Allāh who sends the winds. Then they raise a cloud, then He spreads it as He wishes in the sky, and forms it into fragments, then you see the rain falling from its midst.

- Surah Room, 30:48

In conclusion then, we can see that truly the Quran will remain a guide for humanity till the end of this world. The more closely we look into the āyāt (verses) of the Qur'ān, the more it will reveal its secrets to us because the Qur'ān is not confined for the people of one period. Its message is for all humans in all periods of time and its wisdom extends even beyond this world and covers the world to come.

Lesson 4

Infallibility (‘Ismah)

Concept of ‘Ismah

‘Ismah (infallibility) is the Islāmic concept that those who are appointed by Allāh to guide others must be sinless and must never disobey Allāh. Most Sunni Muslims believe that prophets are sinless only when they are receiving revelation (*wahy*) from Allāh so that they do not make any mistake when delivering the revelation to people.

Shi’ah Muslims believe that even the words and actions of prophets (that are called his hadith and sunnah) are very important in understanding Islām and therefore a Nabi or Rasul is always ma’sum (sinless). Shi’ah Muslims also believe that the daughter of Rasulullāh (s), Sayyida Fātima (‘a) and the twelve Imāms from the Household (Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) of Rasulullāh (s) are ma’sum and together with Rasulullāh (s) they form the fourteen ma’sumeen.

Of course other pious members of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) were also free of sin but when we say these fourteen are the ma’sumeen we mean their being sinless (or infallible) is a requirement of religion because of their position and role in Islām.

Meaning of ‘Ismah

The word *‘ismah* means a protection or a covering. It is therefore a special grace (*lutf*) of Allāh that is given to a person so that he is able to keep away from sins out of his or her own free will. A person who is given this gift of ‘ismah is called a ma’sum (female: ma’suma) and the plural is ma’sumeen.

It is important to understand that a ma’sum is not forced by Allāh or unable to commit sins but he or she keeps away from sin by his own power and freewill. A ma’sum keeps away from sin because of his or her deep understanding of how sin harms the soul of a person and also because a ma’sum is aware and conscious of Allāh’s presence at all times. This is just like ordinary people who have the freewill to hurt their

bodies but they don't do it because they know how painful and harmful it will be. People commit sins because they don't realize how much they are harming their souls. If they knew that, they would not even think of committing a sin.

One can also think of 'ismah in this way: it is within your power to go naked in the streets. But have you ever thought of doing so? No. Why? Because it is far below your dignity to behave like that. Similarly a ma'sum does not even think of sin because it is far below his or her dignity.

Necessity of 'Ismah

A ma'sum Nabi, Rasul or Imām does not even sin by mistake. Allāh makes sure that it never happens and protects them from such mistakes.

Why is it necessary for Allāh to protect them so much? And what do we mean when we say it is a necessity of Islām that a Nabi or Imām should be ma'sum?

The answer is that Allāh sent the anbiya ('a) and aimmah ('a) to guide people to the Right Path (Sirāt al-Mustaqim) and to become role models and examples to follow. He also asked people to listen to all their words and watch all their actions so that they may be guided by it. For example, Allāh tells us about Rasulullāh (s):

﴿لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِّمَن كَانَ يَرْجُو اللَّهَ وَالْيَوْمَ الْآخِرَ وَذَكَرَ
اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا﴾

In the Messenger of Allāh there is certainly for you a good example (to follow), for those who look forward to Allāh and the Last Day, and remember Allāh much.

- Surah al-Ahzāb, 33:21

Now if a Nabi or Imām sometimes made mistakes or committed sins even by accident, how would we know what to follow and what to ignore?

That is why Allāh also tells us about Rasulullāh (s):

﴿وَمَا يَنْطِقُ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ. إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا وَحْيٌ يُوحَىٰ﴾

Nor does he speak out of [his own] desire: it is just a revelation that is revealed [to him].

- Surah an-Najm, 53:3-4

So Islām's goal of guidance to humankind could not be achieved if the guides themselves had not been sinless (ma'sumeen).

Also, suppose a man who commits sins like ordinary people claimed that he has been sent by Allāh to lead the people to the Right Path, how would the people be sure that he is saying the truth?

Allāh also says in the Qur'ān:

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

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

- Surah an-Nisā, 4:64

Now if the anbiyā were to be obeyed and followed - and we know that Allāh does not want us to follow wrongdoers - how can we obey the anbiyā unless they are sinless and free from committing errors and sins?

When Allāh (s.w.t.) told Nabi Ibrahim ('a) that He was appointing him as an Imām, Nabi Ibrāhim ('a) asked if his children will also be made Imām. Allāh replied that the wrongdoers from his descendants will never be given this honour:

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

﴿ذُرِّيَّتِي قَالَ لَا يَنَالُ عَهْدِي الظَّالِمِينَ﴾

And when his Lord tested Ibrahim with certain words, and he fulfilled them, He said, 'I am making you the Imām of mankind.' Said he, 'And from among my descendants?' He said, 'My pledge does not extend to the unjust.'

- Surah al-Baqarah, 2:124

This proves that Allāh only chooses those who are ma'sum to represent Him as guides to the human race.

Some Muslims quote examples from the Qur'ān to show that the anbiya made mistakes. For example, the story of Nabi Adam ('a) eating from the forbidden tree.

There are however many reasons to explain why Nabi Adam ('a) never committed a sin. Firstly, when Nabi Adam ('a) was told not to go near a tree, it was not in this world. So there was no shari'ah and laws of halāl and harām there.

Secondly, Allāh told the angels He was going to create a khalifa **on the earth**:

﴿وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ إِنِّي جَاعِلٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ خَلِيفَةً قَالُوا أَتَجْعَلُ فِيهَا مَنْ يُفْسِدُ فِيهَا وَيَسْفِكُ الدِّمَاءَ وَنَحْنُ نُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِكَ وَنُقَدِّسُ لَكَ قَالَ إِنِّي أَعْلَمُ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ﴾

When your Lord said to the angels, 'Indeed I am going to set a khalifa on the earth,' they said, 'Will You set in it someone (i.e. humans) who will cause corruption in it, and shed blood, while we celebrate Your praise and proclaim Your sanctity?' He said, 'Indeed I know what you do not know.'

- Surah al-Baqarah, 2:30

So Nabi Adam ('a) only became a Nabi after coming to the earth.

Thirdly, when Nabi Adam ('a) was in the Garden before coming to the earth, Shaytān misled him by swearing in the name of Allāh. Nabi Adam ('a) was the first human being. He had never heard anyone say a lie and he never imagined anyone could swear falsely in Allāh's Name.

Whenever we hear of any "mistakes" made by the anbiya, they are not actually sins that affect their position as spiritual guides. Instead such actions are called *Tark al-Awla* which means "Leaving the Better Option". It is possible for a Nabi to do this and for Allāh to correct him or remind him but as such, a Nabi cannot commit sins. We shall learn more about Tark al-Awla in Book 8.

Types of 'Ismah

There are two types of infallibility ('ismah): general ('āmmah) and specific (khāssah).

Al-'Ismah al-'Aammah: This is a general kind of “sinlessness” that is accessible to everyone. For example, the angels are sinless in this sense. They don't commit sins but it is not out of choice. Similarly, newborns and very young children are also called “ma'sum” in this sense. Even if we protect ourselves from certain sins, we can be said to be “ma'sum” in a limited sense. For example, if you never steal or backbite, we could say you are infallible (ma'sum) from stealing and backbiting. There have always been some very pious individuals in Islām who did everything wājib and kept away from all harām matters. But they may have made mistakes when they were young and they learnt to become pious with time, knowledge and experience. Also, when such pious individuals keep away from sin, it is very good but if they didn't, it would make no difference to us or the rest of mankind. Their 'ismah is only for their own sake. So their 'ismah is also part of this general sinlessness (al-'ismah al-'āmmah).

Al-'Ismah al-Khāssah: This is a special and specific kind of infallibility that is a requirement of Islām for any prophet or Imām to have. This 'ismah is special because it affects everyone else as well. And it can be further divided into two categories: the 'ismah of all the anbiya and rusul besides Rasulullāh (s), the Last Messenger; and the 'ismah of Rasulullāh (s) and the thirteen ma'sumeen ('a) from his family (Ahl al-Bayt) ('a).

The other anbiyā and rusul besides the fourteen ma'sumeen ('a) of Islām, may sometimes make a choice that is not the best even though it is not a sin (i.e. tark al-awla). But the fourteen ma'sumeen ('a) do not commit even tark al-awla. They are Allāh's most perfect creation and about whom Allāh says in the Qur'ān:

﴿... إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيُذْهِبَ عَنْكُمُ الرِّجْسَ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ تَطْهِيرًا﴾

Indeed Allāh desires to repel all impurity from you, O People of the Household, and purify you with a thorough purification.

- Surah al-Ahzāb, 33:33

Lesson 5

Taqiyya

The Concept of Taqiyya

Taqiyya means to hide one's faith and not to let others know what you really believe. Islām allows us to do this if our lives are in danger or we fear others may harm us.

We know taqiyya is allowed in Islām because Allāh says in the Qur'ān:

﴿لَا يَتَّخِذُ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الْكَافِرِينَ أَوْلِيَاءَ مِنْ دُونِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ فَلَيْسَ مِنَ اللَّهِ فِي شَيْءٍ إِلَّا أَنْ تَتَّقُوا مِنْهُمْ تُقَاةً...﴾

*The faithful should not take the faithless for allies instead of the faithful, and whoever does that Allāh will have nothing to do with him, **except when you are wary of them out of caution.***

- Surah Aal-i Imrān, 3:28

The condition for taqiyya is that when we hide our faith it should not put the life of another Muslim in danger nor should it misguide others or put Islām in danger.

Some Sunni Muslims believe taqiyya was only allowed in the early days of Islām when Muslims were few and they were being tortured but now it is harām to practice taqiyya. Other Sunni Muslims believe taqiyya is still allowed but only with non-Muslims if a person is living in their midst and fears for his life.

The Shi'ahs on the other hand believe taqiyya can be practiced even today. The condition is not whether it is practiced against another Muslim or non-Muslim. The condition is that as long as Islām is not harmed and another person's life is not in danger, then it is wājib to save your life even if you have to lie and hide your true faith.

Some Sunni Muslims accuse the Shi'ah Muslims of hypocrisy because they practice taqiyya against them (Sunni Muslims). But what we have to realize is that over the last 1400 years of Muslim history, the Shi'ah have

always been persecuted, tortured and killed by the ruling Banu Umayya and Banu Abbās rulers and the Shi'ah had to hide their faith and love for the Ahl al-Bayt (a') in order to save their lives. Even today, there are sects such as the Wahābbi who teach their followers that it is good to kill the Shi'ah.

Our Imāms therefore taught us to be wise: when Islām is in danger then you should even sacrifice your life. But when there is nothing to be gained, then it is foolish to put yourself in harm's way and risk your life. Instead, we should hide our faith, which is the meaning of taqiyya.

The famous Sunni scholar at-Tabari defined taqiyya as, 'to say with the tongue (against what one believes) while the heart rests comfortably in faith (*imān*). As long as one does not believe what one says and it is only out of fear of people, but the heart rests in faith, then there is no harm and he has not committed a sin.'¹

Difference from Nifāq

Those who accuse the Shi'ah of hiding their true faith and beliefs say the Shi'ahs are being hypocrites (*munafiqeen*) by practising taqiyya because they are saying and doing things other than what is in their hearts.

However nothing is further from the truth. Taqiyya is actually the exact opposite of Nifāq (hypocrisy).

A hypocrite (*munāfiq*) *pretends to follow the right path* but in his heart he believes in the wrong things and *he pretends to have faith only to cheat others* and take wrong advantage of them.

A person who practices taqiyya *pretends to follow the wrong path* but in his heart he believes in the truth and *he pretends only out of fear* and to preserve his or her life.

In other words the Shi'ah are not allowed to practice taqiyya unless they fear for their safety. But if they are in danger, then naturally who the person threatening them should not matter, whether it a non-Muslim or a Muslim who believes it is lawful to harm or kill Shi'ahs.

¹ Tabari, *Jām'i al-Bayān*, 3:28

Furthermore, some well known Sunni scholars have also supported the belief in Taqiyya. The famous Sunni scholar and mufassir (commentator) of the Qur'ān, Nawawi wrote that Hasan al-Basri said, 'Taqiyya is permitted for the faithful (mu'mineen) until the Day of Resurrection because repelling harm from oneself is obligatory (wājib) as much as possible.' Nawawi also wrote in his tafsir of Qur'ān that during the time of Rasulullāh (s) there was a man who claimed to be a prophet of God. He was known as Musaylama al-Kadhāb (the Liar). Musaylama once captured two companions of Rasulullāh (s) and said to one of them, 'Do you bear witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of God?' He said, 'Yes, yes, yes.' He asked again, 'And do you testify that I am the messenger of God?' He said, 'yes'. So he released him. Then he called the other and asked him, "Do you bear witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of God?" He said, 'Yes'. Then he asked, 'Do you testify that I am the messenger of God?' and he replied, 'I am deaf' so he had him killed. This news reached Rasulullāh (s) and he said, 'As for this one who was killed, he went by his conviction and proved himself, so blessings on him. And for the other, he took advantage of what Allāh has permitted him and there is no harm on him'.²

The Sunni mufassir Tha'labi narrated from Ibn Musayyib who said: A man came to Rasulullāh (s) in Madina and said: 'I think I have ruined myself!' 'What is it with you?' asked Rasulullāh (s). 'The Quraysh tortured me until I testified to what they believe in.' he lamented. 'How was your heart (at the time)?' asked Rasulullāh (s). He said, 'At peace (with Islām and not in doubt)' 'So if they repeat the same then you repeat the same', commanded the Prophet (s). And he said that thrice.³

And other Sunni scholars narrate from A'isha the wife of Rasulullāh (s) that a man related to Rasulullāh (s) came to see him and requested permission to enter and Rasulullāh (s) remarked at how evil he was. Then he allowed him to enter and spoke well to him. When he left, A'isha asked him, 'Messenger of Allāh, after what you said of him, you spoke so nicely to him?' So he replied, 'O A'isha, the worst of men is one whom people avoid, out of being wary of his evil.'

² Nawāwi, *Marāh Labid*, on Qur'ān 3:28

³ Tha'labi, *al-Kashf wa al-Bayān*, Qur'ān 3:28

And finally, the most authentic hadith source for Sunni Muslims – Sahih Bukhāri – narrates from Abu Darda (a companion of Rasulullāh (s)) who said, ‘we used to smile at people’s faces while in our hearts we cursed them.’ And in a similar report from Ibn Abi Dunya, he said, ‘we used to laugh with them’ and other such traditions.⁴

Imām Ja’far as-Sādiq (‘a) said, ‘Rasulullāh (s) used to say: “He that has no taqiyya has no religion (deen).”’

When Taqiyya is Harām

When we say ‘practising taqiyya’ we mean pretending like those around you and in whose midst you are even though your belief and practice is different from theirs. The rules of taqiyya however are as follows:

1. Taqiyya should be practised only if one is afraid of being harmed by those around him or her. It is harām to practice it just to ‘fit in’ e.g. with non-Muslims or their culture and especially it is harām to practice it to deceive fellow Muslims if there is no danger to one’s life, property or reputation.
2. Taqiyya is harām if by saving your life you put the life of another Muslim in danger.
3. Taqiyya is harām if by saving yourself you put Islām in danger and the true message of Allāh may be lost or changed forever.
4. Taqiyya is harām if you are a religious or spiritual leader and others look up to you for guidance and if by practising taqiyya, those who follow you may be confused in their religion and may go astray. For this reason, a Nabi or Imām does not practice taqiyya. For example, it was harām for Imām Husayn (‘a) to pledge allegiance to Yazid out of taqiyya, only to save his life. This would confuse many Muslims and they too would believe it is ok to pledge allegiance to a sinful tyrant like Yazid.

If however, a person fears for his or her own safety and neither Islām nor the lives or faith of other Muslims would be in danger, then a person must see if any good would come out of speaking the truth and not

⁴ Alusi, *Ruh al-Ma’āni*, 3:28

practising taqiyya. If some good will come out of it, then they have a choice of either standing for the truth and even sacrificing their lives for it or saving their lives through taqiyya. And if nothing beneficial will come out of it then of course it is wājib to practice taqiyya.

There are many examples in history when prominent companions of Rasullāh (s) and the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) could have practised taqiyya but instead they chose to speak the truth before the tyrant even though they paid for it with their lives. History recorded their courage and faith and how they exposed the tyrants forever. For example, Yāsir and Sumayya, the parents of Ammār bin Yāsir, who were the first martyrs of Islām; or the companions of Imām 'Ali ('a) who were tortured and killed after him for saying the truth and speaking in favour of Imām 'Ali ('a), such as Maytham at-Tammār and Rushayd al-Hijri who were killed by 'Ubayd Allāh b. Ziyād; and Kumayl b. Ziyād and Qanbar who were killed by Hajjāj b. Yusuf ath-Thaqafi.

Examples from Qur'ān

The following verses of the Qur'ān support the practice of Taqiyya:

﴿مَنْ كَفَرَ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ إِيمَانِهِ إِلَّا مَنْ أُكْرِهَ وَقَلْبُهُ مُطْمَئِنٌّ بِالْإِيمَانِ وَلَكِنْ مَنْ شَرَحَ
بِالْكُفْرِ صَدْرًا فَعَلَيْهِمْ غَضَبٌ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ﴾

*Whoever gives up faith in Allāh after his faith - **except someone who is forced while his heart is at rest in faith** - those who open up their chests to unfaith, upon such shall be Allāh's wrath, and there is a great punishment for them.*

- Surah an-Nahl, 16:106

﴿لَا يَتَّخِذُ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الْكَافِرِينَ أَوْلِيَاءَ مِنْ دُونِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ فَلَيْسَ مِنَ
اللَّهِ فِي شَيْءٍ إِلَّا أَنْ تَتَّقُوا مِنْهُمْ تُقَاةً...﴾

*The faithful should not take the faithless for allies instead of the faithful, and whoever does that Allāh will have nothing to do with him, **except when you are wary of them out of caution.***

- Surah Aal-i Imrān, 3:28

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

*Said a man of faith from Fir'aun's clan, **who concealed his faith**, 'Will you
 kill a man for saying, "My Lord is Allāh," ...*

- Surah Ghāfir, 40:28

The last āyah (verse) above refers to a man who was a cousin of Fir'aun and used his influence to protect Nabi Musa ('a) without letting Fir'aun know that he was believed in Nabi Musa ('a). He is known in Islāmic history as 'The Faithful from the Family of Fir'aun' (*Mu'min Aal Fir'aun*). The wife of Fir'aun was also a believer in Nabi Musa ('a). Her name was Āsiya and she too hid her faith until when Nabi Musa ('a) was in danger. Then both Āsiya and *Mu'min Aal Fir'aun* revealed their true faith and Fir'aun had both of them killed.

Examples from History (Tārikh)

Ammār Yāsir

During the early days of Islām in Makkah, when Abu Jahl heard that Ammār and his parents (Yāsir and Sumayya) had become Muslim, he was very angry. With a group of other polytheists, he went to Ammār's house and burnt it down. Then the men took Ammār and his father Yāsir and mother Sumayya and tied them with ropes in a desert area outside Makkah and began torturing them.

They whipped them until they bled and even burnt them with torches of fire but this family remained firm in their faith. Then they put rocks on their chests and left them under the hot sun at noon time.

Finally, 'Ammār saw his parents being killed brutally before his own eyes and under extreme stress, he agreed to what the polytheists wanted him to say just so they would let him go. Some of the Muslims began to say, 'Ammār has become faithless' but Rasulullāh (s) defended him saying, 'Never! Ammār is filled with faith, from his head to his toes.' And when 'Ammār came to the Prophet (s), weeping and remorseful. The Prophet (s) wiped his tears saying, 'Do not weep. And if they repeat what they

did to you again, they you too repeat and say what you said before.’ And it is concerning ‘Ammār that Allāh revealed:

﴿مَنْ كَفَرَ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ إِيمَانِهِ إِلَّا مَنْ أُكْرِهَ وَقَلْبُهُ مُطْمَئِنٌّ بِالْإِيمَانِ وَلَكِنْ مَنْ شَرَحَ
بِالْكُفْرِ صَدْرًا فَعَلَيْهِمْ غَضَبٌ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ﴾

*Whoever gives up faith in Allāh after his faith - **except someone who is forced while his heart is at rest in faith** - those who open up their chests to unfaith, upon such shall be Allāh’s wrath, and there is a great punishment for them.*

- Surah an-Nahl, 16:106

Hadrat Abu Tālib (‘a)

You have seen earlier the story of *Mu’min Aal Fir’aun* who is mentioned in the Qur’ān in Surah 40 ayah 28 that he used to hide his faith so that he could use his influence to protect Nabi Musa (‘a).

Hadrat Abu Tālib, the uncle of Rasulullāh (s) (and father of Imām Ali (‘a)) was the same. He was the chief of Makkah and as long as he was alive, the other Makkan leaders like Abu Sufyān and Abu Jahl could not harm Rasulullāh (s). But this was only possible as long as Hadrat Abu Tālib did not openly say he was a Muslim. If he showed himself as a Muslim then he would lose his power and status and he would not be able to support and protect Rasulullāh (s).

We do however see a lot of evidence of his faith in Rasulullāh (s) in many of Hadrat Abu Tālib’s poetry in praise of Rasulullāh (s). We also know that Hadrat Abu Tālib helped Rasulullāh (s) make his first public announcement at Da’wah Dhul ‘Ashirah, he also recited the ‘*aqd* of marriage between Rasulullāh (s) and Sayyida Khadija (‘a) and he also protected Rasulullāh (s) and all the new Muslims in his valley called *Sh’ib Abu Tālib* when the Quraysh imposed sanctions against the Muslims. All these incidents and more show that Hadrat Abu Tālib (‘a) was a Muslim and one of the best of them but did not openly declare his faith.

Shortly after Hadrat Abu Tālib (‘a) and Sayyida Khadija (‘a) passed away, Rasulullāh (s) had to leave Makkah and migrate to Madina because there was no one to protect him against the evil plots of the Quraysh. In fact

the Quraysh only plotted to assassinate Rasulullāh (s) after Hadrat Abu Tālib (‘a) passed away.

Much later on, after even Rasulullāh (s) passed away and the Banu Umayya came to power, they began teaching people that Hadrat Abu Tālib (‘a) died a non-Muslim and will not enter Jannah. This was mainly because he was the father of Imām Ali (‘a) and the Banu Umayya (especially Mu’āwiya) hated Imām Ali (‘a) and used to make up stories to tarnish his image.

Unfortunately, because the majority of Muslims simply followed the Banu Umayya as their rulers, this idea of Abu Tālib not being a Muslim has spread amongst Sunni Muslims who believe this even today.

The Shi’ahs and Sunnis therefore have a fundamental difference on a person who says verbally he is a Muslim just to save his life but in his heart he is a hypocrite versus someone who doesn’t say he is a Muslim but his heart is full of faith. The first person is a munāfiq and the second person is a mu’min. In Islāmic history, these two roles are symbolized by Abu Sufyān and Hadrat Abu Tālib (‘a) respectively.

The Sunni Muslims say Abu Sufyān was a Muslim because he recited the Kalima when Rasulullāh (s) took over Makkah from him and therefore Abu Sufyān died a Muslim and will go to Jannah. And they say Abu Tālib was not a Muslim because even when he was dying he did not recite the Kalima and therefore he will not go to Jannah. So they go by what was said by a person and not the true intentions of a person.

The Shi’ah Muslims say that Abu Sufyān was the leader of the polytheists of Makkah. He plotted against Rasulullāh (s) and fought him for most of his life. When Makkah was lost, he recited the *kalima ash-shahādah* only to save his life. But even after that, his disloyalty to Islām is well known. Even his son Mu’āwiya, his wife Hind and his grandson Yazid are known for their hatred for Rasulullāh (s) and Islām – though at face value they recited Kalima. So really, they were hypocrites and will go to Jahannam.

On the other hand, Hadrat Abu Tālib (‘a) is one of the most eminent people of Paradise. He spent his entire life protecting Rasulullāh (s). He sheltered him, raised him like his own son, fed him before he fed his own children and gave Rasulullāh (s) all the protection and support to

spread his message in Makkah. He allowed the other Makkan leaders to think he was only defending his nephew. Yet because he did not openly declare the *kalima ash-shahādah* and the Banu Umayya made up false stories that he was asked on his deathbed to recite the Kalima and he refused, the Sunni scholars today consider him to have died faithless. Hadrat Abu Tālib (‘a) taught us how to practice taqiyya and he is as worthy of praise and esteem in Allāh’s view as the *Mu’min Aal Fir’aun*.

Lesson 6

Qiyámah

There once lived a Muslim who secretly drank alcohol in his house. One day a small boy walked into his room and saw him. Now the man was terrified. Would the boy tell someone what he had seen? How would the man face his family and friends in the masjid? He could not sleep at night as he worried about everybody finding out about his drinking.

What a strange man! He was more scared of a little boy than of Allāh. Allāh sees all we do and there will be a Day when we will have to account for all we have done. That will be the Day of Judgement.

Stages of the Day of Judgement

No one knows the exact time of the Day of Resurrection. It is a secret known to Allāh alone. But many verses of the Qur'ān tell us about what will happen during the Day of Judgement. One verse of the Qur'ān mentions the length of the Day of Judgement like 50,000 years in this world:

﴿تَعْرُجُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ وَالرُّوحُ إِلَيْهِ فِي يَوْمٍ كَانَ مِقْدَارُهُ خَمْسِينَ أَلْفَ سَنَةٍ﴾

The angels and the Spirit ascend to Him in a day whose measure is fifty thousand years.

- Surah al-Ma'ārij, 70:4

Blowing of the Trumpet

When the Hour of Doom comes to pass, Allāh will command the archangel Isrāfil ('a) to blow a Trumpet given to him by Allāh. When Isrāfil ('a) blows this trumpet, everyone in the heavens and on the earth will fall unconscious and die.

﴿وَتُفْخَخُ فِي الصُّورِ فَصَعِقَ مَنْ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا مَنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ...﴾

And the Trumpet will be blown, and whoever is in the heavens will swoon and whoever is on the earth, except whomever Allāh wishes.

- Surah az-Zumar, 39:68

Then the earth will shake violently. The stars will fall away. The mountains will crumble and turn to dust. The oceans will be set on fire and the whole solar system that we know of will collapse...

﴿إِذَا الشَّمْسُ كُوِّرَتْ. وَإِذَا النُّجُومُ انْكَدَرَتْ. وَإِذَا الْجِبَالُ سُيِّرَتْ. وَإِذَا الْعِشَارُ عُطِّلَتْ. وَإِذَا الْوُحُوشُ حُشِرَتْ. وَإِذَا الْبِحَارُ سُجِّرَتْ﴾

When the sun turns dark, when the stars fall down, when the mountains are set moving, when the pregnant camels are neglected, when the wild beasts are brought together, when the seas are set on fire.

- Surah at-Takwir, 81:1-6

﴿يَوْمَ يَكُونُ النَّاسُ كَالْفَرَاشِ الْمَبْثُوثِ. وَتَكُونُ الْجِبَالُ كَالْعِهْنِ الْمَنْفُوشِ﴾

The day mankind will be like scattered moths, and the mountains will be like tufts of wool.

- Surah al-Qāri'ah, 101:4-5

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

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

- Surah al-Inshiqāq, 84:1-5

And the whole earth will be changed into a new earth:

﴿يَوْمَ تُبَدَّلُ الْأَرْضُ غَيْرَ الْأَرْضِ وَالسَّمَاوَاتُ وَبَرَزُوا لِلَّهِ الْوَاحِدِ الْقَهَّارِ﴾

The day the earth is transformed into another earth and the heavens [as well], and they are presented before Allāh, the One, the Supreme.

- Surah Ibrāhim, 14:48

The earth will then become one flat surface:

﴿وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْجِبَالِ فَقُلْ يَنْسِفُهَا رَبِّي نَسْفًا. فَيَذَرُهَا قَاعًا صَفْصَفًا. لَا تَرَى فِيهَا عِوَجًا وَلَا أَمْتًا. يَوْمَئِذٍ يَتَّبِعُونَ الدَّاعِيَ لَا عِوَجَ لَهُ وَخَشَعَتِ الْأَصْوَاتُ لِلرَّحْمَانِ فَلَا تُسْمَعُ إِلَّا هَمْسًا﴾

They question you concerning the mountains. Say, 'My Lord will scatter them [like dust].' Then He will leave it (the earth) a level plain. You will not see any crookedness or unevenness in it. On that day they will follow a caller in whom there will be no crookedness. The voices will be silenced before the All-Merciful (Lord), and you will hear nothing but a murmur.

- Surah Tā Hā, 20:105-8

Thereafter the angel Isrāfil ('a) will be brought back to life and Allāh will command him to blow the Trumpet a second time and everyone who ever lived will come back to life:

﴿... ثُمَّ نَفِخَ فِيهِ أُخْرَى فَإِذَا هُمْ قِيَامٌ يَنْظُرُونَ﴾

Then it (the Trumpet) will be blown a second time, behold, they will rise up, looking on!

- Surah az-Zumar, 39:68

No one knows how long everyone will remain dead between the two blowings of the Trumpet. The sound of the Trumpet (as-Sur)'s second blowing will indicate the start of the Day of Judgement. And when people are raised again, it will be a new world altogether:

﴿وَنُفِخَ فِي الصُّورِ فَإِذَا هُمْ مِنَ الْأَجْدَاثِ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ يَنْسِلُونَ. قَالُوا يَا وَيْلَنَا مَنْ بَعَثَنَا مِنْ مَرْقَدِنَا هَذَا مَا وَعَدَ الرَّحْمَانُ وَصَدَقَ الْمُرْسَلُونَ. إِنْ كَانَتْ إِلَّا صَيْحَةً وَاحِدَةً فَإِذَا هُمْ جَمِيعٌ لَدَيْنَا مُحْضَرُونَ﴾

And when the Trumpet is blown, behold, there they will be, scrambling from their graves towards their Lord! They will say, 'Woe to us! Who raised us from our place of sleep?' 'This is what the All-Merciful (Lord) had promised, and the messengers had spoken the truth!' It will be but a single Cry, and, behold, they will all be presented before Us!

- Surah Yā Sin, 36:51-53

﴿فَإِذَا نُفِخَ فِي الصُّورِ فَلَا أَنْسَابَ بَيْنَهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ وَلَا يَتَسَاءَلُونَ﴾

When the Trumpet is blown, there will be no ties between them on that day, nor will they ask [about] each other.

- Surah al-Mu'minun, 23:101

The Resurrection

The Resurrection of the dead will be physical. It won't be spirits or souls alone.

When people challenged Rasulullāh (s) and asked him how Allāh would bring the dead back to life, Allāh replied them saying:

﴿... قَالَ مَنْ يُحْيِي الْعِظَامَ وَهِيَ رَمِيمٌ. قُلْ يُحْيِيهَا الَّذِي أَنْشَأَهَا أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ خَلْقٍ عَلِيمٌ﴾

He says, 'Who shall revive the bones when they have decayed?' Say, 'He will revive them who produced them the first time, and He has knowledge of all creation.

- Surah Yā Sin, 36:78-79

﴿أَيَحْسَبُ الْإِنْسَانُ أَنْ نَجْمَعَ عِظَامَهُ. بَلَىٰ قَادِرِينَ عَلَىٰ أَنْ نُسَوِّيَ بَنَانَهُ﴾

Does man suppose that We shall not put together his bones? Yes indeed, We are able to complete [even] his fingertips!

- Surah al-Qiyāmah, 75:3-4

A Muslim must therefore believe that the Resurrection will be of the souls **and** bodies just like in this world.

﴿خُشَعًا أَبْصَارُهُمْ يَخْرُجُونَ مِنَ الْأَجْدَاثِ كَأَنَّهُمْ جَرَادٌ مُنتَشِرٌ﴾

with a humbled look [in their eyes], they will emerge from the graves as if they were scattered locusts,

- Surah al-Qamar, 54:7

﴿يَوْمَ يَخْرُجُونَ مِنَ الْأَجْدَاثِ سِرَاعًا كَأَنَّهُمْ إِلَىٰ نُصَبٍ يُوْفَضُونَ﴾

The day when they emerge from the graves, hurrying, as if racing toward a target.

- Surah al-Ma'ārij, 70:43

Mahshar – The Gathering Place

As massive earthquakes and changes in the earth flatten everything and the earth becomes one flat, smooth, extended surface, everyone will be resurrected and they will all gather for accounting before Allāh. This open, flat, plain field where the entire human race will stand for accounting is called Mahshar.

Imām Ali ('a) describes this event:

That day would be such that Allāh would collect on it the previous generations and the latter, to stand in obedience for accounting and for being paid for their deeds. Sweat would flow up to their mouths like reins while the earth would be trembling under them. In the best condition among them would be someone who has found a resting place for both his feet and an open place for his breath.⁵

The condition of people at this time will be such that every man, woman and child will be concerned only about his or her own well being, and not of others:

﴿فَإِذَا جَاءَتِ الصَّاحَّةُ. يَوْمَ يَفِرُّ الْمَرْءُ مِنْ أَخِيهِ. وَأُمِّهِ وَأَبِيهِ. وَصَاحِبَتِهِ وَبَنِيهِ. لِكُلِّ
أَمْرٍ مِنْهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ شَأْنٌ يُغْنِيهِ﴾

So when the deafening Cry comes - the day when a man will evade his brother, his mother and his father, his spouse and his sons - that day each of them will have something to keep him preoccupied.

- Surah 'Abasa, 80:33-37

⁵ Nahj al-Balāgha, Sermon 101

Imām Ali b. Musa ar-Rida ('a) said, 'There are three occasions when this creation (humans) is most bewildered and frightened: The day he is born, he comes out of the womb of his mother and sees the world (for the first time); And the day he dies and sees the next world and its people; And the day he will be resurrected and will see the commands (or judgments) which he had not seen in this world.'

After everyone has gathered on one plain and is standing in fear and awe, then a voice will call out, 'To whom does the Kingdom belong today?' Everyone will hear this and realize their power was not really any independent power and the only King was always Allāh the Creator. There will be none to answer. Then Allāh will declare again, 'To Allāh, the Only One, the Supreme':

﴿يَوْمَ هُمْ بَارِزُونَ لَا يَخْفَىٰ عَلَى اللَّهِ مِنْهُمْ شَيْءٌ لِمَنِ الْمُلْكُ الْيَوْمَ لِلَّهِ الْوَاحِدِ
الْقَهَّارِ﴾

The day when they will emerge [from their graves], nothing about them will be hidden from Allāh. 'To whom does the kingdom belong today?' 'To Allāh, the One, the Supreme!'

- Surah al-Ghāfir, 40:16

Questioning of Prophets and their Nations

The first people to be questioned on the Day of Judgement will be the prophets and messengers. Allāh will ask them if they delivered the message they were given so that everyone present can see that there was no failing on the part of Allāh's guides.

﴿يَوْمَ نَدْعُو كُلَّ أُنَاسٍ بِإِمَامِهِمْ فَمَنْ أُوْتِيَ كِتَابَهُ بِيَمِينِهِ فَأُوْتِئِكَ يَقْرَءُ وَنَ كِتَابِهِمْ وَلَا يُظْلَمُونَ فَتِيلًا﴾

The day We shall call every group of people with their Imām, then whoever is given his book in his right hand—they will read it, and they will not be wronged so much as a single date-thread.

- Surah Banu Isrāil, 17:71

﴿وَإِذْ قَالَ اللَّهُ يَا عِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ أَأَنْتَ قُلْتَ لِلنَّاسِ اتَّخِذُونِي وَأُمِّي إِلَهَيْنِ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ قَالَ سُبْحَانَكَ مَا يَكُونُ لِي أَنْ أَقُولَ مَا لَيْسَ لِي بِحَقِّ إِنْ كُنْتُ قُلْتُهُ فَقَدْ عَلِمْتَهُ تَعْلَمُ مَا فِي نَفْسِي وَلَا أَعْلَمُ مَا فِي نَفْسِكَ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ عَلَّامُ الْغُيُوبِ. مَا قُلْتُ لَهُمْ إِلَّا مَا أَمَرْتَنِي بِهِ أَنْ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ رَبِّي وَرَبَّكُمْ وَكُنْتُ عَلَيْهِمْ شَهِيدًا مَا دُمْتُ فِيهِمْ فَلَمَّا تَوَفَّيْتَنِي كُنْتُ أَنْتَ الرَّقِيبَ عَلَيْهِمْ وَأَنْتَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ. إِنْ تُعَذِّبُهُمْ فَإِنَّهُمْ عَبْدَاكَ وَإِنْ تُغْفِرْ لَهُمْ فَإِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ﴾

And when Allāh will say, ‘O Isa son of Maryam! Was it you who said to the people, “Take me and my mother for gods besides Allāh”?’ He will say, ‘glory be to You! It is not for me to say what I have no right to [say]. Had I said it, You would certainly have known it: You know whatever is in my self, and I do not know what is in Your Self. Indeed You are knower of all that is Unseen. I did not say to them [anything] except what You had commanded me [to say]: “Worship Allāh, my Lord and your Lord.” And I was a witness to them so long as I was among them. But when You had taken me away, You Yourself were watchful over them, and You are witness to all things. If You punish them, they are indeed Your creatures; but if You forgive them, You are indeed the All-mighty, the All-wise.’

- Surah al-Māidah, 5:116-118

The Prophets and Imāms will also testify for their own people and bear witness who amongst the people was loyal, sincere and faithful to Allāh’s message.

﴿وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا لِتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَيَكُونَ الرَّسُولُ عَلَيْكُمْ

شَهِيدًا...﴾

Thus We have made you a middle nation that you may be witnesses to the people, and that the Messenger may be a witness to you.

- Surah al-Baqarah, 2:143

﴿فَكَيْفَ إِذَا جِئْنَا مِنْ كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ بِشَهِيدٍ وَجِئْنَا بِكَ عَلَى هَؤُلَاءِ شَهِيدًا﴾

So how shall it be, when We bring from every nation a witness and We bring you as a witness to them?

- Surah an-Nisā, 4:41

﴿...لِيَكُونَ الرَّسُولُ شَهِيدًا عَلَيْكُمْ...﴾

...so that the Messenger may be a witness over you...

- Surah al-Hajj, 22:78

This proves that Rasulullāh (s) is not dead and even though he is not physically present, he is able to witness what his nation (ummah) does. In fact, the Light (nur) of Rasulullāh (s) and the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) existed even before the creation of the world so it is not impossible for them to be aware of and witness what people do in this world.

Allāh tells us that ordinary martyrs are not dead and we should not call them dead. How then can we say that Rasulullāh (s) or his purified Household is dead?

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

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

- Surah al-Baqarah, 2:154

﴿وَلَا تَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ قُتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَمْوَاتًا بَلْ أَحْيَاءٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ يُرْزَقُونَ﴾

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.

- Surah Aal-i Imrān, 3:169

All the Anbiya and Rusul and Aimmah, *alayhim as-salām*, will also be asked to pray for those who have sinned but are sincerely sorry so that Allāh will forgive them. This is called Intercession (shafā'ah) and we shall learn more about it in Book 8. Even though Allāh can forgive people directly, He will give the power of shafā'ah to the Anbiya ('a) and Rusul ('a) and Aimmah ('a) and especially Rasulullāh (s) and his Ahl al-Bayt ('a), to honour them and show their status to all of humankind. Some very learned scholars and very pious individuals will also be given the power to intercede (i.e. do shafā'ah) for others in their community or their families. All this will save many people from the fire of Hell. Of course no

one will be able to help another person except by the permission of Allāh.

﴿مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يَشْفَعُ عِنْدَهُ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ﴾

Who is it that may intercede with Him except with His permission?

- Surah al-Baqarah, 2:255

﴿يَوْمَئِذٍ لَا تَنْفَعُ الشَّفَاعَةُ إِلَّا مَنْ أَذِنَ لَهُ الرَّحْمَنُ وَرَضِيَ لَهُ قَوْلًا﴾

Intercession will not avail that day except from him whom the All-Merciful allows and approves of his word.

- Surah Tā Hā, 20:109

Lesson 7

Qiyámah (cont'd)

Rasulullāh (s) and his Ahl al-Bayt ('a)

Out of the trillions and trillions of Allāh's creatures, no one will receive more honour on the Day of Judgement than Rasulullāh (s) and his Ahl al-Bayt ('a). They will be given the highest ranks and everyone will want to be near them. Rasulullāh (s) will be near a fountain called Kawthar and anyone who gets to drink from this fountain will never feel thirsty again and will enter Paradise. Imām Ali ('a) will be given the right to decide who enters Paradise and Hell and that is why he is called 'Qaseem al-Jannati wan Nār' (The Distributor of Paradise and Hellfire). The daughter of Rasulullāh (s) Sayyida Fatima az-Zahra ('a), for example, will be the first one to enter Paradise and she will only go in with her Shi'ah following her. When it is announced on the Day of Judgement, 'where is the Beauty of All Worshippers (Zayn al-Abideen)?' All the trillions of beings standing on the plains of Mahshar will see Imām Ali b. al-Husayn Zayn al-Abideen ('a) being ushered forward and cutting through the ranks of people and everyone will look at him with amazement and great love. And in this manner, every individual of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) will be honoured and will help their sincere Shi'ah and those who loved them to get to Jannah (Paradise).

Book of Deeds

Every action a person commits in life and every word he or she utters is recorded by angels in a Book of Deeds:

﴿إِذْ يَتَلَقَّى الْمُتَلَقِّيَانِ عَنِ الْيَمِينِ وَعَنِ الشِّمَالِ قَعِيدٌ . مَا يَلْفِظُ مِنْ قَوْلٍ إِلَّا لَدَيْهِ رَقِيبٌ عَتِيدٌ﴾

When the twin recorders record [his deeds], seated on the right hand and on the left: he says no word but that there is a ready observer beside him.

- Surah Qāf, 50:17-18

The two angels who record these deeds are called Kirāman Kātibin and you have studied about them in Book 6. One the Day of Judgement, everyone will be given their Book of Deeds to look at. The good will be given their Book in their right hand from the front and they will be very happy to read it and they will know it means they are going to Jannah (Paradise) and the evil will be given in their left hand from the back and they will be terrified because they will know it means they are heading to Hellfire. They will not want to read it but will be forced to.

It will be said to them:

﴿وَكُلَّ إِنسَانٍ أَلْزَمْنَاهُ طَائِرَهُ فِي عُنُقِهِ وَنُخْرِجُ لَهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ كِتَابًا يَلْقَاهُ مَنْشُورًا. اقْرَأْ كِتَابَكَ كَفَىٰ بِنَفْسِكَ الْيَوْمَ عَلَيْكَ حَسِيبًا﴾

We have attached every person's deeds to his neck, and We shall bring it out for him on the Day of Resurrection as a wide open book that he will encounter. 'Read your book! Today your soul suffices as your own accouter.'

- Surah Banu Isrāil, 17:13-14

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

The Book will be set up. Then you will see the guilty 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

Testimony of Limbs

The evil will deny what is in their Books and will try to lie and protest. They will argue and even swear that they never committed the sins recorded in their Book. Allāh will then cause their limbs to speak. Their tongues will be made silent and instead their hands and legs will speak:

﴿يَوْمَ تَشْهَدُ عَلَيْهِمْ أَلْسِنَتُهُمْ وَأَيْدِيهِمْ وَأَرْجُلُهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ﴾

On the day when witness shall be given against them by their tongues, their hands, and their feet concerning what they used to do.

- Surah Nur, 24:24

﴿الْيَوْمَ نَخْتِمُ عَلَىٰ أَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَتُكَلِّمُنَا أَيْدِيهِمْ وَتَشْهَدُ أَرْجُلُهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ﴾

Today We shall seal their mouths, and their hands shall speak to Us, and their feet shall bear witness concerning what they used to earn.'

- Surah Yā Sin, 36:65

Many other things will bear witness as well. The places where a person did something good or bad will bear witness. The days and nights will bear witness. The earth will bear witness, the Qur'ān will bear witness who read it and who did not, the masājid will bear witness who prayed in them and who did not, and so on. In other words, in the Hereafter, everything will be alive and able to speak.

The Weighing Scales of Deeds (al-Mizān)

Every person's actions – good or bad – will be weighed. How 'heavy' a person's deeds are will depend not only on the action but also on the person's understanding and the intention behind the action as well.

For example, if a person prayed only because it was a habit and not really out of love for Allāh, their intention was weak so their salāh will be very light. And if a person is learned in religion and prayed 2 rak'ahs, his or her salāh might be 'heavier' than a person who prayed 100 rak'ahs but was ignorant. The weight of each salawāt you recite for Rasulullāh (s) and his Ahl al-Bayt ('a) will be very heavy. The more you recite it in this world, the happier you will be on the Day your deeds are weighed.

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

﴿خَرْدَلٍ أَتَيْنَا بِهَا وَكَفَىٰ 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 accounters.

- Surah al-Anbiyā, 21:47

﴿وَالْوِزْنَ يَوْمَئِذٍ الْحَقُّ فَمَنْ ثَقُلَتْ مَوَازِينُهُ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ. وَمَنْ خَفَّتْ مَوَازِينُهُ فَأُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ خَسِرُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوا بِآيَاتِنَا يَظْلِمُونَ﴾

The weighing [of deeds] on that Day is a truth. As for those whose deeds weigh heavy in the scales - it is they who are the successful. As for those whose deeds weigh light in the scales - it is they who have ruined their souls, because they used to wrong Our signs.

- Surah al-A'rāf, 7:8-9

﴿فَمَنْ ثَقُلَتْ مَوَازِينُهُ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ. وَمَنْ خَفَّتْ مَوَازِينُهُ فَأُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ خَسِرُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ فِي جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدُونَ﴾

Then those whose deeds weigh heavy in the scales—it is they who are the successful. As for those whose deeds weigh light in the scales—they will be the ones who have ruined their souls, [and] they will remain in hell [forever].

- Surah al-Mu'minun, 23:102-3

The Bridge (as-Sirāt)

Every person will then be told to try and get to Jannah by crossing over a bridge (Sirāt). The Sirāt is a very long bridge from Mahshar all the way to the gates of Jannah (Paradise) but it passes over Hellfire. Anyone who slips and falls off the Bridge (Sirāt), falls straight down into Hellfire. Some narrations tell us that for the faithless the Sirāt will be 'thinner than hair, sharper than a sword's blade and hotter than fire'. But those who are pious will cross it like a flash of lightening. For some it will be made very wide and spacious. Others will slip and crawl but make it to Jannah eventually after many, many years while the evil will slip and fall down into Hell.

﴿وَإِنْ مِنْكُمْ إِلَّا وَارِدُهَا كَانَ عَلَى رَبِّكَ حَتْمًا مَقْضِيًّا. ثُمَّ نُنَجِّي الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا وَنَذَرُ

الظَّالِمِينَ فِيهَا حِثًّا﴾

There is none of you but will come to it:⁶ a [matter that is a] decided certainty with your Lord. Then We will deliver those who are Godwary, and leave the wrongdoers in it, fallen on their knees.

- Surah Maryam, 19:71-2

In some narrations we are told that the Sirāt will have many stations. Each station will be a place for one of the duties of Islām. For example, when a person reaches the Station of Salāt, they will be questioned about it. If they used to take their salāh lightly, they will be punished. Those who pass through all the Stations because of being saved by the Mercy of Allāh and the intercession (shafā'ah) of Rasullullāh (s) and the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) will make it to the Gates of Jannah.

﴿وَقَفُّوهُمْ إِنَّهُمْ مَسْئُولُونَ﴾

[But first] stop them! For they must be questioned.'

- Surah as-Saffāt, 37:24

Rasullullāh (s) said to Imām Ali ('a), 'O Ali! On the Day of Resurrection, I, you and Jibrāil shall sit on the Sirāt, and none shall pass over the Sirāt except one who is freed from Jahannam because of your love.'

That is why in some hadith Imām Ali ('a) is called *Sirāt al-Mustaqim* (the Straight Path). The Ma'sumeen ('a) are called 'Sirāt' in this world because they are like a bridge that connects us to Allāh. It is perfectly right to call them the Paths of Allāh. Those who hold on to the Qur'ān and the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) in this world will cross the Sirāt safely on the Day of Judgement. Rasullullāh (s) promised us before leaving this world in a hadith that is well-known as Hadith ath-Thaqalayn:

'I leave behind two important things (thaqalayn): the Book of Allāh and my family, my Ahl al-Bayt. If you hold on to them, you will never go

⁶ That is, they will approach it, without entering it.

astray after me and these two will never separate until they return to me at the Fountain of Kawthar.'

Imām Ali ('a) said, 'And know that you have to pass over the pathway (of Sirāt) where steps waver, feet slip away and there are fearful dangers at every step.'⁷

The Final Destination

As the Day of Judgement progresses, the good will separate from the evil and become different communities.

﴿وَأَمْتَاذُوا الْيَوْمَ أَيُّهَا الْمُجْرِمُونَ﴾

And 'Get apart today, you guilty ones!'

- Surah Yā Sin, 36:59

One of the signs of the people heading to Jannah is that their faces will be bright and happy while one of the signs of those destined for Jahannam is that their faces will be gloomy and unhappy:

﴿وُجُوهُ يَوْمَئِذٍ مُسْفَرَةٌ. ضَاكَّةٌ مُسْتَبْشِرَةٌ. وَوُجُوهُ يَوْمَئِذٍ عَلَيْهَا غَبَرَةٌ. تَرَهَقُهَا قَتَرَةٌ.﴾

﴿أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْكَافِرَةُ الْفَجْرَةُ﴾

That day some faces will be bright, laughing and joyous. And some faces on that day will be covered with dust, overcast with gloom. It is they who are the faithless, the vicious.

- Surah 'Abasa, 80:38-42

The faithful will keep running towards the direction of Jannah with their faith lighting the way for them while the faithless will keep stumbling and falling into Hellfire. They will try to hold on to the faithful but will not succeed:

⁷ Nahj al-Balāgha, sermon 82

﴿يَوْمَ تَرَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ يَسْعَى نُورُهُمْ بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَبِأَيْمَانِهِمْ بُشْرَاكُمُ الْيَوْمَ جَنَّاتٌ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا ذَلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ. يَوْمَ يَقُولُ الْمُنَافِقُونَ وَالْمُنَافِقَاتُ لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا انظُرُونَا نَقْتَبِسْ مِنْ نُورِكُمْ قِيلَ ارْجِعُوا وَرَاءَكُمْ فَالْتَمِسُوا نُورًا فَضُرِبَ بَيْنَهُم بِسُورٍ لَهُ بَابٌ بَاطِنُهُ فِيهِ الرَّحْمَةُ وَظَاهِرُهُ مِنْ قِبَلِهِ الْعَذَابُ. يُنَادُونَهُمْ أَلَمْ نَكُنْ مَعَكُمْ قَالُوا بَلَىٰ وَلَكِنَّكُمْ فَتَنْتُمْ أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَتَرَبَّصْتُمْ وَارْتَبْتُمْ وَغَرَّتْكُمُ الْأَمَانِيُّ حَتَّىٰ جَاءَ أَمْرُ اللَّهِ وَغَرَّكُمْ بِاللَّهِ الْغُرُورُ﴾

The day you will see the faithful, men and women, with their light moving swiftly before them and on their right, [and greeted with the words:] ‘There is good news for you today! Gardens with streams running in them, to remain in them [forever]. That is the great success.’ The day the hypocrites, men and women, will say to the faithful, ‘Please wait for us, that we may take something from your light!’ They will be told: ‘Go back and grope for light!’⁸ Then there will be set up between them a wall with a gate, with mercy on its interior and punishment toward its exterior. They will call out to them, ‘Did we not use to be with you?’ They will say, ‘Yes! But you gave yourselves into temptation, and you awaited⁹ and were doubtful, and [false] hopes deceived you until the command of Allāh (i.e. death) arrived, and the Deceiver deceived you concerning Allāh.

- Surah al-Hadid, 57:12-14

The faithful will finally make it to Jannah. They will be delighted to arrive there knowing that now they shall live there forever and never experience any fear or grief. The angels will welcome them:

﴿جَنَّاتُ عَدْنٍ يَدْخُلُونَهَا وَمَنْ صَلَحَ مِنْ آبَائِهِمْ وَأَزْوَاجِهِمْ وَذُرِّيَّاتِهِمْ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ يَدْخُلُونَ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنْ كُلِّ بَابٍ. سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ بِمَا صَبَرْتُمْ فَنِعْمَ عُقْبَى الدَّارِ﴾

The Gardens of Eden, which they will enter along with whoever is good from among their ancestors, their spouses, and their descendants, and the angels will call on them from every door: ‘Peace be to you, for your patience.’ How excellent is the reward of the [ultimate] abode!

- Surah ar-Ra’d, 13:23-24

⁸ That is, go back into the world. Said mockingly to the hypocrites.

⁹ That is, waited for a reverse of fortune for Muslims.

And they shall begin experiencing rewards and pleasures beyond their imagination:

﴿فَلَا تَعْلَمُ نَفْسٌ مَّا أُخْفِيَ لَهُمْ مِنْ قُرَّةِ أَعْيُنٍ جَزَاءً بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ﴾

No one knows what has been kept hidden for them of comfort, as a reward for what they used to do.

- Surah as-Sajdah, 32:17

Some Islāmic scholars say the difference between this world and the Hereafter is like the difference between our previous ‘world’ when we were in the wombs of our mother and this world. A fetus in the womb of its mother lives in a small, dark, cramped place. Even if you could talk to it, there is no way it can ever imagine light or space or colour of the vast oceans and tall mountains or even a flower or a fruit or what it means to see or walk or the movements of the sun and the moon. In the same way, we only imagine Paradise and Hell based on our limited language and experience in this world but the Hereafter is very, very different and beyond our imagination.

Those who end in Hell will be scared and unhappy to be there. The Angel in charge of Hell will ask them:

﴿وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِرَبِّهِمْ عَذَابُ جَهَنَّمَ وَيَسَّ الْمَصِيرُ. إِذَا أُلْقُوا فِيهَا سَمِعُوا لَهَا شَهيقًا وَهِيَ تَفُورٌ. تَكَادُ تَمَيِّزُ مِنَ الْغَيْظِ كُلَّمَا أُلْقِيَ فِيهَا فَوْجٌ سَأَلَهُمْ خَزَنَتُهَا أَلَمْ يَأْتِكُمْ نَذِيرٌ. قَالُوا بَلَى قَدْ جَاءَنَا نَذِيرٌ فَكَذَّبْنَا وَقُلْنَا مَا نَزَّلَ اللَّهُ مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِنْ أَنْتُمْ إِلَّا فِي ضَلَالٍ كَبِيرٍ. وَقَالُوا لَوْ كُنَّا نَسْمَعُ أَوْ نَعْقِلُ مَا كُنَّا فِي أَصْحَابِ السَّعِيرِ. فَاعْتَرَفُوا بِذُنُوبِهِمْ فَسُحِقًا لِأَصْحَابِ السَّعِيرِ﴾

For those who defy their Lord is the punishment of hell, and it is an evil destination. When they are thrown in it, they hear it blaring, as it seethes, almost exploding with rage. Whenever a group is thrown in it, its keepers will ask them, ‘Did there not come to you any warner?’ They will say, ‘Yes, a warner did come to us, but we called it a lie and said, ‘Allāh did not send down anything; you are only in great error.’ And they will say, ‘Had we listened or applied reason, we would not have been

among inmates of the Blaze.’ Thus they will admit their sin. So away with the inmates of the Blaze!

- Surah al-Mulk, 67:6-11

And later on when the People of Hell will be asked how come they ended up there:

﴿مَا سَلَكَكُمْ فِي سَقَرٍ. قَالُوا لَمْ نَكُ مِنَ الْمُصَلِّينَ. وَلَمْ نَكُ نُطْعِمُ الْمِسْكِينَ. وَكُنَّا نَخُوضُ مَعَ الْخَائِضِينَ. وَكُنَّا نُكَذِّبُ بِيَوْمِ الدِّينِ. حَتَّىٰ آتَانَا الْيَقِينَ﴾

What drew you into Hell?’ They will answer, ‘We were not among those who prayed. Nor did we feed the poor. We used to gossip along with the gossipers, and we used to deny the Day of Judgement, until death came to us.’

- Surah al-Mudaththir, 74:42-47

Sins stick to a person’s soul and make it dirty and rusty. Many people who end up in Hell will eventually be purified and cleaned and will come out of Hell and be brought to Paradise. Only the very evil people will remain there forever. We will learn more about life in Jannah and Jahannam in Book 9 inshā Allāh.

﴿وَسِيقَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِلَىٰ جَهَنَّمَ زُمَرًا حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءُوهَا فَفُتِحَتْ أَبْوَابُهَا وَقَالَ لَهُمْ خَزَنَتُهَا أَلَمْ يَأْتِكُمْ رُسُلٌ مِّنكُمْ يَتْلُونَ عَلَيْكُمْ آيَاتِ رَبِّكُمْ وَيُنذِرُونَكُمْ لِقَاءَ يَوْمِكُمْ هَذَا قَالُوا بَلَىٰ وَلَكِنْ حَقَّتْ كَلِمَةُ الْعَذَابِ عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ. قِيلَ ادْخُلُوا أَبْوَابَ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا فَبئسَ مَثْوًى الْمُتَكَبِّرِينَ. وَسِيقَ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا رَبَّهُمْ إِلَى الْجَنَّةِ زُمَرًا حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءُوهَا وَفُتِحَتْ أَبْوَابُهَا وَقَالَ لَهُمْ خَزَنَتُهَا سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ طِبْتُمْ فَادْخُلُوهَا خَالِدِينَ. وَقَالُوا الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي صَدَقْنَا وَعَدَّهُ وَأَوْرَثَنَا الْأَرْضَ نَتَّبِعُ مِنْ الْجَنَّةِ حَيْثُ نَشَاءُ فَنِعْمَ أَجْرُ الْعَامِلِينَ﴾

The faithless will be driven to hell in throngs. When they reach it, and its gates are opened, its keepers will say to them, ‘Did there not come to you [any] messengers from among yourselves, reciting to you the signs of your Lord and warning you of the meeting of this day of yours?’ They will

say, 'Yes, but the word of punishment became due against the faithless.' It will be said, 'Enter the gates of hell to remain in it [forever]. Evil is the [ultimate] abode of the arrogant.' Those who are wary of their Lord will be led to paradise in throngs. When they reach it, and its gates are opened, its keepers will say to them, 'Peace be to you! You are welcome! Enter it to remain [forever].' They will say, 'All praise belongs to Allāh, who has fulfilled His promise to us and made us heirs to the earth, that we may settle in paradise wherever we may wish!' How excellent is the reward of the workers [of righteousness]!

- Surah az-Zumar, 39:71-74

Fiqh **(Laws)**

Lesson 1

Salāh

Types of Wājib Salāh

There are six types of wājib salāh:

1. The Five Daily Salāh.
2. Salāt al-Ayāt.
3. Salāt al-Mayyit (taught in Book 10).
4. Two Rak'ah Salāh after Wājib Tawāf of Ka'bah (taught in Book 10).
5. Compensation (*qadā*) salāh of a dead man that is wājib on the eldest son.
6. Salāh that becomes wājib due to an oath (*nadhr*, *'ahd*, *qasam*) or if one is paid to pray the *qadā* for someone deceased (as *niyābah*).

Note: Salāt al-Jumu'ah (Friday prayer) is counted as part of the five daily prayers because it is prayed instead of Salāt adh-Dhuhr on Fridays.

Mustahab (*nāfila*) prayers are studied in Book 9. The importance of salāh and not to take it lightly can be reviewed from Book 5 (Akhlāq Lesson 7).

The Compensatory Prayer (Salāt al-Qadā)

Qadā salāh is performed in compensation for a salāh that has not been performed during its proper time. It is wājib to make up all those prayers that have been missed for whatever reason, except for bāligha women who are excused from salāh at certain times of the month (which will be taught to the girls separately).

Those who suffer from mental illness do not have to pray salāh. Also, a non-Muslim who becomes a Muslim does not have to pay qadā for the time before he or she became a Muslim. But if a Muslim loses his faith for a duration and then returns to Islām, he or she must make up for all the missed prayers.

It is also wājib to pray the qadā for all salāh that were incorrectly performed at their due time.

The qadā of salāh should not be taken lightly and should be repaid as soon as possible. A qadā salāh can be performed at any time. For example, the qadā for fajr salāh can be repaid even at dhuhr or maghrib time, and so on.

Qadā salāh can also be performed in jamā'ah. For example, if the Imām of Jamā'ah is leading salāt al-'ishā, you can pray your qadā of dhuhr with the jamā'ah.

The rules for qadā salāh when travelling was taught in Book 6 and is repeated here:

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'ah) and not 4 rak'ah. Similarly, if you have a qadā of a 4-rak'ah salāh (like 'isha) 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.

Salāt al-Jumu'ah or The Friday Salāh is held every Friday in congregation (jamā'ah) and it is prayed instead of the dhuhr salāh. It is wājib during the known presence of Imām al-Mahdi (‘a). But during the ghaybah (when his whereabouts is unknown), it is an alternative obligation (wājib takhyiri) i.e. it is permissible to perform either salāt al-jumu'ah or salāt adh-dhuhr. But one of them must be performed. Also, if a person prays salāt al-jumu'ah, then he does not have to pray salāt adh-dhuhr.¹⁰

Salāt al-Jumu'ah

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا نُودِيَ لِلصَّلَاةِ مِنْ يَوْمِ الْجُمُعَةِ فَاسْعَوْا إِلَىٰ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَذَرُوا
الْبَيْعَ ذَلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ﴾

¹⁰ Ayatullah Sistāni, *Islāmic Laws*, Ruling 740.

O you who have faith! When the call is made for prayer on Friday, hurry toward the remembrance of Allāh, and leave all business. That is better for you, should you know.

- Surah al-Jumu'ah, 62:9

Method of Performance

The Friday Salāh consists of two sermons (khutbas) followed by a two-rak'ah salāh.

The two khutbas are delivered first. The prayer-leader (imām) has to do this whilst standing and his hands must rest on a stick or a weapon (a sword, for example).

In the first sermon the prayer-leader (imām) is required to praise and thank Allāh, and to ask the people to follow the laws of Islām, to be God-conscious (i.e. have taqwa), and promote righteousness. At the end of the sermon the prayer-leader must recite one surah from the Qur'ān and then sit down for a moment's pause.

The prayer-leader (imām) then stands up, and begins the second khutba by praising Allāh, Rasulullāh (s), and his family ('a), and then asking Allāh to bless them. He should pray for Allāh to forgive the people.

This is the minimum wājib requirement for the contents of the sermons, but the prayer-leader may also talk about ethical, social, religious and political issues that concern the Muslim community. Those parts of the sermons that are wājib must be said in Arabic, but the rest can be in the language of the majority so that they can understand him.

After the sermon, the prayer-leader begins the salāh by proceeding to the place where he will lead the congregation. The Friday Salāh consists of two rak'ah and is performed just like the fajr salāh, with only two differences:

- a. It is recommended that in the first rak'ah after the recitation of Surah al-Fātiha, the Imām should recite Surah al-Jumu'ah (Surah 62). And after the second rak'ah, it is recommended for him to recite Surah al-Munāfiqun (Surah 63).

- b. There are two qunuts in salāt al-jumu'ah. In the first rak'ah, the qunut is done before ruku. And in the second rak'ah, the qunut is done after ruku and before going to sajdah.

Conditions for Salāt al-Jumu'ah

The following conditions must be met before the Friday Salāh can be held:

1. It must be performed in congregation (jamā'ah), not individually.
2. The number of people praying salāt al-jumu'ah must be at least five, including the prayer-leader (Imām).¹¹
3. It must be performed as soon as possible after the time of Dhuhr starts. If there is a long delay, then salāt adh-dhuhr should be prayed instead.
4. The prayer-leader (imām) must fulfill all the conditions of a person who leads regular *salāt al-jamā'ah* e.g. he must be just ('ādil).
5. There should not be another salāt al-jumu'ah being held that fulfills all the above conditions within a distance of 3 miles (1 farsakh). If two salāt al-jumu'ah are held within a radius of 3 miles, the salāh that starts later will be void (bātil).

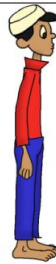

Rules for Salāt al-Jumu'ah



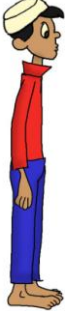




1. In the presence of Rasulullāh (s) or a ma'sum Imām ('a), salāt al-jumu'ah is *wājib 'ayni*. Meaning it **must** be prayed instead of salāt adh-dhuhr. During the ghaybah of the Imām ('a) it is *wājib takhyiri* meaning people have a choice to choose between salāt al-jumu'ah and salāt adh-dhuhr. According to some marāj'i, if salāt al-jumu'ah is held, then it is wājib on men to attend if they are neither sick nor travellers and within 11 kms or 6 miles (2 farsakh) of the place where it is being held. And according to other marāj'i even if it is not wājib, it is highly recommended to attend. Salāt al-Jumu'ah is never wājib for women to attend.

¹¹ Ayatullah Sistāni, *Islāmic Laws*, Ruling 740.

2. Salāt al-Jumu'ah is never wājib on a traveller (*musāfir*) regardless of whether he is praying qasr or he is staying for more than 10 days and praying in full.
3. Salāt al-Jumu'ah is never wājib on men who are old, sick, blind and have difficulty in attending it.
4. If a person is late in joining salāt al-jumu'ah and he joins during the ruku of the 2nd rak'ah, then he should finish his two rak'ahs and then, as an obligatory precaution (*ih̥tiyāt wājib*), he should also pray salāt adh-dhuhr after that.
5. Some Muslims perform two adhāns before praying salāt al-jumu'ah. This is an innovation (*bid'ah*) and **harām**.
6. A person intending to attend salāt al-jumu'ah should try and listen to both sermons. It is *ih̥tiyāt wājib* to listen to both sermons.
7. During the sermons of salāt al-jumu'ah, those present are required to listen attentively and not even engage in other acts of worship like praying, tasbih, etc. It is makruh to talk. And if it disturbs others from listening to the sermons, it is harām. In general, it is makruh to take children for salāt al-jumu'ah or any jamā'ah salāh if they will make noise, run around, or distract others from their 'ibādah.

Method of Praying Salāt al-Jumu'ah

Niyah	'I am praying 2 rak'ah salāt al-Jumu'ah <i>qurbatan ilallāh'</i>	
1 st Rak'ah qirā'ah		Mustahab for the Imām to recite Surah al-Jumu'ah after Surah al-Fātiha.
Qunut		Note that in the 1 st rak'ah qunut is done <i>before</i> ruku.

<p>Ruku'</p>		
<p>Sujud</p>		
<p>2nd Rak'ah qirā'ah</p>		<p>Mustahab for the Imām to recite Surah al-Munāfiqun after Surah al-Fātiha.</p>
<p>Ruku'</p>		
<p>Qunut</p>		<p>Note that in the 2nd rak'ah qunut is done <i>after</i> ruku.</p>
<p>Sujud</p>		
<p>Tashahhud & Salām</p>		

Lesson 2

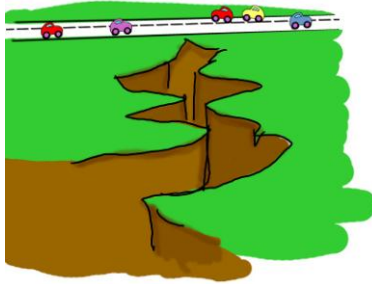
Salāt al-Ayāt

Any unusual act of nature (whether it causes a disaster or not) like an earthquake, hurricane, tsunami, tornado, volcano eruption, sun or moon eclipse (total or partial) and even severe thunder and lightning, is a 'sign' (āyah) of Allāh's power and how we are in need of His protection, mercy and love at all times.



When we experience any such 'sign' (āyah) of Allāh, it is **wājib** on all bāligh, sane, Muslim men and women to pray a special salāh called Salāt al-Ayāt (The Prayer of Signs). This salāh is only wājib for the people of the area in which the event occurs.

In the case of an eclipse (sun or moon), the time for the salāh is when the eclipse starts and it should be prayed before it is over. If a person fails to do so, they still have to pray its qadā. If a person did not know there was an eclipse in his or her town and later finds out, he/she should still pray the qadā if it was a total eclipse. If it was a partial eclipse, and they hear about it after it is over, they do not have to pray the qadā.



In the case of an earthquake, Salāt al-Ayāt should be performed without delay, and it is a sin to delay it. However, even if there is a delay, the salāh should be said with the niyyah of '*qurbatan ilallāh*' without specifying *adā* or *qadā*.

Method of Performance

Salāt al-Ayāt can be performed in *jamā'ah* (congregation) or *furāda* (individually). It consists of two rak'ahs and 10 rukus. Each rak'ah has five rukus.

Qunut is performed before all the even number rukus. This means in the first rak'ah, we would perform qunut before the 2nd, and 4th ruku. And in

the second rak'ah, we would perform qunut before the 1st, 3rd and 5th ruku (because these are the 6th, 8th and 10th rukus in the total salāh).

When the salāh is about to start, someone should call out: '*As-Salāh*' three times instead of the adhān or iqāmah. The niyyah to perform Salāt al-Ayāt should specify it is in time (*adā qurbatan ilallāh*) or in compensation (*qadā qurbatan ilallāh*).

Step-by-Step

1. After niyyah, perform takbirat al-ihram and recite Surah al-Fātiha and another surah.
2. Perform 1st ruku' and stand up.
3. Recite Surah al-Fātiha and another surah.
4. Perform qunut, 2nd ruku', and stand up.
5. Recite Surah al-Fātiha and another surah.
6. Perform 3rd ruku' and stand up.
7. Continue this way until 5th ruku'. Then stand up. And then go to sajdah continue the rak'ah as usual.
8. When you stand for the 2nd rak'ah, recite surah al-Fātiha and another surah.
9. Then perform qunut, 1st ruku (which is the 6th ruku in total), and stand up.
10. Recite Surah al-Fātiha and another surah.
11. Perform 2nd ruku' and stand up.
12. Continue this way until qunut and 5th ruku' (which is the 10th ruku' in total) and then go to sajdah and complete the salāh as normal.

In total, you will have prayed 2 rak'ahs that have 10 rukus and 5 qunuts:

FIRST RAK'AH:

Ruku'
 Qunut & Ruku'
 Ruku'
 Qunut & Ruku'
 Ruku'

SECOND RAK'AH:

Qunut & Ruku'
 Ruku'
 Qunut & Ruku'
 Ruku'
 Qunut & Ruku'

Lesson 3

Salāt al-Jamā'ah

Importance

It is strongly recommended that all wājib salāh should be performed in congregation (jamā'ah). When a ma'sum Imām is physically present, the Friday (Jumu'ah) salāh and the two 'Īd salāh are **wājib** and must be performed in jamā'ah.

Mustahab prayers can never be performed in jamā'ah, except the special salāh for rain (Salāt al-Istisqa), and the two 'Īd prayers (which are mustahab during the ghayba of the Imām ('atfs)).

The importance of Salāt al-Jamā'ah is such that even those who have already prayed on their own are encouraged to repeat their salāh if they meet with a group that is praying together. Some of the benefits of Salāt al-Jamā'ah are that it promotes:

- Equality: The poor and rich, of all colours and ethnicities, stand together shoulder-to-shoulder as equals before Allāh.
- Unity: Same language. All actions done together at same time. Teaches us to be united at all times.
- Friendship & Networking: Creates opportunities for Muslims to meet and be part of each other's friendship circle. Opportunities to help each other (business, family, etc.) arise.
- Discipline: Standing still in straight rows, following the Imām in everything he does and says.
- Prestige of Islām. Keeps the masjid and Muslim community thriving. A show of strength against the enemies of Islām.
- Limitless spiritual reward. Two people praying salāt al-jamā'ah get the thawāb of 150 salāh for each rak'ah. Three people = 600 salāh per rak'ah. Four people = 1200 salāh. Five people = 2400 salāh. Keeps doubling until 10 people in Jamā'ah equals thawāb of 72,800 prayers for each rak'ah. After 11 people, only Allāh knows the reward.

Method of Praying

Typically the person leading the salāh (called the *Imām* of the Salāh) stands in front and those following him (called *ma'mum*) stand in rows by a small distance behind him.

The place where the followers stand must not be lower than the place where the Imām stands - unless it is only slightly lower or a slope that is not too steep. The opposite however is permissible. All or even some of the followers can stand higher than the Imām. If some of the jamā'ah is on an upper level or floor, it is fine provided that the front row of the upper level can see the Imām or any row on the ground.

There must not be any complete obstruction between the Imām and anyone in the jamā'ah. For instance, if there is a wall between them, those behind the wall or curtain will be considered disconnected from the Imām of Jamā'ah. However, if those following are separated from the Imām by a wall, curtain or upper floor and there is some opening in the wall or curtain, then that suffices to establish a connection.

In a mixed jamā'ah, the women should connect to the salāt al-jamā'ah either by standing behind the rows of the men, or to their side with a curtain or partial wall separation. Women should never stand in front of the men during salāh, such that the men behind can see their backs. The only exception to this is in Masjid al-Harām (Makkah) when praying right before the Ka'bah.

If there are only two people praying in jamā'ah and both are male, it is mustahab that the one following stands at the right hand side of the Imām instead of behind him.

If the Imām and the followers are both women, the ihtiyāt wājib is that all of them should stand in a line. The female Imām (or 'Imāmah') should not stand in front of the other women.

After the rows have been formed, with everyone standing close together, shoulder-to-shoulder with feet in each row in a straight line, the Imām or one of the followers in the front row stands up and recites the iqāmah, while the rest of the jamā'ah remains seated; they may repeat the phrases in a low voice. When the muqim (person reciting the

iqāmah) comes to the phrase: '*qad qāmatī salāh*' (meaning 'The prayer has been established!'), then it is mustahab for the whole congregation to rise and prepare for salāh.

The Imām makes the niyyah for the salāh and recites the *takbirat al-ihram* in a loud voice. Thereafter the followers makes the niyyah to pray salāh in jamā'ah and they also recite the *takbirat al-ihram*.

What is Mustahab in Salāt al-Jamā'ah

- The Imām to position himself in the middle of the line.
- The Imām to take into account the old and weak and not prolong qunut, ruku' and sajdah unless he knows the people want that.
- The Imām to recite loud enough (but without shouting) for the followers to hear him.
- The Imām to prolong the ruku' twice over if he realizes someone has joined late and is trying to catch up. But then in consideration of others in the jamā'ah, he should stand up even if he realizes more have also arrived to join.
- The learned and pious should occupy or be given the opportunity to occupy the first row.
- Everyone should stand up for jamā'ah when *qad qāmatī salāh* is declared.

What is Makruh in Salāt al-Jamā'ah

- To start a new row when there is room in the existing rows.
- For a follower to recite the *dhikr* such that the Imām can hear him.
- For a traveller who is praying qasr salāh to lead the Jamā'ah.

What to Recite and What Not to Recite

During qiyām, the Imām recites the surahs (qirā’ah) loudly in the fajr salāh and in the first two rak’ahs of the maghrib and ‘isha salāh. But in the dhuhr and ‘asr salāh, he recites them softly (except for the *Basmallah*). As you already know, reciting loudly is called **jahriya** and reciting softly is called **ikhfatiya** and even when you pray alone (*furāda*), it is wājib to recite the two surahs in salāt al-dhuhr and ‘asr softly. For fajr, maghrib and ‘isha it is wājib for men to recite the two surahs loudly and women can recite them either way.

The followers in a jamā’ah salāh must not recite the two surahs in any salāh, but just listen. In the case of dhuhr and ‘asr when the Imām is reciting the two surahs softly the followers can repeatedly recite a tasbih softly like ‘subhān Allāh’ or ‘astaghfirullāha rabbi wa atubu ilayhi’ until the Imām is done.

In the case of the 3rd and 4th rak’ah, when the Imām is reciting the tasbihāt al-‘arba’a three times, the followers can do the same but recite it softly as well so as not to disturb the Imām with their voices. As you already know, even when you pray alone (*furāda*) instead of jamā’ah, it is wājib to recite the tasbihāt al-‘arba’a softly.

Once the Imām says the takbir and goes into ruku’ or qunut, the followers should then do the same and thereafter they should recite everything softly along with the Imām.

This means the followers must not keep quiet during ruku’, sujud, tashahhud, salām, and so on. They must recite everything besides the qirā’ah of the two surahs in the first two rak’ahs, but softly so that the Imām cannot hear them or be disturbed by their voices. If a follower intentionally keeps quiet, for example during the *dhikr* of ruku’ and sujud, then their salāh is not valid. If they forget, it is fine but they should start reciting as soon as they remember.

When the followers recite along with the Imām, they should do so either with him or just a little behind him but never ahead of him. To recite ahead of the Imām intentionally (when you can hear him) makes your salāh bātil unless you have changed your niyyah to *furāda*. But if you

recite ahead of the Imām by mistake, it is ok though you must stop and let the Imām catch up and then stay with or behind him.

Following the Leader - Staying with or Behind the Imām

The rule of thumb with salāt al-jamā'ah is 'follow the leader'. You always stay with or one step behind the Imām – never ahead of him. This is both in words and in action. For example, if a follower recites the takbirat al-ihrām before the Imām, his salāh is bātil. Although, he or she does not have to wait for the rows in front to do their takbirat al-ihrām (it is only recommended). Once the Imām does the takbirat al-ihrām, he can do it also.

Similarly, if a follower goes into ruku' or sajdah before the Imām or stands up before him intentionally, then his salāh is not valid. This means when you are in sajdah, wait until you hear the Imām saying the takbir before you raise your head and sit up as well. Likewise, do not recite anything ahead of the Imām.

If a person *mistakenly* goes into ruku' before the Imām does (e.g. the Imām does qunut but the follower goes into ruku') he should simply wait in ruku' until the Imām gets there. He shouldn't stand up again and then go to ruku' again because that will count as two ruku's! Likewise, if a person mistakenly goes into sajdah before the Imām or raises his head from sajdah before the Imām, then it is fine (because it was not intentional) but they should simply wait until the Imām gets there and thereafter they should continue following the Imām. He shouldn't raise his head and then do sajdah again – that will be 2 sajdahs!

Basic Prerequisites of Imām of Jamā'ah

The prayer-leader (Imām) must be:

1. Bāligh.
2. Sane.
3. Shi'ah Ithna Ashari Muslim.
4. Of legitimate birth.
5. 'Adil (just). This means not a person who sins open or a reputed sinner (*fāsiq*).

6. Knows the rules (*ahkām*) of salāh.
7. Pronounces the recitations in Arabic properly and performs its actions correctly.

It is recommended that the person who is most learned in matters of Islāmic law (*fiqh*) should lead the salāh.

Only a man can be the Imām for a male-only or mixed congregation, but a woman can lead the prayers of a female-only congregation.

Those who are performing the salāh in the standing position cannot pray behind someone who is performing it in the sitting position (injured or handicapped).

If a person performs salāh behind an Imām believing he is qualified and later discovers that the Imām of Jamā'ah did not fulfil one of the conditions, their salāh is still valid and does not have to be repeated.

It is wrong to stand apart and to pray *furāda* (on one's own), when others are praying in jamā'ah, especially when it can be misunderstood to mean that you do not consider the Imām to be qualified to lead the salāh. This is a form of silent backbiting (*ghibah*) of the Imām. However if it is an emergency and a person is in a hurry (e.g. because they are travelling shortly, etc.) then it is ok.

If a person believes the Imām leading the salāh is unworthy to lead then he should still stand in jamā'ah but pray with the niyyah of *furāda* and recite the surahs softly (when other followers are quiet) so that no one is aware that he is praying with *furāda* niyyah.

Those who follow an Imām must also be sure that the Imām is performing a wājib salāh (other than the salāh for rain and the two 'īd prayers), because if the Imām is performing a mustahab salāh, it is not permitted to follow him.

Lesson 4

Salāt al-Jamā'ah (cont'd)

How to Join Midway

If a person arrives when the salāt al-jamā'ah has begun, they can still join it and get the thawāb of praying in jamā'ah provided they follow these rules:

1. You can only join a salāh when the Imām hasn't yet completed the ruku'. Once the Imām raises his head from ruku', you must wait for the next rak'ah to join.
2. You must join a row (or start a new row at the back if all the lines are full) but not stand far away from the rest of the group.
3. If the Imām has just started qirā'ah, say your takbirat al-'ihrām and follow as others. If the Imām is about to complete qirā'ah, wait for the Imām to say the takbir and as he goes to ruku', you say your takbirat al-'ihrām and join him in ruku' before he stands up again.

The best way to understand how to join salāt al-jamā'ah midway is by reading the following scenarios and practising them in class.

Scenario 1:

Ali arrives late for maghrib. He hears the Imām reciting Surah al-Fātiha so he knows it is the first or the second rak'ah. He finds a spot to stand and join the jamā'ah. He does his takbirat al-ihrām and starts listening to the Imām.

When the Imām finishes reciting the two surahs, he does the takbir and goes to ruku'. Ali realizes this is the first rak'ah. So he simply continues with the jamā'ah as others.

Scenario 2:

Same as Scenario 1 but when the Imām completes the two surahs he does takbir and goes into qunut. Ali realizes he has missed one rak'ah already and this is the 2nd rak'ah. So here is what Ali does now:

The Imām of Jamā'ah	Ali
Recites qunut	Ali has done takbirat al-ihram earlier so he simply raises his hand and listens to Imām in qunut
Goes to ruku' then 2 sajdahs	Follows as normal
Recites Tashahhud	Ali cannot recite tashahhud because it is his 1 st rak'ah. So he raises his knees a little whilst supporting himself with his fingers on the ground. This partial sitting is called tajāfi. Ali simply listens.
Stands up for 3 rd rak'ah	Stands up for 2 nd rak'ah
Recites tasbihāt al-'arba'a	Recites Surah al-Fātiha (and 2 nd surah only if there is time)
Goes to ruku' and then 2 sajdahs	Follows and does the same. Skips qunut because it is not wājib.
Recites tashahhud and salām	Recites tashahhud with Imām and then stands up and continues praying 3 rd rak'ah on his own (with furāda niyyah).

Scenario 3:

Same as above but Imām was praying 4 rak'ah ('Isha) and Ali was praying Maghrib.

The Imām of Jamā'ah	Ali
After 2 nd sajdah of 3 rd rak'ah, Imām stands up for 4 th rak'ah.	It is Ali's 2 nd rak'ah. Ali recites tashahhud quickly and then stands up for 3 rd rak'ah.
Recites tasbihāt al-'arba'a three times.	Recites tasbihāt al-'arba'a even once.
Goes to ruku' and then sujud.	Follows Imām.
After 2 nd sajdah recites tashahhud and salām to complete Isha.	Also recites tashahhud and salām to complete Maghrib.

Scenario 4:

Same as previous but Imām was praying 'Isha and so was Ali.

When the Imām begins the tashahhud and salām to complete the salāh, Ali can stand up alone and recite his 4th rak'ah as *furāda* and complete it as normal.

Whenever Ali does not have to recite tashahhud and salām but the Imām is reciting it, Ali can adopt a *tajāfi* position and wait and see if the Imām stands up after tashahhud or if he will also recite the salām. If the Imām stands up after tashahhud, Ali knows it is the 2nd rak'ah of the Imām, and he can stand with him. If the Imām recites salām, then Ali knows the Imām has finished the salāh and he can stand up from *tajāfi* and finish his salāh as normal.

Scenario 5:

Ali runs to join the jamā'ah and the Imām has just finished the qirā'ah and is doing the takbir before going into ruku'. Ali does his takbirat al-ihram and joins the Imām in ruku'. Ali does not have to worry about not reciting the qiyām and qirā'ah. But he must join no later than ruku'. If Ali tries to join but before he does takbirat al-ihram and gets into ruku', the Imām is already raising his head from ruku', then it is too late. Ali must wait for the next rak'ah to do his takbirat al-ihram (when the Imām stands up from sujud).

Scenario 6:

Ali joins salāt al-dhuhr. The Imām is quiet and Ali doesn't know whether the Imām is reciting Surah al-Fātiha and another surah or whether he is reciting the tasbihāt arba'a (i.e. what rak'ah the jamā'ah is in). Since it is Ali's 1st rak'ah, if he does takbirat al-ihram, he needs to recite at least Surah al-Fātiha before the Imām goes into ruku' (so that he can join the Imām in ruku'). However Ali also doesn't know how far the Imām is done and whether he will have enough time to recite the whole Surah al-Fātiha. What should he do?

Ali should stand ready but not do takbirat al-ihram because most likely he won't get a chance to recite the whole Surah al-Fātiha. Once the

Imām is done and he does takbir to go to ruku', Ali should then do his takbirat al-ihram and join the Imām in ruku'. In other words, the best time to join the jamā'ah is when the Imām is going into ruku' (and not during qirā'ah). But you must do takbirat al-ihram and be in ruku' with the Imām before the Imām stands up from ruku' - even if it is for just a brief moment.

Points to Remember:

When you are trying to stay with the Imām, you can skip doing qunut when it is your 2nd rak'ah but not the Imām's. Qunut is not wājib and you might miss joining the Imām in ruku' if you do qunut.

If for any reason a person cannot catch up with an Imām during jamā'ah and gets disconnected e.g. a person has to recite tashahhud and by the time he stands up the Imām has gone into ruku; or a person does takbirat al-ihram and is reciting Surah al-Fātiha but the Imām has gone into ruku' and is standing up (so he missed joining ruku'), then the person should simply change his niyyah to *furāda* and then continue praying on his own (even though he is standing in a row of jamā'ah).

Similarly if an emergency arises and a person needs to end his salāh quickly and without the jamā'ah, he or she can change their niyyah to furāda at any time in the salāh and then continue on their own even if they are standing in the jamā'ah rows.

Summary:

In the 1st and 2nd Rak'ah of salāt al-Jamā'ah:

- Join while the Imām is still reciting the first or second surah, or
- Join in Ruku'

In the 3rd and 4th Rak'ah of salāt al-Jamā'ah (or when you don't know which rak'ah it is):

- Join when Imām goes to Ruku'. Do not join during qirā'ah of Imām.

Lesson 5

Sawm (Fasting)

By now we know that it is wājib for every *bāligh* (adult), *‘āqil* (sane) Muslim who is not sick, very old and weak, or travelling, to fast throughout the month of Ramadan from the time of Fajr to the time of Maghrib.

A person who fasts must do so with the niyyah of fasting for Allāh’s sake only and from Fajr to Maghrib time they must keep away from eating, drinking, smoking or inhaling dense fumes, ascribing lies to Allāh or the ma’sumeen (‘a), immersing the head underwater and throwing up (vomiting) on purpose.

There are other matters also that break a fast and other conditions when some people are excused from a wājib fast in Ramadan but have to make up for it later on. Some are mentioned below and others will be covered later.

Types of Fasts

Wājib Fasts

- The whole month of Ramadan.
- When one makes a vow (*nadh*r) to fast and it has become wājib.
- In compensation (*qadā*) for a missed wājib fast.
- Qadā for the fasts missed by a deceased father (wājib on the eldest son).
- The fast on behalf of (*niyābah*) of a deceased for which one has taken payment.
- The fasts of kaffāra (penalty) that become wājib when a person deliberately fails to perform some wājib duties. (Kaffāra is explained in detail later in the lesson.)

Harām Fasts

- On the day of ‘Id al-Fitr (1st Shawwāl).
- On the day of ‘Id al-Adha (‘Id al-Qurbān) – (10th Dhul Hijjah).
- For a wife to fast a mustahab fast if her husband disapproves of it.

- For a child to fast a mustahab fast if it hurts the feelings of the parents or causes them any suffering (physical or emotional).
- For a sick person to fast when he knows fasting will harm him further. However if a person knows fasting will not harm him, he should fast his wājib fasts even if the doctor advises not to. And if he knows it will harm him, he should not fast even if the doctor says it is ok.

Mustahab Fasts

As such, fasting is mustahab every day of the year except for the days when it is harām or makruh. But the following occasions are particularly highly recommended to fast:

- The first and last Thursday of every lunar month.
- The first Wednesday after the 10th of a lunar (Islāmic month).
- The 13th, 14th and 15th of each lunar month.
- The 1st, 3rd and 7th of Muharram.
- The 17th of Rabi 'ul-Awwal (Birthday of Rasullāh (s)).
- The 15th of Jamādi al-Ula.
- The whole month of Rajab and Sha'bān or as many days as possible in these months. One should try and fast for at least one day in each of these months, especially the 27th of Rajab (Mi'rāj & Bi'thah) and the 15th of Sha'bān.
- The Day of 'Id Nawruz.
- From the 4th until the 10th of Shawwāl.
- The 25th and 29th of Dhu l-Qa'ada.
- The 1st to the 9th of Dhu l-Hijjah.
- The Day of Ghadir Khum (18th Dhul Hijjah).
- The Day of Mubāhala (24th Dhul Hijjah).

It is not wājib to complete a mustahab fast. If a fellow Muslim invites you to a meal, it is better to break your mustahab fast and eat instead of telling him you are fasting. (But this is not the case for wājib fasts.)

Makruh Fasts

- To fast on the day of Ashura (10th Muharram).
- To fast on the day of 'Arafa (9th Dhul Hijjah) if there is a doubt whether it is the day of 'Arafa or the day of 'Id al-Adha.

Note: It is highly recommended to pray salāt al-maghrib on time so when you're fasting, you should pray first before having iftār. If you're too hungry to concentrate on your salāh, you can break your fast first with some dates and a drink and then pray maghrib salāt before having a full iftār meal.

Qadā, Fidya and Kaffāra

If we miss a wājib fast for any reason, there are three possible penalties:

1. We have to compensate the missed fast(s). This is called *qadā*.
2. We have to pay 708 grams (called a *mudd* - almost $\frac{3}{4}$ kg) of food in exchange for each missed fast. This is called *fidya*.
3. We have to either fast for 60 days or feed 60 poor people as a penalty. This is called *kaffāra*.

In many cases a person may have to do more than one of the above. E.g. pay the *qadā* of the fast and the *fidya* of one *mudd* per fast. Or pay the *qadā* and *kaffāra* for each missed fast.

1. Cases for which Qadā Fast is Required

- If a person misses a wājib fast due to illness and then recovers his or her health.
- If a person misses a wājib fast because of travelling. The *qadā* fasts are paid when they return home.
- If a person misses a wājib fast or is forced to break it for any other justified reason acceptable in shari'ah.

Notes:

1. If an action that usually breaks a fast is done unintentionally, it does not break the fast. For example, if a person vomits unintentionally or forgets they are fasting and eats and then stops as soon as he or she remembers, the fast is not broken.
2. A *qadā* fast can be broken before dhuhr time if a person decides they will fast another day. But as *ihdiyāt wājib*, they cannot break the fast after dhuhr time.
3. It is makruh to travel in the month of Ramadan if the travel is not urgent and if by travelling a person will not be able to fast. It is

not makruh to travel if it is a requirement of someone's work because they can still fast while travelling.

2. Cases for which Fidya is Required

- If a person is ill or has a permanent health condition and does not expect to ever be able to fast in Ramadan for the rest of their lives. Then for each fast, they must pay the $\frac{3}{4}$ kg of food (per fast) to the poor and they do not have to worry about the qadā.
- The very old and elderly who are too weak to ever fast also pay fidya for each day of wājib fast.
- Pregnant women, if it is harmful for them or their baby, also do not have to fast but in addition to the fidya for each fast, they also have to pay the qadā later on.
- Women who are nursing a child, if it is harmful to them or their baby, do not have to fast but instead should pay the fidya for each day. They must fast the qadā for all missed wājib fasts later on.
- Those with a medical condition because of which they become unusually thirsty or hungry and cannot fast should pay the fidya instead. During the wājib fasts (e.g. of Ramadan) they can only drink as much water (or eat as little) as is absolutely necessary.
- If a person has qadā fasts for Ramadan and deliberately delays them until the next Ramadan because of which they cannot pay the qadā on time, they must, after this second Ramadan is over, pay the outstanding qadā they neglected but, as well, they must give fidya for each qadā that was deliberately delayed and not redone before the next Ramadan.

Notes:

1. By fidya we mean to give one *mudd* ($\frac{3}{4}$ kg) of wheat, rice or barley (or its equivalent value in money) for each fast, to a poor and needy person.
2. If a person becomes well after being sick for several years, he or she should fast the qadā for the last Ramadan only and give the fidya for all the rest of the previous Ramadāns that he or she missed fasting.

3. Cases for which Kaffāra is Required

- If a person deliberately does not fast in Ramadan or deliberately breaks his or her fast for no justified reason, they must:
 - a. Ask Allāh for forgiveness for the sin committed, and
 - b. Compensate for the missed fast (as *qadā*), and
 - c. Either feed 60 poor people or fast for 60 days **for each fast** that was broken or skipped deliberately.

Notes:

1. If a person decides to pay the kaffāra with 60 fasts, they have to fast thirty-one fasts consecutively. The remainder do not have to be continuous. They have to be careful that the thirty-one days will not include days in which fasting is harām (such as ʿĪd al-Adha). If the 31-day sequence is broken deliberately or due to the occurrence of such a day, they have to start afresh. However, if the sequence is broken due to a justified excuse (such as menses or necessary travel), it is not necessary to start fasting afresh.
2. If a person decides to feed 60 poor persons, he should give each one of them a *mudd* ($\frac{3}{4}$ kg) of wheat, rice, or barley. If it is not possible, he should give as much food as possible, and if he is unable to do the 60 days fast or feeding 60 poor persons, he should pray to Allāh for forgiveness and repent.
3. It is not wājib to pay the kaffāra immediately, but one should not delay it unnecessarily. Even if one can afford to pay it later on in life, they have to do it.

Qadā Fasts for a Deceased Father

It is wājib for the eldest son to compensate (as *qadā*) for the missed fasts of his late father, either by fasting them himself or by hiring someone else to do this. It is not wājib to make up the missed fasts of one's late mother, but it is very commendable if one does so.

If the eldest son is doubtful whether his father had missed any fasts, it is not wājib for him to compensate for them. The same rules apply for the missed *salāh* of a deceased father.

Lesson 6

Gender-Specific (for Boys)

This lesson was taught in Book 6. It is being taught here again as a revision and to encourage the students to ask questions and seek clarification on anything related to gender-specific issues. The teacher may add material to the subject from Book 8, if required and as necessary.

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 urination, but should always be practised.

If a boy performs Istibra and he finds any wetness on his underwear or clothes later on, he can assume his body and clothes are tāhir.

If Istibra had not been performed, then he would have to assume that the wetness was urine and he would have to wash 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 urination is considered clean.

Respect for Women

One of the signs of Islām'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 Rasulullāh (s) began preaching Islām 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 Hawwā 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. Islām allowed women to participate fully in society and to even own property and businesses 1400 years ago.

Some of the common accusations against Islām 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 Godconsciousness (taqwa). That is why Allāh says:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ 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. Godconsciousness means to be constantly aware or conscious of Allāh and to keep away from sin out of this consciousness, and to respect Allāh whilst striving to do good. This is the true meaning of taqwa.

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 and their responsibilities come sooner. 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 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 Islām 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. Whether it is your mother, sister, cousin or anyone at school or madrasah. Never tease or make fun of a girl. It is shameful for a Muslim boy or man to make fun of a girl or woman.

In Islām, a man always looks out and protects a woman against others who may try to harm her. Never, ever raise your hand against a girl 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 who are not related to them, they should not stare at them sinfully or make them uncomfortable with their behaviour. Neither should they 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 6

Gender-Specific (for Girls)

This lesson was taught in Book 6. It is being taught here again as a revision and to encourage the students to ask questions and seek clarification on anything related to gender-specific issues. The teacher may add material to the subject from Book 8 if required and as necessary.

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. Girls mature earlier and in Islām are considered to be *bāligha* from the age of 9 (i.e. on her 9th Islāmic birthday). This means whatever is *wājib* on adults like praying (*salāh*), fasting (*sawm*) and *hijāb* is also *wājib* on a Muslim girl from the age of 9.

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 who are just beginning to experience *haid*, the cycle can be longer, up to 45 days.

In North America, 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 15.¹²

Women usually have periods until menopause, which occurs between the ages of 45 and 55 (usually around the age of 50).

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 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 a Masjid or haram of Rasulullāh (s) or any of the Imāms (‘a). She can enter the areas that are not designated as Masjid within the building (such as the Husayniyya attached to a masjid).
- 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:

¹² <http://www.womenshealth.gov/faq/menstruation.cfm>

- 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 Book 6 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. Your teacher will review the notes in Book 6 (Fiqh Lesson 6) on how to perform ghusl using the tartibi method.

Lesson 7

Hijāb

When a Muslim girl reaches the age of nine, 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.

In the days before Islām, women were ill-treated and no one realized their value and importance. Islām teaches that men and women are equal and they can only be better than each other individually by virtue of their Godconsciousness (*taqwa*).

Allāh created a natural attraction between men and women so that they would marry, have children and raise families. In particular, He created a very strong physical (sexual) attraction in men for women. But Allāh also wants men and women to respect each other and live with chastity. He wants men and women to admire each other physically only after being married lawfully.



Allāh made women very beautiful and attractive to men. In order to discourage temptation for sin and to ensure that women are respected for *who they are* and not judged only by their physical appearances, Allāh then commanded women to cover their bodies and commanded everyone to lower their gaze and not to look at each other sinfully.

Wearing hijāb does not mean a woman is restricted in her freedom. Islām encourages women to acquire knowledge and advance themselves in all noble pursuits even with their hijāb. For example, women are allowed to do business, to work in any halāl profession, to take up any halāl career as men, to own property, etc. while they maintain their hijāb.

Rasulullāh (s) showed people how valuable a woman is by showing great respect for his wives and his daughter Sayyida Fatima (‘a). Sayyida Fatima az-Zahra (‘a) used to be very particular and careful of her hijāb. She never went without hijāb even in the presence of a blind man.

Many Muslim women also feel that hijāb makes them more confident and keeps them protected from being attacked or molested by evil men. Women who dress indecently or in clothes that are either too tight or too revealing are more likely to be targeted by would-be attackers or stared at and ogled by unchaste men. When men who are strangers to a woman stare at her because of how she is dressed, it is also a humiliation for her family especially her parents, husband and/or children.

Hijāb means that the entire body of a woman should be covered in the presence of 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 completely. The overall appearance of the dress is that it must be loose so that it does not reveal the shape of the woman’s body and it should not be attractive in any way that draws the attention of men who are strangers towards her.

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

Bāligh boys and men must also dress decently and respectfully in the presence of all non-mahrams and even mahrams besides their spouses.

In Book 4, you read a story of Sayyida Fatima (‘a) and the blind man. That story teaches us that hijāb is not just to stop others from staring at us sinfully. It also helps to keep our thoughts and actions pure. Every time we realize we are in hijāb, we also remember that Allāh is watching us and that hijāb is not just about clothing but also about how we behave in public and with strangers, how we talk to them and how we interact with others.

That is why even men have to observe hijāb. The hijāb for men is to dress modestly, not to clean shave their beards, and to lower their eyes from looking at women sinfully or staring at non-mahram women.

Think of hijāb like a shield that protects women from harm but also protects both men and women from sin.

You should also review the lesson on Hijāb in Book 5 (Fiqh Lesson 7) about the definition of who is *mahram* and *ghayr mahram* to you.

Hijāb in the Qur'ān

Allāh says in the Qur'ān in Surah al-Ahzāb, 33:59:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ قُلْ لَأَزُوحِكَ وَبَنَاتِكَ وَنِسَاءَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ يُدْنِينَ عَلَيْهِنَّ مِنْ جَلَابِيبِهِنَّ ذَلِكَ أَدْنَى أَنْ يُعْرَفْنَ فَلَا يُؤْذَيْنَ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا﴾

O Prophet! Say to your wives and your daughters and the women of the believers that they let down upon them their garments (i.e. hijāb); this will be more proper, that they may be known (to be better), and thus they will not be given trouble; and Allāh is Forgiving, Merciful.

Here the word Jilbāb refers to a covering that is bigger than a head cover and shorter than a shawl and is designed to cover the head and shoulders. According to the command of Allāh, the coverings for women that form their hijāb is wājib, and disobedience of this command earns Allāh's anger.

In another āyah of the Qur'ān (Surah al-Nur, 24:30-31), Allāh says:

﴿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 عَلَى جُيُوبِهِنَّ وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا لِبُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ آبَائِهِنَّ... أَوْ أَبْنَائِهِنَّ... أَوْ إِخْوَانِهِنَّ... وَتَوْبُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا أَيُّهَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ﴾

Say to the believer men to cast down their gaze and guard their private parts. That is purer for them. Indeed Allāh is well aware of what you do.

And say to the believing women that they cast down their gaze and guard their private parts and do not display their ornaments except what is apparent, and let them wear their head-coverings over their bosoms, and not display their ornaments except to their husbands or their fathers... or their sons... or their brothers... and turn to Allāh all of you, O believers, so that you may be successful.

Besides the Qur'ān, there are many ahādith on the importance of hijāb and its being wājib.

The True Spirit of Hijāb

Besides dressing modestly and lowering our gaze, hijāb also means that we shouldn't flirt or be too friendly with those who are not our mahram.

This doesn't mean that we shouldn't be polite or cannot even smile at our non-mahram. What it means is that when talking to our non-mahram, we should always have sensible, respectful conversations. Instead of fooling around and joking, we should talk about something meaningful that is, for example, related to our work. This is regardless of whether it is a friend at school or our cousin at home. Remember: Allāh always knows what is in our hearts and our real intention (*niyyah*).

Observing hijāb also means it is *harām* to have any physical contact with a ghayr mahram such as hugging or shaking hands with them. For example, our cousins as well as the spouses of our uncles and aunts are not our mahram. We cannot shake hands with them or hug them even if we consider our cousin to be 'just like a brother/sister' or the spouse of our real uncle and aunt to be 'just like a father/mother'.

TARIKH (History)

Lesson 1

Nabí Dáwud (‘a) & Nabí Sulaymán (‘a)

In Book 4 we studied how Nabi Musa (‘a) freed the Banu Isrāil from slavery and brought them out of Egypt to the land of Palestine. However, they were constantly engaged in war against the Philistines who finally managed to banish them from their homes.

In the last battle, which was many years after Nabi Musa (‘a) had died, the Sacred Casket containing the original Tablets of the Tawrāt that Allāh gave Nabi Musa (‘a) was lost, and this really disappointed the Banu Isrāil. They spent many gloomy years in exile before they came to their leader Nabi Samuel (‘a) and asked him to appoint a strong king for them so that they could regain their land.

On the command of Allāh, Nabi Samuel (‘a) appointed Nabi Tālut as their king. The Banu Isrāil protested and said that Tālut was a poor and unknown man. However, Nabi Samuel (‘a) informed them that Allāh had chosen Nabi Tālut (‘a) because of his knowledge, wisdom and strength, and he would undoubtedly lead them to victory.

It took Nabi Tālut (‘a) 20 years to find the Sacred Casket again and after that they marched to Palestine. The Philistines were led by a fearsome commander who a giant named Jālut (Goliath). The sight of Jālut filled the Banu Isrāil with terror and no one dared to fight him.

Nabi Dāwud (‘a) was present in the army of Nabi Tālut (‘a). He was only a young man at the time, and had not come to fight. His job was to attend to his three older brothers who were soldiers, and to bring news of the war back to their father. When Nabi Tālut (‘a) saw that Jālut had terrified his army, he tried to encourage his men by promising them great rewards if they faced Jālut. He promised that he would marry his daughter to the man who killed Jālut.

When Nabi Dāwud (‘a) heard so much noise in the battlefield, he came forward to find out what was going on. He had never fought a battle before, but when he saw Jālut, he approached Nabi Tālut (‘a) and said,

'Let me fight this devil because I have killed a tiger and a bear who attacked my father's sheep.'

The brave words of Nabi Dāwud ('a) impressed Nabi Tālut ('a), who dressed him in a coat of armour and warned him to be careful.

Before Nabi Dāwud ('a) approached Jālūt, he removed the heavy armour that was restricting his movement. He stood before the enemy, armed only with a catapult and the staff with which he used to guide his sheep.

Before Jālūt could react, Nabi Dāwud ('a) shot a stone from his catapult and struck the giant Jālūt's forehead with terrible force and brought him to the ground in a daze. Nabi Dāwud ('a) then drew Jālūt's heavy sword and cut off his head. The sight of their leader and champion dead scared the Philistines, who fled the battlefield in panic. Because of his extraordinary courage, Nabi Tālut ('a) married his daughter to Nabi Dāwud ('a).

Allāh says in the Qur'ān:

﴿فَهَزَمُوهُمْ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَقَتَلَ دَاوُودُ جَالُوتَ وَآتَاهُ اللَّهُ الْمُلْكَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَعَلَّمَهُ مِمَّا يَشَاءُ...﴾

Through Allāh's Will, they defeated their enemy. Dāwud killed Jālūt and Allāh gave him the kingdom and wisdom and taught him whatever He wished.

- Surah al-Baqarah, 2:251

Nabi Dāwud ('a) was made commander-in-chief of Nabi Tālut ('a)'s army and after Nabi Tālut ('a) passed away, Nabi Dāwud ('a) became the king. Allāh gave him wisdom and the Divine Book, Zabur, which he used to recite in a beautiful voice to attract the people to the words of Allāh.

Allāh gave Nabi Dāwud ('a) many blessings. When he used to praise Allāh, the mountains and the birds would also join him and sing the praise of Allāh with him. Nabi Dāwud ('a) could also touch iron and melt it in his hands like wax and he used this gift to design special, lightweight battle armour. Even though he was the king, Nabi Dāwud ('a) made different things out of iron and sold it to people to earn his living.

Allāh says in the Qur'ān:

﴿وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا دَاوُودَ مِنَّا فَضْلًا يَا جِبَالُ أُوِّبِي مَعَهُ وَالطَّيْرَ وَأَلْنَا لَهُ الْحَدِيدَ﴾

Indeed We gave Dāwud blessings from us, saying, 'O Mountains! Sing (the praise of Allāh) along with him, and O Birds!, you too.' And We made iron soft for him.

- Surah Sabā, 34:10

Nabi Dāwud ('a) ruled wisely for many years and was succeeded by his youngest son, Nabi Sulaymān ('a) who became King of the Banu Isrāil and also a great prophet of Allāh.

Nabi Sulaymān ('a)

Nabi Sulaymān ('a) was the youngest son of Nabi Dāwud ('a) and inherited him as the king and prophet of Allāh. Allāh granted Nabi Sulaymān ('a) the greatest kingdom that any king has ever ruled over in the world. Nabi Sulaymān ('a) could control the wind and even fly in the air while sitting on his throne. Nabi Sulaymān ('a) was also given control over both men and jinn and they served him faithfully and did whatever he ordered them to do. Nabi Sulaymān ('a) could speak to all the animals and birds in their own language and they obeyed him as well.

Because of these special blessings, Nabi Sulaymān's ('a) kingdom was very powerful and many countries were under his control. Whenever the army of Nabi Sulaymān ('a) marched on a mission, it was an amazing sight to see. The whole army could be seen flying in the air with great power.

One day, Nabi Sulaymān ('a) was travelling with his army of jinn and men when they came to a valley that was full of ants. One of the ants that was very wise saw the army coming towards them and told all the other ants to go into their homes so that they would not accidentally be crushed by the army of Nabi Sulaymān ('a).

Nabi Sulaymān ('a) could hear the words of the ant so he asked the ant, 'I am a prophet (nabi) of Allāh. Do you think I would crush anyone?'

And the wise ant said, 'No, I knew you would not crush them but I did not want them to see your great army and forget the greatness of Allāh and His blessings!'

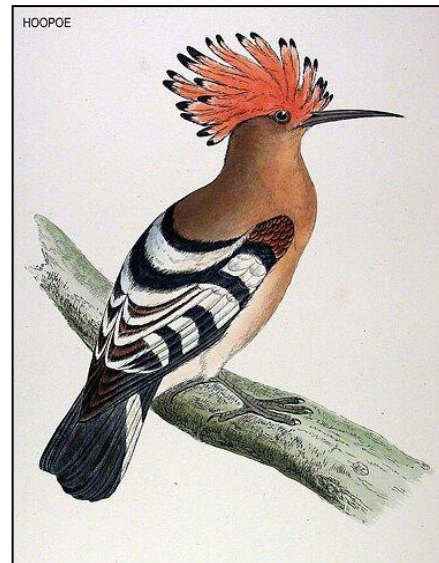
This was a great lesson for all of us that even when we see something great and powerful, we should always remember that Allāh is ever greater and more powerful. Nabi Sulaymān ('a) smiled and thanked Allāh for all His favours.

One day, when Nabi Sulaymān ('a) was inspecting his army, he noticed one of his messenger birds called Hudhud (a Hoopoe) was missing. He got angry and said, 'where is Hudhud? He better have a good excuse for being absent!'

And soon after that, Hudhud appeared. He told Nabi Sulaymān ('a) that he was late because he had stopped in a faraway land called Sabā, where he saw some people worshipping the Sun and their ruler was a woman called Queen Bilqis.

Nabi Sulaymān ('a) sent Hudhud back to Bilqis with a letter and in it he told her to stop worshipping the Sun and to believe in Allāh and accept Nabi Sulaymān ('a) as the prophet of Allāh.

Queen Bilqis tried to send some gifts to Nabi Sulaymān ('a) but Nabi Sulaymān ('a) sent them back and told her that Allāh had given him even a greater kingdom and much more than what she had.



So Queen Bilqis decided to go and visit Nabi Sulaymān ('a) with her people. Nabi Sulaymān ('a) wanted to show Bilqis how much power Allāh had given him so he asked, 'who can bring me the throne of Queen Bilqis even before she gets here.' One jinn said, 'I can bring it even before you stand from your throne.' But there was a wise man in the court of Nabi Sulaymān ('a) called Asif bin Barkhiya. He told Nabi Sulaymān ('a), 'I can bring it with the knowledge and power that Allāh has given me, even before you blink.' And as Nabi Sulaymān ('a) blinked, he found the

throne of Bilqis, which was thousands of miles away in the land of Sabā, all of sudden in front of him.

When Queen Bilqis arrived, she was very surprised to see her throne had reached the palace of Nabi Sulaymān ('a) even before her.

As she entered the palace of Nabi Sulaymān ('a) and saw in amazement and wonder how beautiful it looked, she thought the whole palace floor was covered in water. So she lifted her dress a little to step over the 'water' but it was actually a crystal floor and there was no water. Nabi Sulaymān ('a) wanted her to realize that not everything we see is what it appears to be. And therefore the Sun cannot be god just because it looks so bright and big.

Queen Bilqis realized her mistake and changed her faith. She now believed in Allāh and that Nabi Sulaymān ('a) was the prophet of Allāh. And she returned to her people and they all stopped worshipping the Sun.

Nabi Sulaymān ('a) ruled over his people with justice for a long time. His kingdom covered most of the known world. No before or after has had such a great kingdom as Nabi Sulaymān ('a). This is because he had prayed to Allāh and said:

﴿قَالَ رَبِّ اغْفِرْ لِي وَهَبْ لِي مُلْكًا لَا يَنْبَغِي لِأَحَدٍ مِنْ بَعْدِي إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْوَهَّابُ﴾

He (Sulaymān) said, 'my Lord! Forgive me and give me a kingdom like no one will deserve after me; indeed You are the Giver of bounties (without measure).'

- Surah Sād, 38:35

Homework:

At home, read the translation of Surah an-Naml (surah 27) from āyah (verse) 15 to āyah 44 and see if you can find:

- The story of the ants.
- The story of hudhud.
- The story of Bilqis and her throne.
- The story of Bilqis and the palace with a crystal floor.

Lesson 2

Nabí Khidr (‘a) & Nabí Musa (‘a)

We studied about the life of Nabí Musa (‘a) in Book 4 (Tārikh). Nabí Musa (‘a) was the greatest prophet (nabi) of Allāh in his time. Once, Allāh wanted Nabí Musa (‘a) to meet another man who had special hidden knowledge from Allāh. This man is called Khidr (‘a) and he is still alive even today. Some scholars believe that he too is a prophet and they call him Nabí Khidr (‘a). Allāh does not mention the name of Khidr (‘a) in the Qur’ān but He calls him ‘one of Our servants’ and someone whom Allāh taught Himself.

Nabí Musa (‘a) was very keen to meet Khidr (‘a) and asked Allāh where he would find him. Allāh told Nabí Musa (‘a) to set out on a journey and take a salted fish with him and when he reaches the ‘Spring of Life’ where there is a fountain that can bring the dead back to life and make a person live very long (like Khidr is still alive) then the fish would also come back to life and that is where Nabí Musa (‘a) would meet Khidr (‘a).

And so Nabí Musa (‘a) set out with a servant of his called Yusha bin Nun until they reached a spring of water where some drops fell on the fish and it came back to life and swam away.

There Nabí Musa (‘a) met Khidr (‘a) and he asked him to teach him some knowledge and wisdom. Nabí Musa (‘a) wanted to follow Khidr (‘a) and learn from him but Khidr (‘a) told him it would be difficult for Nabí Musa (‘a) because everything that Khidr (‘a) did was with special hidden knowledge from Allāh.

We can now read the whole story of Nabí Musa (‘a) and Khidr (‘a) in the Qur’ān and what Nabí Musa (‘a) saw when he was travelling with Khidr (‘a).

Surah al-Kahf, 18:66-82:

Musa said to him (Khidr), ‘May I follow you so that you teach me some of the guidance that you have been taught?’

He (Khidr) said, 'you cannot have patience with me! And how can you have patience about something that you don't know of?'

He (Musa) said, 'You will find me, inshā Allāh, to be patient, and I will not disobey you in any matter.' He (Khidr) said, 'If you follow me, do not question me about anything until I [myself] mention it to you.'

So they went on until they boarded a boat. [When they got off the boat] he (Khidr) made a hole in it. He (Musa) said, 'did you make a hole in it to drown its people? You have certainly done a monstrous thing!'

He (Khidr) said, 'Did I not say, you cannot have patience with me?' He (Musa) said, 'Do not hold me for what I forgot and do not be hard on me.'

So they went on. When they met a boy, he (Khidr) killed him. He (Musa) said, 'Did you slay an innocent soul without reason? You have done a terrible thing!'

He (Khidr) said, 'Did I not tell you, you cannot have patience with me?'

So he (Musa) said, 'If I question you about anything after this, do not keep me in your company. You have already got sufficient excuse from me.'

So they went on until they came to a town where they asked its people for food but the people refused to keep them as guests. There they found a wall that was about to collapse, so he (Khidr) built it up again.

So he (Musa) said, 'If you wished, you could have taken a wage for it (from the people of the town since they refused to help us).'

He (Khidr) said, 'This is where you and I shall part. I will now inform you about the meaning of all that over which you could not be patient.'

As for the boat, it belonged to some poor people who worked on the sea. I wanted to sink it because behind them was an (evil) king who was seizing every ship by force (and would come after them).

As for the boy, his parents were faithful believers and we feared he (the boy) would (grow up one day) and harm them with rebellion and unfaith (i.e. the boy was going to grow up and become an evil person). So we desired that their Lord should give them in exchange (of this boy another) one better than him in purity and closer in mercy.

As for the wall, it belonged to two boys, orphans in the city. Under it there was a treasure belonging to them. Their father was a good man (and he died but left them the treasure and the wall was the only sign for it). So your Lord desired that they should grow up and take out their treasure, as a mercy from your Lord.

I did not do (the actions) out of my own wish (but was guided by Allāh). This is the meaning of that over which you could not keep patience.

- End of Surah Kahf (Surah 18), āyāt 66 to 82 -

There are many lessons we can learn from the story of Nabi Musa ('a) and Khidr ('a). The most important lesson is that we should never judge any action of Allāh when we don't know the real reason behind it. We know Allāh is Wise in all His actions and everything happens for a reason. And on the Day of Judgement Allāh will tell us all the reasons. Having faith in Allāh means trusting Him that He only does what is good for us. If we hear that a young child died in an accident or because of an illness, or if something bad happens to us, we should pray to Allāh to help us but we should not ask, 'why did Allāh do it?'

Similarly, some people ask, 'why is Imām al-Mahdi ('atfs) in ghayba?' or 'how can we benefit from an Imām if we cannot see him?' People ask these questions because they are only making judgements from what they know but they don't realize that only Allāh knows the hidden reasons. One day, when Imām al-Mahdi ('atfs) returns, all the reasons will be known and there will be no need to ask all these questions.

Homework:

When you go home, find Surah Kahf (surah 18) āyāt 66 to 82 in your copy of the Qur'ān and read the story in Arabic and then tell it to your parents and ask them what lessons they think we can learn from this story.

Lesson 3

al-Isra wa al-Mi'rāj

Rasulullāh (s) preached Islām for 23 years during which time the entire Qur'ān was revealed to him. Out of these 23 years, he preached in Makkah for the first 12 years and then he migrated to Madina and preached Islām from Madina for the remaining 11 years.

In the 11th year of his mission, just one year before the hijrah to Madina, Allāh decided to take Rasulullāh (s) on a special journey to the heavens to show him all the wonders of the universe. Allāh has mentioned this Night Journey (which is called *al-Isrā wa al-Mi'rāj* or in short "Mi'rāj") in the Qur'ān as follows:

﴿سُبْحَانَ الَّذِي أَسْرَى بِعَبْدِهِ لَيْلًا مِّنَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ إِلَى الْمَسْجِدِ الْأَقْصَى الَّذِي
بَارَكْنَا حَوْلَهُ لِنُرِيَهُ مِنْ آيَاتِنَا إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ﴾

Glory be to Him (Allāh) who carried His servant (Rasulullāh) on a journey by night from the Sacred Mosque (of Makkah) to the Farthest Mosque (Masjid al-Aqsa in Jerusalem) whose area We have blessed, that We might show him (Rasulullāh) some of Our signs. Indeed He (Allāh) is the All-hearing, the All-seeing.

- Surah al-Isrā, 17:1

This happened on the 27th night of Rajab. Rasulullāh (s) was resting when the angel Jibrāil ('a) came to him with a special horse with wings called *Burāq*. First Rasulullāh (s) went to the Ka'bah in Makkah to pray and then from there he flew on *Burāq* to Jerusalem where he prayed at Masjid al-Aqsa, the 3rd holiest masjid in Islām (after Masjid al-Harām in Makkah and Masjid an-Nabawi in Madina).

After Masjid al-Aqsa, Jibrāil ('a) flew besides Rasulullāh (s) and took him up to all the seven heavens one by one. There, Rasulullāh (s) saw many angels and he met all the other previous prophets of Allāh. Allāh then showed Rasulullāh (s) paradise (Jannah) where all the faithful will live forever and he showed him hellfire (Jahannam) where all the evil will be sent on the Day of Judgement.

Then Rasulullāh (s) went even higher up to the highest-level in the heavens called *as-Sidrat al-Muntaha*. There, Rasulullāh (s) saw something like the Ka'bah and the angels were going around it in tawāf and praising Allāh. This Ka'bah of the angels is above the one on the earth.

Finally Rasulullāh (s) reached a place where he saw a 'Curtain of Light'. Just like Allāh had talked to Nabi Musa ('a) from a burning bush on the mountain, Allāh talked to Rasulullāh (s) directly from the Curtain of Light.

Allāh describes a part of the Mi'rāj of Rasulullāh (s) as follows:

﴿فَاسْتَوَىٰ وَهُوَ بِالْأُفُقِ الْأَعْلَىٰ ثُمَّ دَنَا فَتَدَلَّىٰ فَكَانَ قَابَ قَوْسَيْنِ أَوْ أَدْنَىٰ فَأَوْحَىٰ إِلَىٰ عَبْدِهِ مَا أَوْحَىٰ مَا كَذَبَ الْفُؤَادُ مَا رَأَىٰ أَفَتِمَارُونَهُ عَلَىٰ مَا يَرَىٰ وَلَقَدْ رَأَاهُ نَزْلَةً أُخْرَىٰ عِنْدَ سِدْرَةِ الْمُنْتَهَىٰ عِنْدَهَا جَنَّةُ الْمَأْوَىٰ إِذْ يَغْشَى السُّدْرَةَ مَا يَغْشَىٰ مَا زَاغَ الْبَصَرُ وَمَا طَغَىٰ لَقَدْ رَأَىٰ مِنْ آيَاتِ رَبِّهِ الْكُبْرَىٰ﴾

Then he (Rasulullāh (s)) settled while he was on the highest horizon. Then he came nearer and nearer until he was within (the distance of) two bows' length or even nearer (to the Curtain of Light). Then He (Allāh) revealed to His servant whatever He (wished) revealed. The heart (of Rasulullāh) did not deny what it saw. Will you (people) then argue with him about what he saw?! Certainly he saw it yet another time, at Sidrat al-Muntaha (the Tree of Ultimate Boundary) near which is the Garden of the Abode (Jannat al-Ma'wa), when the Tree covered whatever it covered. The gaze (of Rasulullāh) did not swerve, nor did it overstep the bounds. Certainly he saw some of the greatest signs of his Lord.

- Surah an-Najm, 53:7-18

Rasulullāh (s) did sajdah and praised and glorified Allāh and Allāh taught Rasulullāh (s) the salāh that we now pray five times a day. If we pray our salāh properly we can come very close to Allāh. That is why Rasulullāh (s) said, 'salāh is the mi'rāj of a *mu'min*.'

When Rasulullāh (s) entered Jannah, he saw some angels building palaces for the faithful made of gold and silver and rubies and other beautiful gemstones. Sometimes they would stop working. Rasulullāh (s) asked the angels why they stopped working and the angels said, 'when a

believer on the earth says, “*subhān Allāh, wal hamdu lillāh wa lā ilāha illal lāhu wallāhu akbar*”, we build his or her palace. But when they stop the tasbih of Allāh, we stop building their palace and gardens.

In Jahannam, Rasulullāh (s) saw the raging fire of hell and some terrible punishments that was waiting for people who kill others, who commit sins without tawbah, who lie and backbite, who hurt other people and steal from other people, and so on.

Rasulullāh (s) saw a huge and tall angel in the heavens who was even able to count all the drops of rain. Rasulullāh (s) asked him if there was anything he could not count and the angel said, ‘only when a *mu’min* recites salawāt on Muhammad and Aali Muhammad, their reward (*thawāb*) is so much that I cannot count it!’

Rasulullāh (s) also saw Isrāil, the Angel of Death and Isrāfil, the Angel who will blow the Trumpet to end the world and then blow it again to bring everyone back to life. There are many books that narrate about all the prophets that Rasulullāh (s) met and talked with and everything he saw that he told the Muslims about when he came back from *mi’rāj*.

By the miracle of Allāh, Rasulullāh (s) went and came back in the same night. The next day when Rasulullāh (s) told people where he had gone and what he had seen, some people did not believe him. So he told them exactly what Masjid al-Aqsa looked like in Jerusalem and some people who had been to Jerusalem confirmed his words were true.

Rasulullāh (s) also told the Quraysh in Makkah that while he was flying, he saw a caravan that was coming towards Makkah that had lost their camel and were looking for it. Shortly after, the caravan came to Makkah and they confirmed that the previous night they had lost their camel and were looking for it!

The leader of the caravan was none other than Abu Sufyān, one of the leaders of Makkah and he confirmed all the details that Rasulullāh (s) had provided. After this the people had no doubt that Rasulullāh (s) had indeed gone to the heavens. The news about the miraculous journey spread like wildfire around Makkah. The leaders of the Quraysh were very upset, especially because a lot of people became Muslims when they were convinced about it.

Some Muslims today believe that the journey of Rasulullāh (s) was not an actual physical journey but it was only a dream in which his soul and spirit went on a journey. But the Shi'ah Muslims do not believe this. It is wājib to believe that the journey of Rasulullāh (s) was physical.

There are many reasons why we know the journey of Rasulullāh (s) was physical. Firstly the Qur'ān says that Allāh took "His servant" and not "His servant's soul" (in Surah al-Isra, 17:1). Secondly, the non-Shi'ah Muslims who say that Rasulullāh (s) only went in his dream also say that it is because Aisha, the wife of Rasulullāh (s) said that she saw Rasulullāh (s) was sleeping in his bed the whole time. But we know this report is not true because when Rasulullāh (s) went for Mi'rāj, he was in Makkah and Aisha was not married to him until after hijrah when Rasulullāh (s) had moved to Madina.

Another person who said that Mi'rāj was a dream was Mu'āwiya the son of Abu Sufyān and the father of Yazid. But Mu'āwiya did not become a Muslim until 9 years after hijrah when the Muslims took over Makkah and Mu'āwiya with his father Abu Sufyān were forced to surrender and they recited the Kalima only to save their lives. So Mu'āwiya only made up the story that Mi'rāj was a dream out of his hatred and jealousy for Rasulullāh (s).

By taking Rasulullāh (s) first to the Ka'bah and then Bayt al-Muqaddas in Jerusalem and then meeting all the prophets in the heavens including Nabi Adam ('a), Nabi Nuh ('a), Nabi Ibrahim ('a), Nabi Musa ('a) and Nabi Isa ('a), Allāh wanted to show that the message of Rasulullāh (s) and Islām was a continuation of the message of all previous prophets; and that to Allāh, there is only one religion from the time of Adam. This religion is the religion of Islām, which means to surrender to Allāh, to believe there is no other god but Allāh and to worship no one and nothing besides Allāh.

The event of Mi'rāj proved that Islām was not only for Arabs and not confined to Makkah and Madina only but is for the whole world and even the universe. It also revealed how close and special Rasulullāh (s) is to Allāh as the best of His creation and the master of all prophets, messengers and guides over Allāh's creation.

Lesson 4

The Pledges of 'Aqaba & Híjra to Madína

The Pledges of Aqaba

Even before Islām, during the month of Dhul Hijjah, tribes from all over Arabia came to Makkah to perform their pilgrimage. Many of them came to worship idols around the Ka'bah and to bring goods to buy and sell for business. Although their worship was not like the Hajj in Islām, the Arabs still knew that the Ka'bah was an important structure. And therefore during the month of Dhul Hijjah, in the first 12 years of his preaching Islām in Makkah, Rasulullāh (s) used to take advantage of this time of the year by meeting the visitors who came from faraway lands and he would introduce the teachings of Islām to them.

In those days, Madina was called *Yathrib* and the people of Yathrib also came to Makkah for pilgrimage and trade. The two main tribes in Yathrib were the tribes of Aws and Khazraj. They were enemies of each other and were always fighting and killing each other.

In the eleventh year after *bi'thah* (the beginning of Rasulullāh's (s) mission), Rasulullāh (s) met six people from the tribe of Khazraj in Makkah during the Hajj season. When he spoke to them about Islām, they were very interested because they had heard from the Jews of Madina (Yathrib), that one day there would be a Prophet who would come from Arabia. The Jews knew this because it was written in their Holy Book, the Tawrāt, which had been revealed to Prophet Musa ('a). The people of Khazraj believed that this was the very same Prophet and so they became Muslims. When the six people returned to Madina they started teaching other people about Islām and soon many people in Yathrib wanted to know more about this new religion.

The next year, twelve people came from Yathrib to Makkah to meet Rasulullāh (s). The meeting took place in a valley outside Makkah called 'Aqaba. These twelve people made a special promise (pledge) to Rasulullāh (s): they accepted Islām and promised not to make anyone a partner with Allāh, not to steal and not to bury their daughters alive.

They promised not to backbite and speak badly of one another and to perform good deeds. In exchange Rasulullāh (s) promised them that if they act according to their pledge, they would go to paradise (Jannah) in the hereafter. This promise or pledge is known in Islām as “The First Pledge of ‘Aqaba”.

The twelve people returned to Madina (Yathrib), their hearts filled with faith. They wrote back to Rasulullāh (s) asking him to send someone to Madina who could teach them more about Islām. Rasulullāh (s) sent Mus'ab bin Umayr and Ibn Umm Maqtum as missionaries to teach them Islām.

The two missionaries did their work so well that there was a great change in thinking in Madina. The people of Madina eagerly waited for the next Dhul Hijjah so that they could meet Rasulullāh (s) again and promise him to help Islām.

The next year a caravan of 500 people, mostly from the tribe of Khazraj, left Madina for Makkah. It included 73 Muslims, two of whom were women. The rest of the people were those who wanted to find out more about the religion before becoming Muslims. They met Rasulullāh (s) on the 13th of Dhul Hijjah at the same place of 'Aqaba.

During the meeting, Rasulullāh (s) addressed them and recited āyāt from the Qur’ān. The words of Rasulullāh (s) made a great impression on all the listeners and they all were ready to accept Islām. Everyone swore to be loyal to Islām and pledged allegiance (*bay'ah*) at the hands of Rasulullāh (s). This event is known as “The Second Pledge of 'Aqaba”.

Rasulullāh (s) then promised the people of Yathrib (Madina) that he would soon come to Madina himself. Once the ceremony was over, the people left for their homes.

An interesting point to note is that so many people from Madina accepted Islām after being introduced to it for only 2-3 years and meeting Rasulullāh (s) only briefly. While in Makkah, Rasulullāh (s) preached to the Quraysh for 12 years but only a few people became Muslims in comparison.

What do you think are the reasons for this? Some of reasons can be as follows:

- A prophet or someone who preaches Islām is usually not appreciated in his own land and by his own people until he goes elsewhere and then returns. Nabi Ibrahim (‘a) was thrown in the fire by his people and had to leave his land. Nabi Musa (‘a) had to flee Egypt for 10 years before returning as a prophet, Nabi Yunus also had to leave his people before returning to them, and the Qur’ān mentions many prophets who were rejected by their own people, such as Nabi Nuh (‘a), Nabi Hud (‘a) and Nabi Sālih (‘a).
- The people of Madina had heard about a messenger who would come to Arabia from the neighbouring Jewish tribes. The Jews themselves rejected Rasulullāh (s) but the tribes of Aws and Khazraj who were idol-worshippers accepted him. We have to be careful so that when Imām al-Mahdi (‘atfs) returns, we should not reject him while other non-Muslims accept him. This will happen for some people as mentioned in hadith.
- The people of Aws and Khazraj were tired of the endless fights between their tribes. They had been at war with each other for over 120 years. They looked forward to the arrival of a leader who would bring peace to their region.

Most of the people living in Madina were either Jews or the idol-worshipping tribes of Aws and Khazraj who then became Muslims. The time was now ripe for Rasulullāh (s) to leave his home in Makkah and move to Madina. Life in Makkah was becoming increasingly difficult for the Muslims, who faced endless persecution at the hands of the Quraysh, especially after the passing away of Hadrat Abu Tālib (‘a) who used to protect them as a leader of Makkah.

Hijrah to Madina

When the Quraysh realised that the Muslims now had the support of the people of Madina, they were very disturbed. In order to crush the spirit of the Muslims, they increased their efforts at persecuting and harassing them.

The companions of Rasulullāh (s) complained to him about the harsh treatment they were receiving at the hands of the Quraysh leaders. Rasulullāh (s) advised all the Muslims to migrate to Madina secretly, and await his arrival there.

One by one the Muslims slipped out of Makkah, making excuses for their departure. Because they were afraid of the reaction of the Quraysh, they kept their destination secret and most of them had to leave their homes, possessions and wealth behind.

The Quraysh suddenly realised that the Muslims were all leaving Makkah. They managed to arrest a few but by that time the majority had already escaped and were on their way to Madina. In Makkah only Rasulullāh (s), his family, Imām Ali (‘a) and a few old and ill Muslims remained. Final arrangements were being made for these last few Muslims to also leave.

The Quraysh were enraged at this mass escape. They knew that the Muslims would now become a danger to them. They called a special meeting and decided there that the only way to stop the spread of Islām was to kill Rasulullāh (s). They decided that a group of men from different tribes would ambush and kill Rasulullāh (s) all at once so that no one person or tribe could be blamed.

On the night that the Quraysh planned to kill Rasulullāh (s), Allāh sent the angel Jibrāil (‘a) with a command to Rasulullāh (s) to immediately leave Makkah for Madina. Rasulullāh (s) asked Imām Ali (‘a) to sleep in his place so that the Quraysh would not realize that he had left.

When Rasulullāh (s) began his journey out of Makkah, he met Abu Bakr on the way, who joined him. Rasulullāh (s) knew that the Quraysh would waste no time in pursuing him once they learnt of his departure, so later in the day, he took refuge in the Cave of Thawr, which was on the way to Madina.

The sacrifice of Imām Ali (‘a), when he took the place of Rasulullāh (s) on the night of migration, pleased Allāh so much that Allāh revealed the following āyah:

﴿وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَشْرِي نَفْسَهُ ابْتِغَاءَ مَرْضَاةِ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ رَءُوفٌ بِالْعِبَادِ﴾

And among men there is one who sells his soul to seek the pleasure of Allāh; and truly Allāh is affectionate to His (such) servants.

- Surah al-Baqarah, 2:207

When the Quraysh found out that Rasulullāh (s) had left Makkah, they sent men to block all routes leading to Madina. They also hired some expert guides to trace the footprints of Rasulullāh (s) in the desert. The Quraysh declared that whoever finds the hiding-place of Rasulullāh (s) would be rewarded with 100 camels. Soon everyone in Makkah was out trying to find Rasulullāh (s).

One of the best trackers and guides of the Quraysh traced the footprints of Rasulullāh (s) to the Cave of Thawr. However, when the Quraysh came near the entrance of the cave, they saw that its entrance was blocked by a spider's web and some wild pigeons had laid eggs in a nest at the entrance.

The men thought it was impossible for anyone to enter the cave without breaking the spider's web and the eggs. So they returned to Makkah to look elsewhere. Allāh had miraculously caused the spider to make the web and the pigeons to lay the eggs in order to protect His beloved Messenger.

Rasulullāh (s) remained in the cave for three days and nights. On one of these nights Imām Ali ('a) came to visit him. Rasulullāh (s) told him to arrange for camels for them.

On the fourth day Imām Ali ('a) sent three camels to the cave along with a reliable guide. Rasulullāh (s) and Abu Bakr then left with the guide for Madina, travelling along the coastal route so as to avoid the Quraysh riders.

It is from this night that Muslims mark the beginning of the Islāmic Era or the Hijri calendar. This is because the migration marked the beginning of a Muslim government in Madina and the setting up of the first Muslim state.

The journey to Madina was a distance of some 400 kilometres and they travelled mostly at night and rested during the day. On the 12th of Rabi ul-Awwal Rasulullāh (s) arrived at Quba, just outside Madina.

The village of Quba was the centre of the tribe of Banu Awf. A large number of Muslims were waiting to escort him into Madina, which was not very far away.

Rasulullāh (s) stayed there for a few days while he waited for the arrival of Imām Ali (‘a). During this time, he laid the foundation of a masjid for the Banu Awf. This was the first masjid of Islām. Masjid Quba still exists in Madina today.



Masjid Quba – the First Masjid

Meanwhile in Makkah, Imām Ali (‘a) returned all the belongings of people that were with Rasulullāh (s) and after three days, he gathered the women of the household of Rasulullāh (s) and any Muslims who still remained in Makkah and prepared to leave. The group left for Madina at night. Imām Ali (‘a) managed to guide his group to Quba three days after the arrival of Rasulullāh (s).

The spies of the Quraysh came to know about the migration of this last group of Muslims and pursued them. They caught up with Imām Ali (‘a) and threatened them, trying to force them to return to Makkah. As the women got nervous, there was no alternative and Imām Ali (‘a) pulled out his sword in defence and warned the Quraysh that anyone who comes closer to the Muslims would die. Seeing the determination of Imām Ali (‘a) the Quraysh changed their attitude and let them go.

When Imām Ali (‘a) reached Quba with his group his feet were swollen and bleeding. This sight brought tears to the eyes of Rasulullāh (s). One day after the arrival of Imām Ali (‘a), Rasulullāh (s) proceeded to Madina.

Both the Muhājirun (the Muslims who had migrated from Makkah) and the Ansār (the Muslims of Madina) lined the streets of Madina eagerly awaiting the appearance of Rasullāh (s).

When his camel came down at a place called ‘the Valley of Wadā’ (*Thaniyat al-Wadā*) and set its foot on the land of Madina, he came into view of the waiting people. They greeted him warmly and began singing in joy:

طَلَعَ الْبَدْرُ عَلَيْنَا

Tala' al-badru 'alaynā

The full moon has risen over us.

مِنْ ثَنِيَّاتِ الْوَدَاعِ

Min thaniyātil-wadā'

From the valley of al-Wadā'.

وَجَبَ الشُّكْرُ عَلَيْنَا

Wajab ash-shukru 'alaynā

It is now obligatory (wājib) on us to show gratefulness.

مَا دَعَى لِلَّهِ دَاعٍ

Mā da'ā lillāhi dā'

For what the Caller has called us to for Allāh.

أَيُّهَا الْمَبْعُوثُ فِينَا

Ayyuhal mab'ūthu fīnā

O' you who were sent amongst us!

جِئْتَ بِالْأَمْرِ الْمَطَاعِ

Ji'ta bil-amri 'l-mutā'

You have come with a matter to be obeyed.

جِئْتَ شَرَّفْتَ الْمَدِينَةَ

Ji'ta sharraft al-madīnah

You have brought honour to the city.

مَرْحَبًا يَا خَيْرَ دَاعٍ

Marhaban yā khayra dā'

Welcome! O best of callers (to Allāh's way).

This traditional *nasheed* (Islāmic poem) that the Ansār sung to Rasulullāh (s) as he arrived and entered Madina after completing the Hijrah in 622 CE is currently over 1400 years old and one of the oldest nasheeds in Islāmic culture. In many masājid, children sing this on the 17th of Rabi ul Awwal, the birthday of Rasulullāh (s).

Class Activity: Listen to the nasheed *Tala' al-Badru 'Alayna* on the Teacher's DVD.

As Rasulullāh (s) entered the city, everyone wanted him to go and stay with them until a house was built for him. Rasulullāh (s) did not want to disappoint anyone so he handled this delicate matter by saying, "Let my camel walk. I shall stay wherever it kneels down."

Everybody followed the camel of Rasulullāh (s) eagerly to see where the camel would finally stop. The camel stopped and bent its knees in a large piece of land that belonged to two orphan boys, Sahl and Suhayl. The land was used for drying dates and agriculture. The nearest house was that of Abu Ayyub al-Ansāri. Abu Ayyub was delighted to have the honour of being the host of Rasulullāh (s), who stayed with him for about seven months, until his house next to the masjid was ready.

Rasulullāh (s) wished to build a masjid over the plot where his camel had stopped. The orphans who owned the property wanted to give the land as a gift to him but he refused the offer and paid the price of the plot, which was 10 dinars in gold.

After the purchase, the ground was cleared of the trees and a masjid was built over it with clay and mud. The roof was made with palm wood and covered with palm branches and leaves. To one side, apartments were built for Rasulullāh (s) and his family and on the other side rooms

were provided for about 70 of the poorer people of Madina who had no house of their own.

The construction work was shared equally between the Muhājirun and Ansār. Rasulullāh (s) also shared in the work although Ammār bin Yāsir, an early convert and faithful companion, seldom allowed him to do anything and used to do Rasulullāh [s]'s share himself.

Ammār was the first person to begin work on the foundation of the masjid. One day Rasulullāh (s) affectionately dusted his body clear of mud and told him, "O Ammār you will be killed by a group of oppressors while you will be inviting them to truth." This prophecy was well known, and 38 years later, Ammār was killed fighting on the side of Imām Ali ('a) against Mu'āwiya in the Battle of Siffin. At that time many of Mu'āwiya's men realised that they were on the wrong side.

Although the masjid was very simple in structure, it was the best in the whole history of Islām. It became the centre of Muslim activity in Madina. The daily prayers and Friday prayers were held there. From this masjid Rasulullāh (s) taught people about the religion of Allāh and thousands became Muslims.

The city of Yathrib was renamed to *Madinat an-Nabi*, which means "The City of the Prophet" and in short it is called *Madina*. And the Masjid was called *Masjid al-Nabawi* (The Prophet's Mosque) and it still stands in Madina today, although it is now much larger. Masjid an-Nabawi is the 2nd holiest masjid in Islām after Masjid al-Harām in Makkah where the Ka'bah stands. Rasulullāh (s) is also buried in a corner of Masjid an-Nabawi (under the green dome) and when people go to Makkah for Hajj they also go to Madina to visit and greet Rasulullāh (s) at his grave, along with the other Imāms from the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) buried in Jannat al-Baqi nearby.

When we say, for example, this year is 1431 AH we mean this year is 1431 after hijrah or since the year that Rasulullāh (s) migrated to Madina. But the Islāmic calendar starts with Muharram even though Rasulullāh (s) had migrated in Rabi ul-Awwal because the months in the Arabic calendar were always from Muharram to Dhul Hijjah from before.

The hijrah to Madina marked a new, 2nd phase in the mission of Rasulullāh (s) and from Book 8 inshā Allāh, we will begin studying the events in the life (*sirah*) of Rasulullāh (s) in Madina.



Masjid an-Nabawi - Madina

Class Activity: Masājid in Islām

The Teacher's DVD has images of the most beautiful masājid all over the world. When time permits, the teacher can show these to the students and the students can then be asked to design their own masjid and include the main components of a masjid's architecture such as the mihrāb, minarets and dome(s).

Another activity can be to show the students the images of the historical masājid such as Masjid al-Harām, Masjid an-Nabawi, Masjid Quba, Masjid al-Qiblatayn and Masjid Ghamāmah and then ask the students to research the history and significance of any of these masājid.

Lesson 5

Imām Hasan az-Zakí al-‘Askarí (‘a)

His Birth

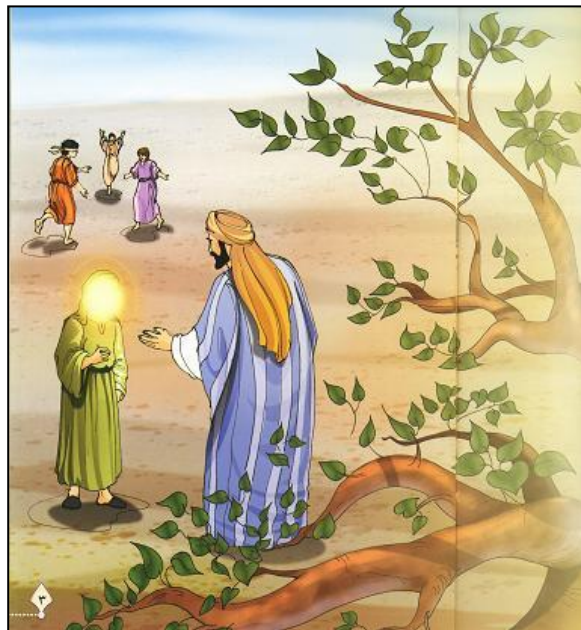
Imām Hasan bin Ali (‘a), our eleventh Imām, was born on 8th Rabi ath-Thāni 232 AH in Madina. His father is the tenth Imām, Imām Ali al-Hādi (‘a) and his mother was a very knowledgeable and righteous woman known for her pure and noble character and her name is *Sawsan* or (according to some books) her name is *Hadith*.

Imām Hasan bin Ali (‘a) was known as Abu Muhammad and the titles he was given by others included az-Zaki, al-Hādi, an-Naqi and al-Khālis. Most of these titles mean ‘the pure one’, which shows how people regarded him. He was also well known as ‘al-Askari’ and ‘Ibn ar-Rida’ (the son of ar-Rida).

In fact, because the Caliph Ma’mun had declared the eighth Imām, Imām Ali ar-Rida (‘a) as his successor and he had minted coins in his name, Imām ar-Rida (‘a) was very popular in the Muslim world and all the Imāms after him – Imām al-Jawād (‘a), Imām al-Hādi (‘a) and Imām al-Askari (‘a) – were all known as ‘Son of ar-Rida’ (Ibn ar-Rida).

Imām Hasan al-Askari (‘a) led an ascetic life and even from the time of his childhood, he taught people not to waste time. One day, when he was a young boy and he was walking past a group of other boys who were playing, a man asked him, ‘do you want to play with the other boys your age?’

And Imām Hasan al-Askari (‘a) replied the man, ‘we were not created to play.’ Then the Imām recited the following āyah of Qur’ān:



﴿وَمَا خَلَقْنَا السَّمَاءَ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا لَاعِبِينَ﴾

We did not create the sky and the earth and whatever is between them for play.

- Surah al-Anbiya, 21:16

Imām Hasan az-Zaki al-Askari (‘a) then said, ‘Know that this world is set to depart. It will not remain for anyone and no one will remain in it.’

His Wisdom

The first phase of the life of Imām Hasan al-Askari (‘a) was the days he spent with his father Imām Ali al-Hādi (‘a) that lasted almost 22 years.

When Imām Hasan al-Askari (‘a) was only 2 years old, the Caliph Mutawakkil had forced Imām Ali al-Hādi (‘a) to move to Samarra where he could keep a close watch on him and constantly have spies watching him, while denying the Shi’ah and the scholars (‘*ulama*’) access to the Imām.

Imām Hasan al-Askari (‘a) had moved to Samarra with his father. Despite all the restrictions, he was soon known for his brilliance in character and in knowledge.

The vizier of Mutawakkil, al-Fath bin Khāqān, used to say, ‘I never saw or knew in Samarra from all the Alawis (descendants of Imām Ali bin Abi Tālib (‘a)) anyone like Hasan bin Ali



bin Muhammad bin ar-Rida (‘a). And I never heard of anyone like him in his calmness, personality, chastity, generosity and nobility.

Another person said concerning the Imām, ‘if the Banu Abbās were to lose the khilāfah, no one from the Banu Hāshim would be more deserving besides him (Imām Hasan al-Askari (‘a)) because of his

excellence and chastity and how much in control he is of himself, and his asceticism and worship and the beauty of his character.'

It is also reported that because of the knowledge of Imām Hasan al-Askari ('a) and the intellectual arguments he raised, the famous Muslim philosopher, mathematician and scientist Ya'qub al-Kindi burnt one of his own books when he realized he was wrong.

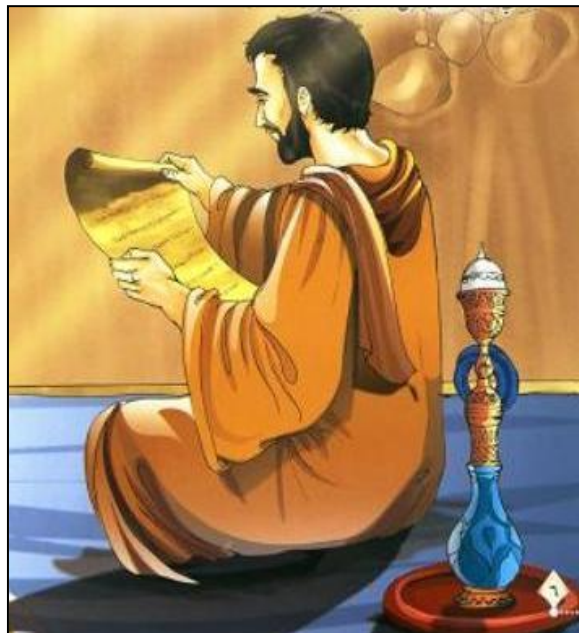
Al-Kindi was from Kufa but lived in Baghdad. The Banu Abbās and the local people of his time regarded him as the greatest philosopher ever. Al-Kindi had begun writing a book to oppose the Qur'ān and prove 'mistakes' in it. One day, one of his students came to Samarra and met Imām Hasan al-Askari ('a).

Imām al-Askari ('a) said to the student, 'is there no one amongst you who is able to show your teacher the error of ways and his misjudgements about the Qur'ān?'

'I cannot debate with him,' said the student.

So the Imām gave him some questions to take back and ask his teacher. He also told him to tell his teacher, 'is it not possible that when you read a book, what you have understood is not necessarily what the author had intended to say?'

When the student brought all these questions to his teacher, al-Kindi began thinking about them and was amazed. He asked his student, 'where do you get these questions from?'



At first the student said, 'I thought of them myself.' But al-Kindi refused to accept that and said to him, 'you are incapable of thinking of such questions.'

And when the student confessed they were from Imām Abu Muhammad Hasan bin Ali al-Askari (‘a), then al-Kindi said, ‘Now you have spoken the truth... only someone from that house could have come up with this.’

And al-Kindi then burnt the book he was writing against the Qur’ān because he saw he had no real arguments to prove any more.

In Prison

Imām Hasan al-Askari (‘a) was imprisoned time and again and he was kept under the watch of a harsh guard called Sālih bin Wasf. Mutawakkil was still not happy and asked Sālih bin Wasf why he was not making life more difficult for the Imām. Sālih told the Caliph that he had appointed the two worst human beings he could find and put them in charge of torturing the Imām but they have changed and become the best of people and are now worshipping Allāh and praying a great deal. Mutawakkil was surprised to hear this and called the two guards and asked them why they had changed. They said about Imām Hasan al-Askari (‘a), ‘what can we say about a man who fasts all day and prays all night. He never talks or does anything but worship Allāh!’



During the time of the Caliph Muhtadi, an Alawi named Abu Hāshim al-Ja’fari complained to Imām Hasan al-Askari in prison that the Caliph Muhtadi is really torturing the Shi’ah and his aim is to eliminate the Shi’ah completely and wipe them all out.

Imām Hasan al-Askari (‘a) said, ‘that will shorten his life... count from today five days and on the sixth day he will be killed... after being humiliated and disgraced.’

And as the Imām had predicted, five days passed and on the sixth day the Turks overthrew the Caliph Muhtadi. He escaped from their hands and began running in the streets screaming, ‘I am the Caliph, O people! Save your Caliph and protect him!’ but not one person came out of their house to help him. He was captured again and killed in a terrible manner.

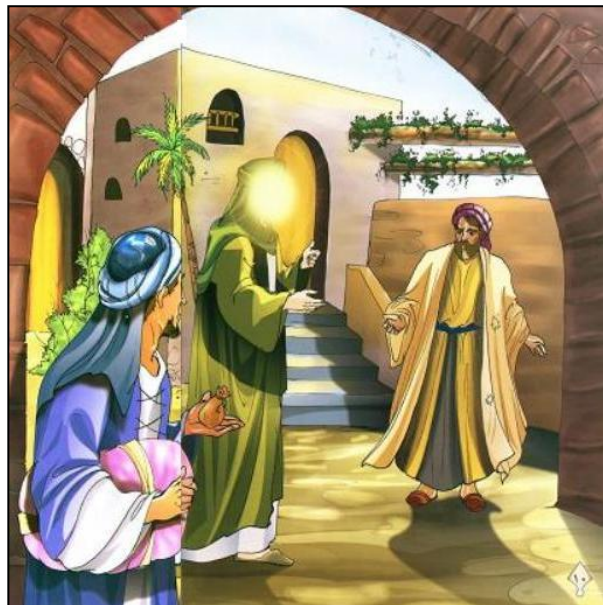
The Turks then appointed another Caliph named al-Mu’tamid and during his time, there was some ease and Imām Hasan al-Askari (‘a) was freed from prison and allowed to return home.

His Hidden Knowledge & Generosity

A man called Ismāil bin Muhammad said that one day he sat down on the road waiting for Imām Hasan al-Askari (‘a) to pass by so that he could ask him for some money. Even though, Ismāil bin Muhammad had buried some 200 dinars and kept that for future.

When the Imām passed by, Ismāil bin Muhammad began complaining of his condition and he said to the Imām, ‘I swear by Allāh, I don’t have anything, not even one dirham and nothing to eat for lunch or dinner.’

Imām Hasan al-Askari (‘a) told him, ‘you are swearing falsely in the name of Allāh, when you have buried away 200 dinars?! Yet I am not saying this to you because I don’t want to give you anything.’



And the Imām then told a servant to give the man whatever he had with him and it was 100 dinars! This was the rule of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a). They

would never turn anyone back empty-handed and no one could say they came to their door and were refused, whether they were deserving or not.

Then Imām Hasan al-Askari (‘a) came close to Ismāil bin Muhammad, after giving him the money, and said to him: ‘you will never get to enjoy the 200 dinars that you have buried and you will lose it when you need it most.’

Ismāil bin Muhammad said that what the Imām told him is exactly what happened. There came a time when he was really poor and in need but when he went to remove the money he had secretly buried, he found that it was gone. One of his sons had seen him burying it and he stole the money and ran away.

Political Turmoil

After the death of Mutawakkil the Turks in the government became very influential and powerful. They controlled the entire army and they would remove and appoint the Caliphs as they pleased. The Caliphs were only puppets who lived in fear of the Turkish viziers and commanders. The Caliph Mu’tazz, for example, who was the son of Mutawakkil and ruled after his brother Muntasir, was attacked



by a group of Turks. They tied his leg to the door of his room and whipped him and then sent him to a prison guard to be tortured. Then they kept him without food and water for 3 days and then they locked him up in a cellar and left him there until he died.

In Samarra therefore, there was always tension between those in power and the caliphs were constantly being overthrown and killed. And it was during this period that Imām al-Mahdi (‘a) was born on 15th Sha’ban 256

AH. His birth was kept a secret and only a few very close companions of Imām Hasan al-Askari (‘a) were informed.

Imām Hasan al-Askari (‘a) tried to prepare the Shi’ah for the final Imām and the ghaybah when people would not know of his whereabouts.

For example, Imām Hasan al-Askari (‘a) wrote many letters to different people and in a letter to Ali bin al-Husayn bin Babwayh al-Qummi, he wrote:

‘..be patient and wait for the time when the Imām will return because Rasulullāh (s) said, “*the best action is to wait for relief from suffering (intidhār al-faraj)*”... our Shi’ah will continue suffering until the *dhuhur* (appearance) of my son whose coming was told by Rasulullāh (s) that he will fill the earth with justice and equity after it is filled with injustice and tyranny. Therefore be patient, the earth will finally belong to the righteous servants of Allāh... and salām on you and on all our Shi’ah and the mercy and blessings of Allāh, and blessings of Muhammad (s) and his family (‘a).’



The Miracle of Praying for Rain

In one incident when Imām Hasan al-Askari (‘a) was imprisoned, there was a drought in Samarra. People suffered immensely as all the water dried up and their crops died. The Muslims organized many prayers for rain but no rain came.

Then the Christians organized prayers and whenever their priest would raise his hand and pray, it would rain. Many Muslims began to doubt Islām and the Caliph did not know what to do. Finally he came to the prison and asked Imām Hasan al-Askari (‘a) for help and said to him,

‘Save the nation (*ummah*) of your grandfather, because people are in doubt of Islām!’

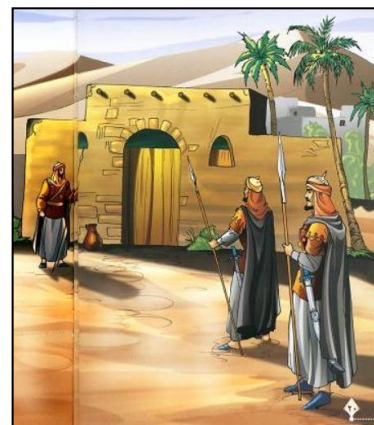
Imām Hasan al-Askari (‘a) was taken to see the Christian priest as he prayed and he noticed the priest was raising one hand with a closed fist. He asked the Caliph’s men to take away what was in the priest’s fist and they found a small bone in it. The Imām then told the priest to pray again without it and even though the clouds had started to gather earlier, they all cleared away and the sun shone brightly and there was no rain.

Imām Hasan al-Askari (‘a) then revealed the priest’s secret. The tiny piece of bone was taken from the grave of a nabi (prophet) and whenever a nabi’s hands (or a part of his body!) are raised to the heavens, it brings rain as a mercy from Allāh. And now Imām Hasan al-Askari (‘a) raised his hands in prayer. Even though he was not a nabi, he of course was the flesh and blood of Rasulullāh (s) and the direct descendant of Nabi Ibrahim (‘a) through all the prophets. He was the inheritor of all the prophets and messengers and the Imām of the Time. And as he prayed, it began raining heavily and the people rejoiced. The Caliph now could not imprison the Imām right away so he allowed him to return home.

The Martyrdom of Imām Hasan al-Askari (‘a)

Reports began coming to the Caliph that a child may have been born to Imām Hasan al-Askari (‘a) and that he was the *Mahdi* and the final Imām.

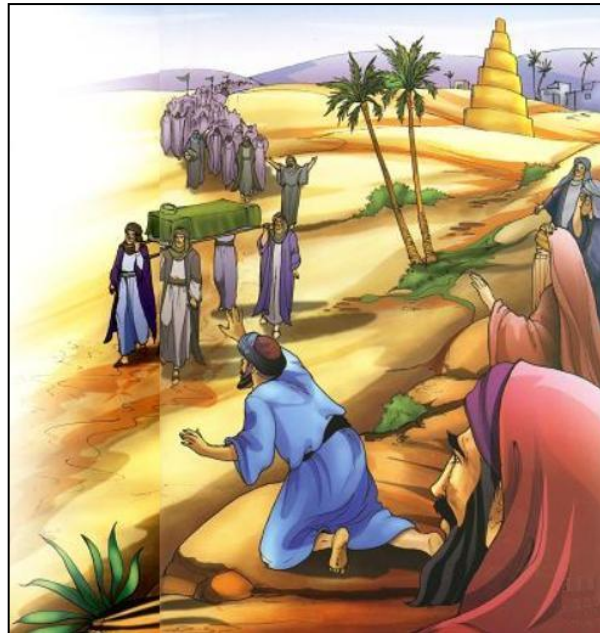
The Caliph increased his spying on the Imām’s house and finally decided to poison Imām al-Askari (‘a). When Imām Ali al-Hādī (‘a) was martyred in 254 AH, Imām Hasan al-Askari (‘a) was only 22 years old. The following year Imām al-Mahdi (‘a) was born. And when Imām Hasan al-Askari (‘a) was poisoned, it was 8th Rabi al-Awwal 260 AH. This means Imām Hasan al-Askari (‘a) was 28 years old and his Imāmah lasted for 6 years only. Imām al-Mahdi (‘a) was just 5 years old at the time.



The last time that Imām Hasan al-Askari (‘a) was freed from prison, he had suffered so much that his hair had turned white even though he was in his 20s. Imām al-Mahdi (‘a) oversaw his father’s funeral. When Imam Hasan al-Askari (‘a)’s brother Ja’far bin Ali tried to lead the funeral prayers (salāt al-mayyit), a young boy came into the room and told his uncle to move away. This was Imām al-Mahdi (‘a) who led the funeral prayers for his father.

The market places in Samarra were closed on that day for mourning and Imām Hasan al-Askari (‘a) was buried next to his father Imām Ali al-Hādi (‘a).

Muslims visit Samarra even today to pay their respects to the Imām, to seek Allāh’s blessings through the Imāms, to recite duas to Allāh at the holy place and as a sign of loyalty to Rasulullāh (s) and his household (Ahl al-Bayt (‘a)).

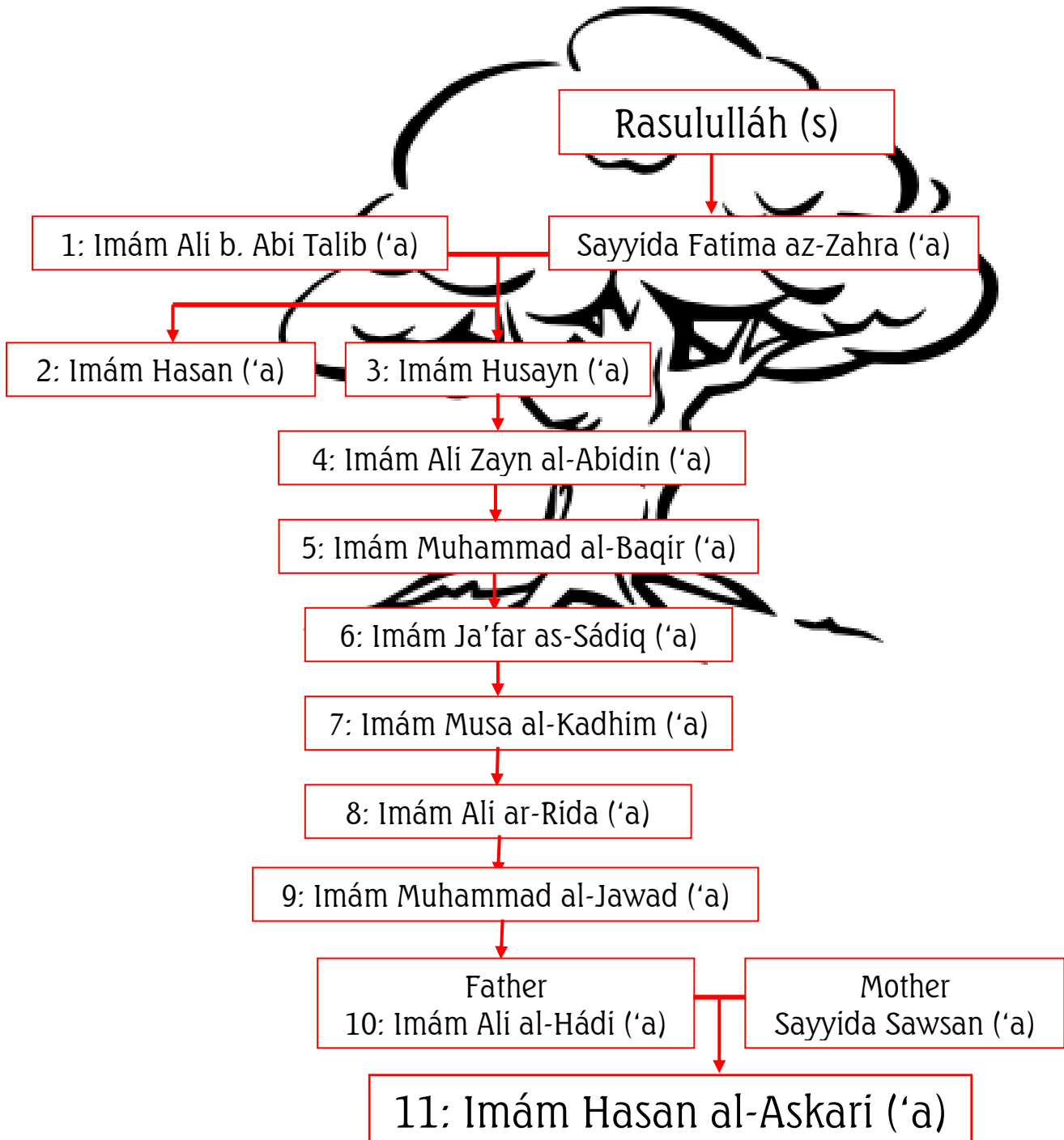


Some of the ahādith of Imām Hasan al-Askari (‘a) are:

- All of filth and sin are placed in one house and its key is lying.
- It is bad manners to show happiness in the presence of someone who is grieving.
- When a child shows disrespect and disobedience to his father it is a sign that (if ignored) it will lead to the child cutting relations with the father when he grows up.
- There is nothing better than two qualities: faith in Allāh and helping your fellow (Muslim) brothers and sisters.
- How bad it is for a faithful (*mu’min*) to have a desire that will humiliate him.

- Good looks is outer beauty and intelligence is inner beauty.
- One who sows evil will reap regret.
- The heart of a fool is in his mouth and the mouth of a wise person is in his heart.
- Humbleness is to say salām to everyone you meet and to sit anywhere in a gathering without expecting special treatment.

Imām Hasan b. Ali az-Zaki al-Askari ('a)'s Family Tree



Wilādah : Madina, 8th Rabi ath-Thāni, 232 AH
Shahādah: Samarra, 8th Rabi al-Awwal 260 AH

Lesson 6

Imām al-Hujjah b. al-Hasan al-Mahdí ('atfs)

His Birth

On Friday 15th Sha'bān 255 AH, the twelfth and last Imām of Islām from the Ahl al-Bayt of Rasulullāh (s) was born. His is our living Imām whom Allāh has blessed with a very long life without aging until such time as when Allāh wishes for him to establish peace and Islām in the whole world.

His name is Muhammad – the same as the name of Rasulullāh (s) – but he is never referred to by his own name. Instead he is referred to with titles like 'al-Mahdí' (the one guided by Allāh), al-Qāim (the one who will rise to establish justice), al-Hujjah (the proof of Allāh), and so on. And after his name, instead of saying 'alayhis salām' (peace be on him) we say "*ajjalalāhu ta'āla farajahu sharif*" or even just "*ajjalalāhu farajahu*", which means 'may Allāh hasten his return').

On the night before he was born, Imām Hasan al-Askari ('a) called his aunt, Sayyida Hakima the daughter of Imām Muhammad al-Jawād ('a) to come and spend the night at his home. This was a Thursday night. And so she came over to his home for dinner and to spend the night there.

Imām Hasan al-Askari ('a) said to his aunt, 'Tonight is the eve of the 15th of Sha'bān. Allāh will reveal in this night His proof (*hujjah*) over the earth and the child born tonight is very special to Allāh. Through him Allāh will give life to the earth again after it is dead.'

Sayyida Hakima asked her nephew Imām Hasan al-Askari ('a), 'who is the mother?'

'Narjis,' replied Imām al-Askari.

'Nargis?' asked Sayyida Hakima with amazement. 'But she shows no sign of being pregnant?'

'It is as I tell you,' replied Imām Hasan al-Askari ('a). Allāh had hidden the pregnancy as well because the spies of the Caliph even had maids in the house spying to see if the wife of Imām al-Askari ('a) was pregnant.

Sayyida Hakima sat besides Sayyida Nargis the whole night waiting for the miracle to happen. Just before the start of dawn when the sky was still filled with stars, Sayyida Nargis showed signs of childbirth and Sayyida Hakima narrates that Imām al-Mahdi ('atfs), the child predicted by Rasulullāh (s) was born.



Imām Hasan ('a) took his son, who was born pure and purified and said to him, 'speak my son, by the power of Allāh. Speak O proof (*hujjah*) of Allāh! O successor of prophets and the last of the Imāms! Speak O Khalifa of the Godconscious (*mutaqin*)!'

And a miracle occurred. The child began speaking and recited:

Bismillāhir Rahmānir Rahim

﴿وَتُرِيدُ أَنْ نَمُنَّ عَلَى الَّذِينَ اسْتُضِعُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَنَجْعَلَهُمْ أَئِمَّةً وَنَجْعَلَهُمُ الْوَارِثِينَ وَتُكِنُّ لَهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَتُرِي فِرْعَوْنَ وَهَامَانَ وَجُنُودَهُمَا مِنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا يَحْذَرُونَ﴾

And We desired to show favour to those who were considered weak in the land, and to make them Imāms, and to make them the inheritors, and to establish them in the land, and to show Fir'aun and Hāmān and their armies from them that of which they were afraid.

- Surah al-Qasas, 28:5-6

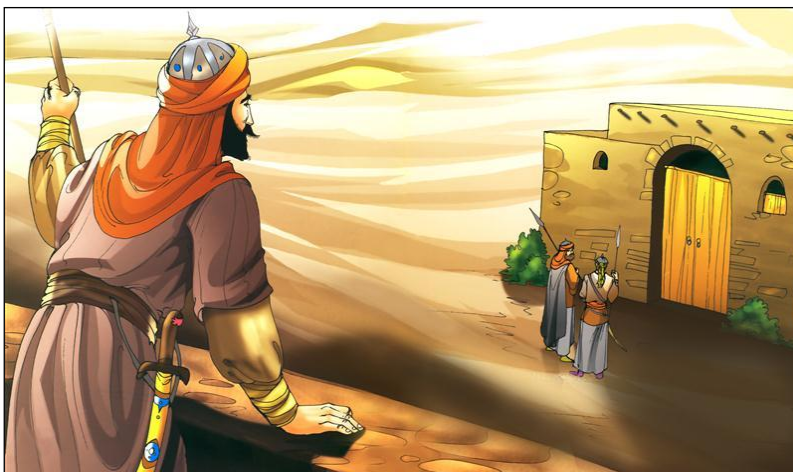
As Imām al-Mahdi ('atfs) recited these āyāt, tears fell from the eyes of Imām Hasan al-Askari ('a) out of awe for the words of Allāh and His promise.

The Hiding and the Showing of the Birth

On one hand Imām Hasan al-Askari ('a) had to hide his son because of the close watch of the Caliph and his men, who were already on the lookout for any child who may succeed him.

On the other hand, the Imām had to make sure that some prominent Shi'ah leaders meet the child and see him with their own eyes so that there is no doubt in the existence of Imām al-Mahdi ('atfs) even after the martyrdom of Imām al-Askari ('a).

And so Imām al-Mahdi ('atfs) was kept hidden from public eyes most of the time but on special occasions Imām Hasan al-Askari ('a) would introduce his son to a trusted person and say to him, 'I have a son now but this must remain a secret with you and you must not reveal it to people for now.'



A third task for Imām Hasan al-Askari ('a) was to train the Shi'ah to communicate with Imām al-Hujjah al-Mahdi ('atfs) without seeing him directly and in person. In order to do this, many at times when the Shi'ah would come to Imām Hasan al-Askari ('a) with questions, he would speak to them from behind a curtain or he would pass them answers in writing through a messenger.

On one occasion Imām Hasan al-Askari ('a) showed his young son to the very close Shi'ah and said to them, 'this is your Imām after me, and my successor over you. Obey him and do not become divided after me

otherwise you will be lost. You will never see him again after this day so if you have any questions, then direct it to Sa'id bin Uthmān and accept what he tells you for he will be the representative of your Imām to you.'

And so after the martyrdom of Imām Hasan al-Askari ('a) in 260 AH, the Imāmah and the Ghaybat as-Sughra of Imām al-Mahdi ('atfs) began. And Sa'id bin Uthmān, a close and trusted companion of Imām Hasan al-Askari ('a) became the 1st safir (ambassador) of Imām al-Hujjah ('atfs). Sa'id b. Uthmān passed away in 267 AH and by the orders of the Imām, the next safir was Sa'id's son Muhammad bin Sa'id. After him, the 3rd safir was Husayn bin Rawh and after him, the 4th and last safir was Ali bin Muhammad as-Summāri. He remained as the safir for several years until 329 AH when he passed away. In this way the Ghaybat as-Sughra lasted 69 years.

Al-Ghaybat as-Sughra

Imām al-Mahdi ('atfs) was to have two ghaybas. The first one was a short one that last 69 years and is referred to as al-Ghaybat as-Sughra (The Minor Occultation). During this time Imām al-Mahdi ('atfs) communicated with the Shi'ah through his ambassadors.



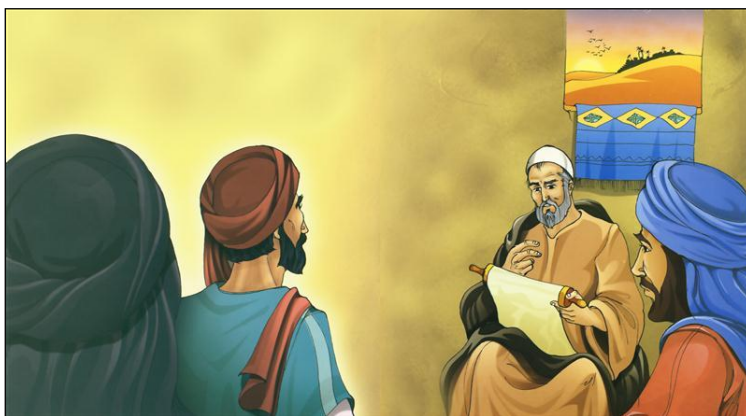
After 69 years had passed, then the Ghaybat al-Kubra (The Major Occultation) began. From then onwards there was no ambassador (safir) and the general scholars ('ulama) would guide the people. But when they were in trouble or needed an answer, the Imām would help them indirectly or even directly without them recognizing him. The Ghaybat al-Kubra continues to this day. All Muslims believe that before the world

ends, Allāh will send Imām al-Mahdi ('atfs) to fill the earth with peace and justice. All Muslims also believe that the Mahdi ('atfs) is a descendant of Rasulullāh (s) and his name is Muhammad - the same name as Rasulullāh (s). But the Sunni Muslims believe the Mahdi ('atfs) will be born in the future whereas we, the Shi'ah believe the earth can never be without someone who is the proof (hujjah) of Allāh. This proof (hujjah) is the protector of the Qur'ān and of Islām even if his work is not seen directly.

Announcing the End of Ghaybat as-Sughra

6 days before the passing away of the last safir, Imām al-Mahdi ('atfs) sent out a message to him to let all the Shi'ah know that there will be no direct representative or contact after him and that the Ghaybat al-Kubra had begun. The message said:

'Bismillāhir Rahmānir Rahim. O Ali bin Muhammad as-Summāri. May Allāh reward your brothers in faith over your loss; for you will die between now and the next six days. Therefore set your affairs and do not appoint anyone in your place after you. For the complete ghayba has now occurred. There will be no appearance (dhuhur) now except by the permission of Allāh, the most High. And that will occur after a long time when people's hearts have become hard and the earth is filled with injustice. There will come people to my Shi'ah who will claim to have seen me. Let it be known: anyone who claims to see me before the coming of Sufyāni and 'the Shout', will be a liar. And there is no power except with Allāh, the Highest and the Mighty.'



The 'Sufyāni' that the message of Imām al-Mahdi ('atfs) mentions is an evil man from the descendants of Abu Sufyān (i.e. an Umayyad) who will rise just before Imām al-Mahdi ('atfs) to create mischief on the earth and he will try and fight Imām al-Mahdi ('atfs). And 'the Shout' is a loud

cry that will be heard in the whole world just before the coming of Imām al-Mahdi (‘atfs). Everyone will understand it in his or her own language and it will announce that the Mahdi (‘atfs) has now returned.

The Reappearance (*Dhuhur*) of Imām al-Mahdi (‘atfs)

When Imām al-Mahdi (‘atfs) returns, he will first come to Makkah. He will pray 2 rak’ahs near the Ka’bah and Maqām Ibrāhim (‘a) and then he will address the people. In his speech he will address the whole world and the people of all religions based on the teachings of all the prophets whose heir he is. Then he will remind people of the hadith of Thaḳalayn from Rasūlullāh (s) and the right of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) and the injustices done to them.

Thereafter Imām al-Mahdi (‘atfs) will outline his goal. It will be to establish Islām as the universal religion for all humankind and Tawhid as the central message that all prophets came to preach and what all divinely-revealed Books taught. He will invite people to the obedience of the One God – Allāh – and the obedience to Rasūlullāh (s), the message of the Qur’ān and to him, the Imām of the Time. Imām al-Mahdi (‘atfs) will call for reviving whatever the Qur’ān upholds and ending whatever the Qur’ān condemns, such as falsehood, idol worship, atheism, polytheism and the innovations and practices that are unIslāmic.

The 313

The first people to pledge allegiance (i.e. give *bay’ah*) will number 313. They will be the most pious, learned and courageous people on the earth at that time and will come from different parts of the world. Through a miracle, Allāh will bring them all together to Makkah for this greatest event in the history of humankind. This number – 313 – is the same as the number of Muslims who fought on the side of Rasūlullāh (s) in the first battle of Islām, the Battle of Badr in 2 AH.



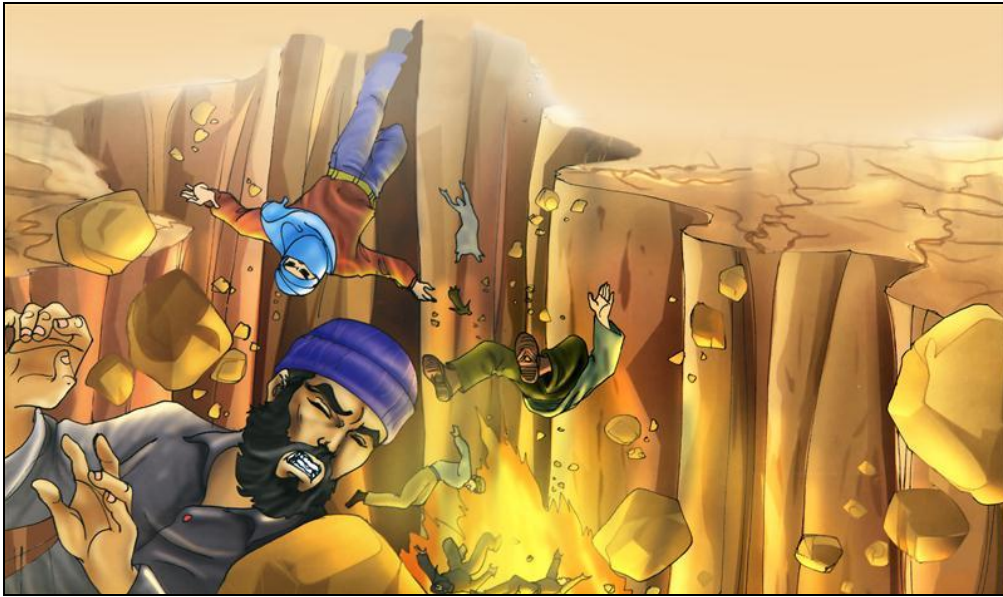
These 313 will give their pledge of allegiance to Imām al-Mahdi (‘atfs) while he stands between Rukn and Maqām. Rukn is the corner of the Ka’bah where the Hajar al-Aswad is lodged and Maqām is the Maqām of Ibrāhim. In other words, near the door of the Ka’bah.

Thereafter Imām al-Mahdi (‘atfs) will assign these 313 as his representatives in different parts of the world.

The Coming of Sufyāni

As mentioned before, Sufyāni will be an Umayyad and a descendant of the children of Abu Sufyān, like Mu’āwiya and Yazid. And according to the hadith of Rasulullāh (s), he will kill many innocent people in Iraq, Egypt, Palestine and other parts of the Middle East. Sufyāni will also kill many women, children and elderly and he will finally set his capital in Shām (Damascus) just like his forefathers had done.

When Sufyāni finds out that Imām al-Mahdi (‘atfs) has appeared in Makkah, he will send an army to fight the Imām but when they army of Sufyāni will be between Madina and Makkah, the earth will open up and most of them will be destroyed.



Imām al-Mahdi ('atfs) will then move to Iraq and make Kufa his capital. And from there Imām al-Mahdi ('atfs) will go towards Shām with a huge army and fight Sufyāni until all of evil is destroyed and there is peace and justice on the earth.

The Return of Nabi Isa ('a)

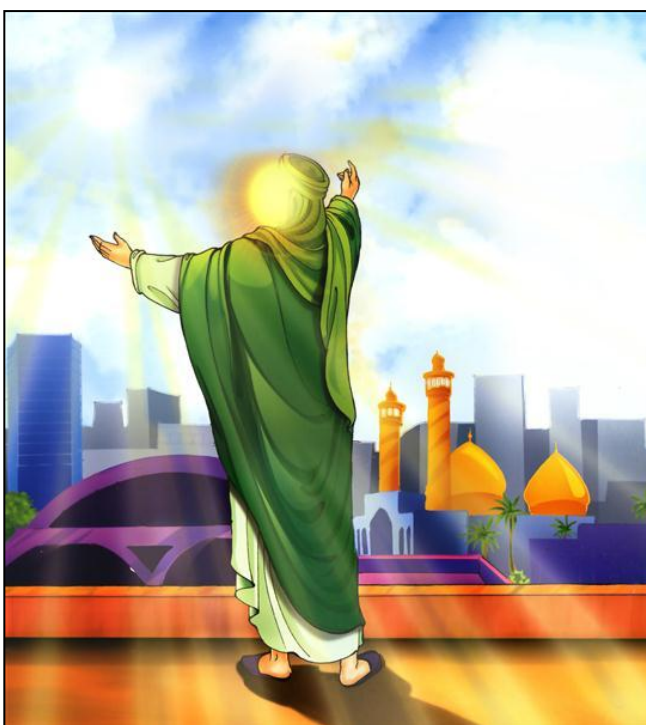
When Imām al-Hujjah al-Mahdi ('atfs) enters Jerusalem, a very important miracle will take place. And that is the descent of Nabi Isa ('a) from the heavens. This is a prophecy that even the Christians believe in (i.e. the return of Jesus) and it is recorded in many ahādith.



Nabi Isa ('a) will refuse to lead the prayers and will insist that Imām al-Mahdi ('atfs) should lead the salāh and he will pray behind Imām al-Mahdi ('atfs). This will show and prove to the Christians and the whole world that the message of Rasulullāh (s) was the final message and is to prevail over all other religions.

Since the majority in the world are Christians, when Nabi Isa ('a) shows his support for Imām al-Mahdi ('atfs) and he denies being the son of God (or God), a large number of Christians will change their understanding of religion and will join Islām as a universal message of monotheism and belief in one God only, without any partners.

Then with the majority of the world following Imām al-Mahdi ('atfs), the spread of justice and peace will increase. And a final evil will be Dajjāl – a person who will try and cheat people into believing that he is god. The Christians call Dajjāl 'the Antichrist' and with Nabi Isa ('a)'s help, he too will be killed.



After many battles and wars, justice and peace will prevail. The whole planet will worship Allāh and human beings will learn to live on the earth without greed and fear, with love and devotion for Allāh and with selfless service to other creatures of Allāh.

Imām al-Mahdi ('atfs) will unveil a tremendous amount of knowledge to human beings because of which all forms of illnesses will be removed, the heavens and earth will give out all its blessings, and human beings will learn to travel to far regions of outer space.

After his *dhuhur*, Imām al-Mahdi (‘atfs) will be known as and addressed by everyone as ‘Baqiyatullah’ (The remainder of Allāh) meaning the last proof of Allāh on the earth.

The Waiting (*al-Intidhār*)

Waiting for Imām al-Mahdi (‘atfs) to return is called *Intidhār*. It is not only the Shi’ah or the Muslims who are waiting for someone to come and establish peace and justice on the earth. Every group of people has some record in their books of history and religion of a saviour that they are waiting for.

We should never doubt in the presence of Imām al-Mahdi (‘atfs). If Allāh could raise Rasulullāh (s) physically all the way to the heavens for *mi’rāj*, and to raise Nabi Isa (‘a) and keep him alive in the heavens until he returns, it is very easy for Allāh to keep someone alive on the earth for a long time. We have many examples of others, good and bad that have lived a long time on the earth or are still alive from even long before Imām al-Mahdi (‘a).



Nabi Nuh (‘a), for example, lived for 950 years according to the Qur’ān and according to some narrations that was only before the flood but he actually lived for 2500 years. Besides Nabi Isa (‘a), Nabi Khidr (‘a), Nabi Idris (‘a) and Nabi Ilyās (‘a) are also alive. We also know that Shaytān (Iblis) has been alive even from before Nabi Adam (‘a) was created. So if Allāh can allow so many others from His creation, good and evil, to remain alive for as long as He pleases, it is very easy for Him to keep Imām al-Mahdi (‘a) alive as His proof and representative on the earth for so long.

During Intidhār

During the time of Intidhār, it is the duty of all the followers of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) to work for the good of humanity and to be role models for others on how human beings will live after the establishment of peace and justice when the Imām returns.

Naturally, those whose values, habits and character are most similar to the values that Imām al-Mahdi ('atfs) will strive to establish are those who will 'fit' into the new world most easily.

Obeying Allāh and keeping away from *harām* are the first duties we have towards showing our loyalty to Imām al-Mahdi ('atfs). Thereafter serving humanity and praying for the return of the Imām ('atfs) are also part of our duties to the Imām.

Just as we are doing 'intidhār' (waiting) for the Imām, so is the Imām doing our 'intidhār'. We are waiting for him to return because we want to see justice and peace established on the earth and the removal of all our suffering. The Imām ('atfs) is waiting for us to show we are ready for his return and that we are pious and sincere and not greedy for the world and selfish. The Imām will only return when Allāh wills it and that will happen when we are ready to follow the Imām ('atfs) sincerely.



Some Ayāt of the Qur'ān Concerning Imām al-Mahdi ('atfs)

﴿هُوَ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ رَسُولَهُ بِالْهُدَىٰ وَدِينِ الْحَقِّ لِيُظْهِرَهُ عَلَى الدِّينِ كُلِّهِ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْمُشْرِكُونَ﴾

It is He who has sent His Apostle with the guidance and the religion of truth, that He may make it prevail over all religions, though the polytheists should be averse.

- Surah at-Tawbah, 9:33

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

*Certainly We wrote in the Zabūr, after the Reminder (Tawrāt) that:
'Indeed My righteous servants shall inherit the earth.'*

- Surah al-Anbiya, 21:105

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

*Those who, if We granted them power in the land, will establish the
salāh, give the zakāh, and bid what is right and forbid what is wrong.
And with Allāh rests the outcome of all matters.*

- Surah Hajj, 22:41

﴿وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَيَسْتَخْلِفَنَّهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ كَمَا
اسْتَخْلَفَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ وَلَيُمَكِّنَنَّ لَهُمْ دِينَهُمُ الَّذِي ارْتَضَى لَهُمْ وَلَيُبَدِّلَنَّهُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ
خَوْفِهِمْ أَمْنًا يَعْبُدُونَنِي لَا يُشْرِكُونَ بِي شَيْئًا...﴾

*Allāh has promised those of you who have faith and do righteous deeds
that He will surely make them successors in the earth, just as He made
those who were before them successors, and He will surely establish for
them their religion which He has approved for them, and that He will
surely change their state to security after their fear, while they worship
Me, not ascribing any partners to Me.*

- Surah an-Nur, 24:55

﴿وَتُرِيدُ أَنْ نَمُنَّ عَلَى الَّذِينَ اسْتُضِعُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَنَجْعَلَهُمْ أَئِمَّةً وَنَجْعَلَهُمُ
الْوَارِثِينَ﴾

*And We desired to show favour to those who were considered weak in
the land, and to make them Imāms, and to make them the inheritors.*

- Surah al-Qasas, 28:5

﴿...وَيَوْمَئِذٍ يَفْرَحُ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ بِنَصْرِ اللَّهِ يَنْصُرُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الرَّحِيمُ وَعَدَّ اللَّهُ لَا يُخْلِفُ اللَّهُ وَعْدَهُ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ﴾

and on that day the faithful will rejoice at Allāh's help. He helps whomever He wishes, and He is the All-mighty, the All-merciful. [This is] a promise of Allāh: Allāh does not break His promise, but most people do not know.

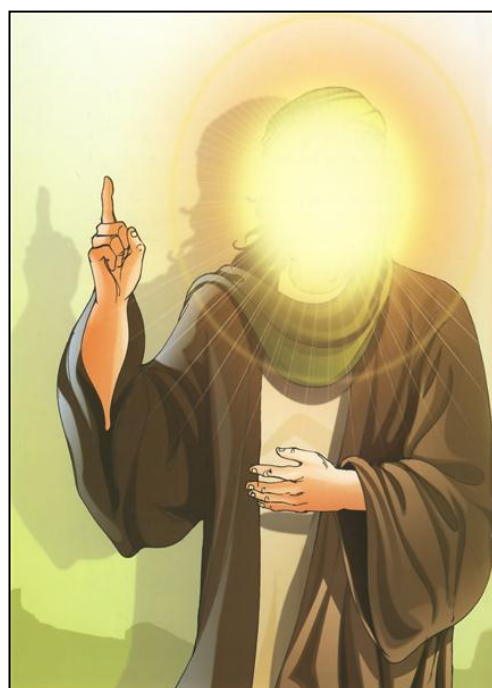
- Surah ar-Rūm, 30:4-6

Ahādith from the Ma'sumeen ('a)

There are numerous *ahādith* (traditions) and *riwāyāt* (reports) from the Ma'sumeen ('a) concerning Imām al-Mahdi ('atfs) and the *ghayba*.

From Rasullāh (s) is reported that he said, 'The Mahdi is from my descendants. He will have a *ghayba* (disappearance) during which time there will be a lot of confusion in the world. When he comes forth, he will bring the treasures of the prophets and he will fill the earth with justice and equity after it is filled with injustice and tyranny.'

From Imām Husayn ('a) who said, 'The master of this matter (*sāhib al-amr*) will have two *ghaybas*. One of them will be so long that some people will say, "he must have died" ...'



From Imām Ali Zayn al-Abidin ('a), who said, 'The Qāim will be like (Nabi) Nuh ('a), that is having a very long life.'

From Imām Ja'far as-Sādiq ('a) that he said, 'If you hear your Imām has gone into *ghayba* then do not deny it.'

From Imām Musa al-Kādhim ('a), he said, 'I am an Upholder of Truth (*Qāim bi al-Haqq*) but the Qāim who will purify the earth of the enemies

of Allāh and fill it with justice as it will be filled with injustice, is the fifth descendant from my children. He will have a *ghayba* that will last a very long time...'

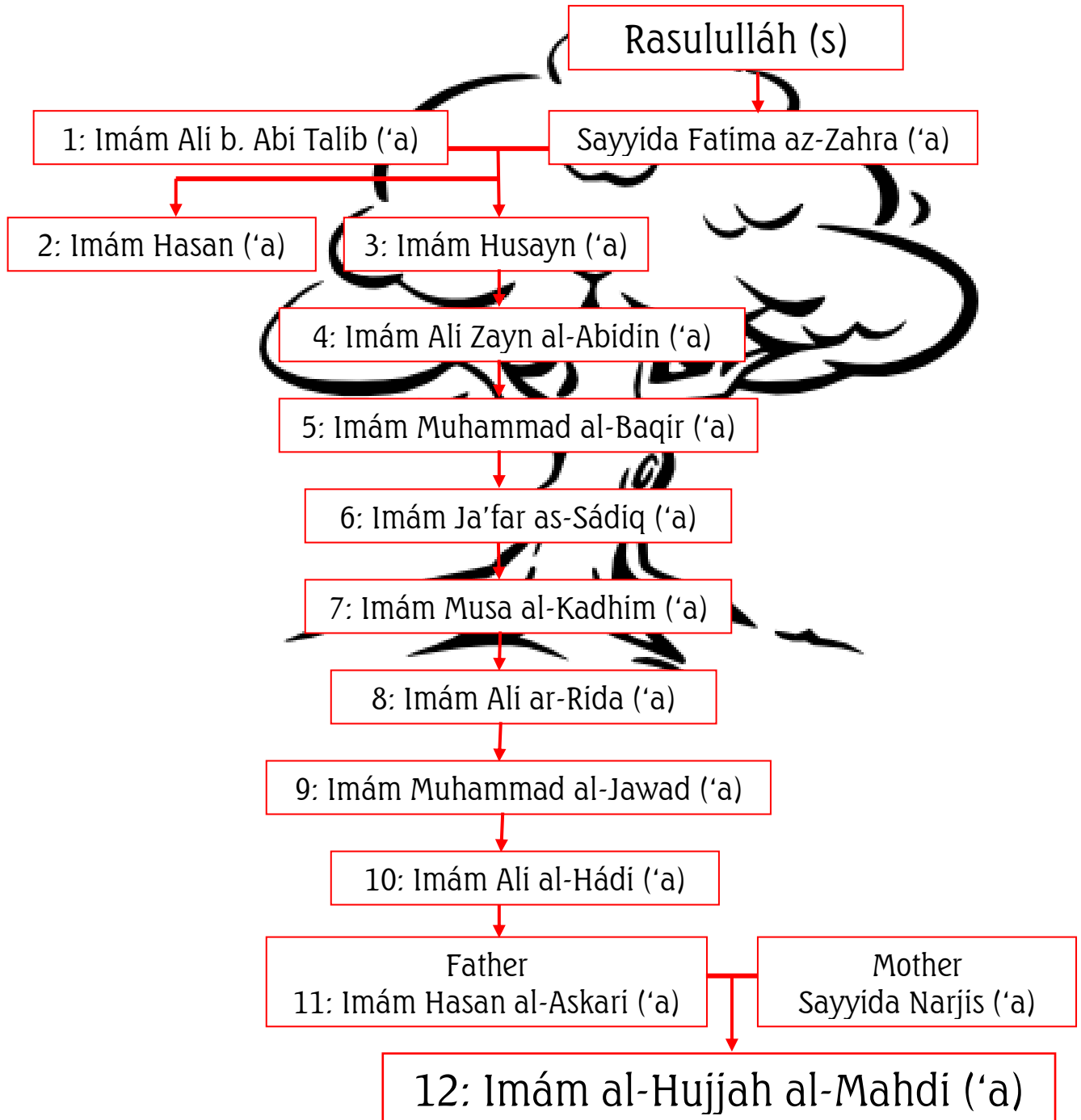
From Imām Hasan al-Askari ('a), 'My son Muhammad is the Imām and the proof (*hujjah*) after me. Anyone who dies without knowing him will die a death of ignorance (*jāhiliya*). He will have a *ghayba* during which the ignorant will be confused.'

And similarly there are lots of ahādith from all the other Imāms as well.

Some of the ahādith of Imām al-Hujjah, al-Mahdi, Sāhib az-Zamān ('atfs) are:

- Allāh is with us... and the truth is with us. So it does not scare us who opposes us.
- Allāh has decided that the truth will prevail and that falsehood will vanish.
- I am the one who will come forth and fill the earth with justice as it will be filled with injustice.
- Whoever wants to ask Allāh for something, let him or her do *ghusl* on a Thursday night after midnight and then sit on his or her prayer mat (and pray for his or her wish).
- Nothing humiliates Shaytān like *salāh*.
- The way you will benefit from me during my *ghaybah* is the way you benefit from the sun when it is hidden from you behind clouds (but you still enjoy its light and warmth).

Imām al-Hujjah b. al-Hasan al-Mahdi ('a)'s Family Tree



Wilādah : Samarra, 15th Sha'ban 255 AH

The current Islāmic year is _____ AH so the age of our Imām is _____.

Lesson 7

Karbala and Ashura

Every Muharram we remember Imām Husayn (‘a) and his sacrifices in Karbala. Imām Husayn (‘a) left Madina in the month of Rajab 60 AH and went to Makkah where he stayed until Dhul Hijjah 60 AH before leaving towards Kufa and finally turning to Karbala and arriving there on 2nd Muharram 61 AH. The food and water in the camp of Imām Husayn (‘a) ran out on 7th Muharram and they all stayed hungry and thirsty for three days. On the 10th of Muharram, the day of Ashura, Imām Husayn (‘a) along with 72 men from his family and his companions and friends, fought bravely against 30,000 men from Yazid’s army.

The army of Yazid was only trying to kill Imām Husayn (‘a) because he refused to accept Yazid as the ruler of the Muslims. Yazid was a drunk and sinful person who did not respect Allāh or Rasulullāh (s) or the religion of Islām.

If you are not familiar with the events of Ashura, your teacher will tell you about some of the brave men in the camp of Imām Husayn (a’) including:

Habib bin Madhāhir and Muslim bin Awsaja, the tribal leaders and companions of Imām Husayn (‘a). Hadrat Ali al-Akbar, the 18 yr old son of Imām Husayn (‘a). Hadrat Abbās, the brother and commander of Imām Husayn (‘a). Hadrat Qāsim b. al-Hasan, the 13 yr old son of Imām Hasan (‘a), Awn and Muhammad, the two teenage sons of Sayyida Zaynab (‘a), the sister of Imām Husayn (‘a), and even Hadrat Ali al-Asghar, the 6 month old baby of Imām Husayn (‘a).

Your teacher will also tell you briefly of how, after the battle, the heads of Imām Husayn (‘a) and all the brave men in his camp were cut off and put on spears and how the tents of the women were burnt and all the women and children along with Imām Ali Zayn al-Abidin (‘a) were taken as prisoners to Kufa and then to Yazid’s palace in Sham.

The tragedy of Karbala is the greatest disaster in human history. No religion has mistreated the family of their own prophet like the so-called

'Muslims' of Sham and Kufa mistreated the family (Ahl al-Bayt) of Rasulullāh (s).

Imām Husayn ('a) taught us to be brave and never to give in to a tyrant even if we have to give our lives. We should always remember Karbala even when it is not Muharram because it gives us courage and increases our love for Imām Husayn (a') and all the members of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) of Rasulullāh (s).

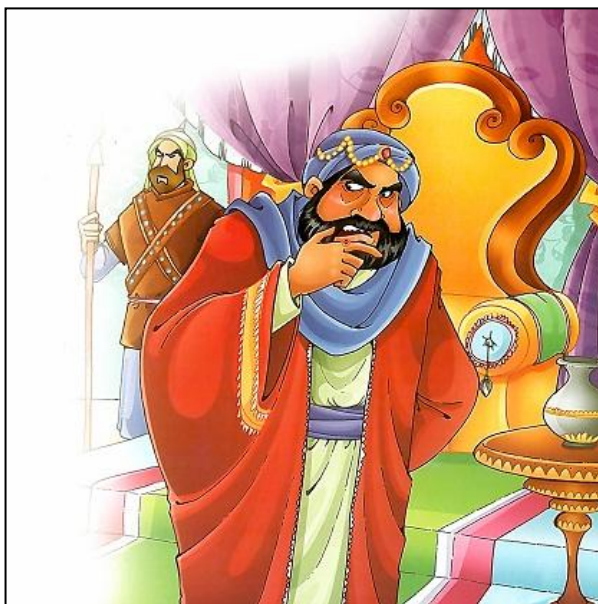
Always Remember Karbala

During the time of Imām Ja'far as-Sādiq ('a), the Muslim ruler was called Mansur al-Dawāniqi. He was from the Banu Abbās and was a cruel and heartless man who really hated the family of Rasulullāh (s).

Mansur was very jealous that the Muslims loved Imām Ja'far as-Sādiq ('a) and that so many of them were studying under him and learning religion and other sciences from the Imām.

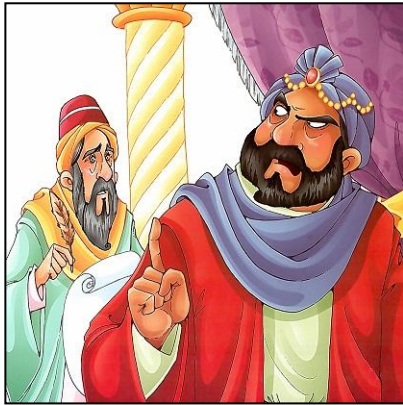
Mansur was also afraid that if Imām Ja'far as-Sādiq ('a) becomes very famous, then people would overthrow him and follow Imām as-Sādiq ('a) who was the rightful successor (*khalifah*) of Rasulullāh (s).

And so Mansur began frightening the Muslims who followed Imām as-Sādiq ('a). He would imprison and torture the Shi'ahs of Imām as-Sādiq ('a) and try and kill anyone who was close to the Imām.



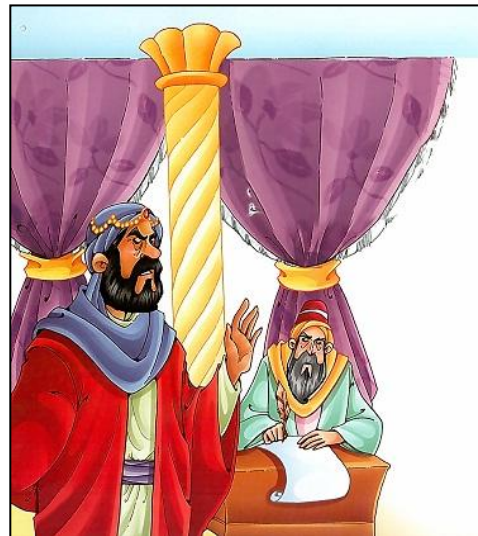
One day, Mansur al-Dawāniqi kept pacing up and down in his palace, thinking of how to get rid of Imām Ja'far as-Sādiq ('a). Then he shouted, 'Where is the scribe?!'

A scribe was a man who wrote all the orders of the caliph. So he came in quivering with fear, holding his paper and pen. Then he said with a trembling voice, 'I am here, master. What do you command me to write?!'



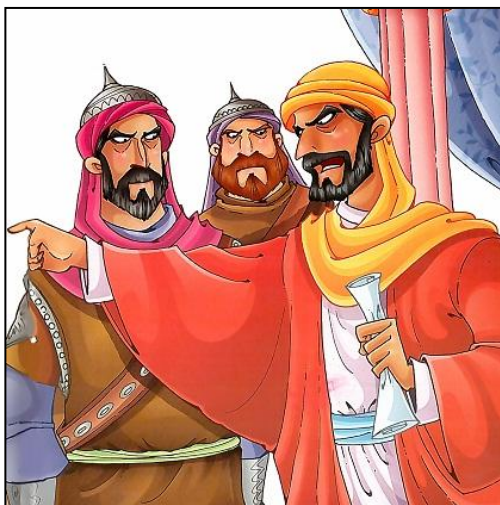
Mansur raised his head with pride and said to the scribe, 'Write exactly what I tell you, word for word, do you understand?!' 'Yes, master. I understand', replied the scribe.

Then Mansur began dictating to the scribe who began writing his words. 'Write,' he commanded, 'From the Abbāsi Caliph, Mansur al-Dawāniqi to the governor of Madina, Hasan bin Zayd. I command you to gather your soldiers immediately and to burn down the house of the Ahl al-Bayt, Rasullāh's family and whoever is in it so that their name is forgotten forever!'



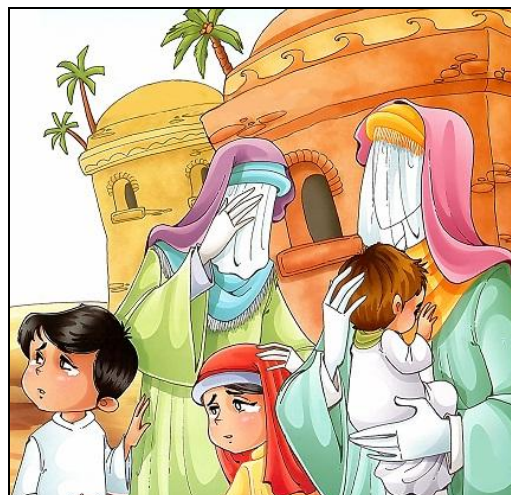
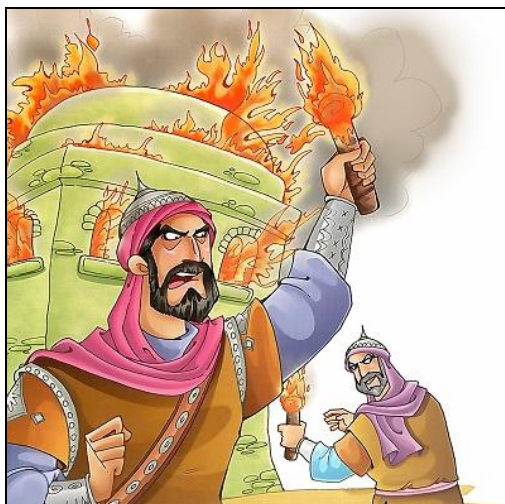
When the letter of Mansur al-Dawāniqi reached his governor Hasan bin Zayd in Madina, he read it and understood the orders of the Caliph. So he gathered the

most hard-hearted and cruelest soldiers in his army, those who hated Rasullāh (s)'s family the most, and said to them, 'The Caliph Mansur in Baghdad has sent orders to burn down the house of Ja'far as-Sādiq so that anyone who is in the house will burn and die as well.'



The soldiers of the Banu Abbās took their fire torches and went to the house of Imām Ja'far as-Sādiq ('a) and began to set it on fire. They went in and set all the furniture on fire as well

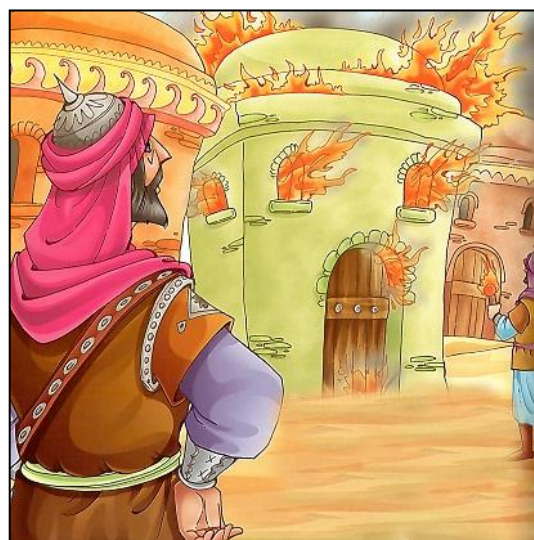
so that everything and everyone inside the house would burn as well.



All the women and children from the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) that were in the house ran out. They were frightened and the children began to cry. But Imām Ja'far as-Sādiq ('a) was still inside the house and had not yet come out.

The cruel soldiers were very happy to see the house of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) on fire and all the women and children frightened, running all over the place.

They were even more delighted when they realized that Imām Ja'far as-Sādiq ('a) had not come out and that the women and children were screaming and calling out his name and asking someone to save him because he was still inside the burning house.



Just then, the people saw Imām Ja'far as-Sādiq ('a) coming out of the flames and walking out calmly and slowly and the fire was not harming him at all.

Then he went back into the burning house and calmly came back out again. All the people standing by including those cruel soldiers saw Imām as-Sādiq ('a) coming out unharmed.

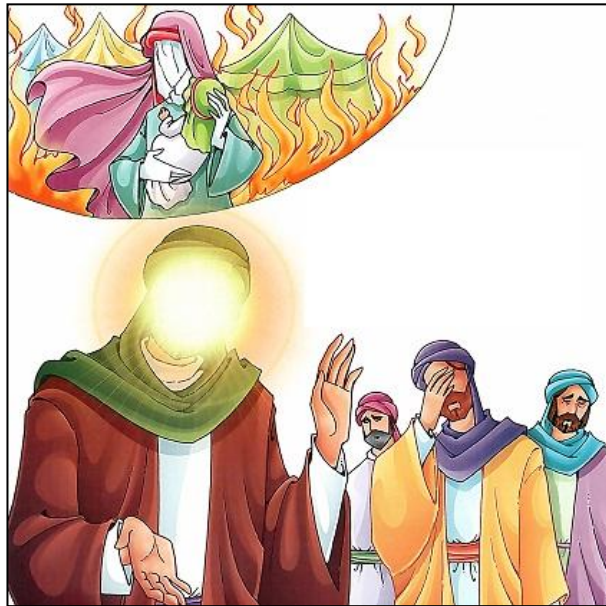
The women and children from Rasulullāh (s)'s family were overjoyed that he was safe. The soldiers were shocked and could not believe their eyes.



Then Imām as-Sādiq ('a) said to the people around him, 'I am the son of Nabi Ibrahim ('a), the friend of Allāh.' Imām as-Sādiq ('a)

said this because Nabi Ibrahim ('a) was the ancestor of Rasulullāh (s) and Imām as-Sādiq ('a). When Nabi Ibrahim ('a) had broken the idols in the time of the tyrant King Namrud, he was thrown into a fire and it did not harm him either.

The Muslims in Madina were happy and rejoiced that Imām Ja'far as-Sādiq ('a) had been saved from the fire. But they saw that Imām as-Sādiq ('a) was very sad and he was crying. So they asked him why he was crying so much until tears were flowing down his beard!!



Imām as-Sādiq ('a) said very sadly, 'When I saw the women and children in my family running from the fire and screaming, I remembered the women and children of my grandfather Imām Husayn ('a) on the day of Ashura in Karbala. But when the army of Yazid was burning the tents after the martyrdom of Imām Husayn ('a) and the women and children ran out into the wilderness there was no one to help or protect them!'

AKHLAQ

(Ethics)

Lesson 1

Rights of Neighbours, Visiting the Sick & Helping Orphans & the Poor

The Rights of Neighbours

Neighbours are those who live in homes besides us. They are like an extended family because they affect our lives directly. When we have a troublesome neighbour who is dirty or noisy or rude, it directly affects our happiness and our homes. On the contrary when we have a good neighbour, it greatly enhances the quality of our life and often we find we have a trustworthy friend who can look out for us in emergencies and in time of need.

Time and again we may ask our neighbour for a favour or they may ask us. It may be to collect a parcel or check the mail while we are away or simply keep an eye out for our home when we are on vacation. Sometimes children of the same age live next door and therefore they play together and build a friendship.

Nowadays the properties in a particular neighbourhood are usually of similar values and therefore neighbours are usually of a similar financial status. In the days of Rasulullāh (s) this was not the case. Families would live in a particular neighbourhood for generations and often it was quite possible for a very rich person to own a large mansion next to a very humble house owned by a very poor person. This is why Islām emphasized the right of the neighbour. For example, a person had to ensure that his or her neighbour was not sleeping hungry while he or she had plenty to eat or that the neighbour was not without clothes or firewood for heating while they were comfortable.

Keeping relations with neighbours is very important but needs to be done within the limits of shari'ah. Islām does not favour one extreme where a person lives next to a neighbour for many years but has never spoken to them. Nor does it favour the other extreme where a Muslim or his children interact so much with the non-Muslim neighbours that issues like tahārah and najāsah, eating halāl food, passing on of

un-Islāmic values and culture like dressing, music, etc. are all compromised.

The middle ground is to ensure our neighbour knows we are Muslims and what we can or cannot do (such as eating halāl, observing hijāb, etc.). Thereafter, we should keep the following rights of neighbours in mind:

- When you see your neighbour outside the house e.g. gardening or in the garage, always greet them with a smile and wish them.
- When your neighbour is celebrating e.g. the birth of a child or the graduation of a child, congratulate them and take them a gift.
- If your neighbour shares gifts with you on Christmas for example, ensure you do the same on 'Id.
- If your neighbour looks worried or stressed or you see a police car outside, do go over and ask if they are ok and if they need any help.
- When you are cutting your grass in summer or blowing leaves in fall or shovelling snow in winter, do some of your neighbour's area that shares a border with you. And you may even come up with a plan where you help each other with such matters.
- Be a good neighbour yourself by not being noisy (or nosy!), being careful not to damage your neighbour's property, looking out for them and not revealing their secrets or anything embarrassing about them that you may see accidentally.

Good neighbours are a blessing of Allāh and we should thank Allāh if we have a neighbour who is not noisy and who is respectful and trustworthy.

Islām asks us to respect the rights of neighbours even if they are not Muslims. The only matter we need to be cautious of is not to compromise on the laws of *shari'ah*.

Rasulullāh (s) said that the archangel Jibrāil emphasized the rights of neighbours to him so much that he feared they might even end up having a share in a person's inheritance!

Visiting the Sick ('Iyādah)

Going to visit someone who is ill is called *'iyādah* in Islām.

Islām stresses *'iyādah* for it is a sign of care and concern for the person who is sick. *'iyādah* is mentioned in hadith frequently as a 'right' of a fellow Muslim and some hadith talk of its reward and how a person who goes for the *'iyādah* of another is accompanied by angels from the time he or she leaves home; and the angels continue praying for him or her until he or she returns home from visiting the one who was ill.

When people are ill they are usually not just physically weak. Their spirits are down as well. When someone ill receives a visitor, it tells him or her that there are others who care for him or her and even if they are bedridden, the visitors help boost the ill person's morale and spirits.

When visiting someone who is ill try and take a thoughtful gift like fruits (if they can eat) and also try and cheer them up and make them laugh instead of making them feel worse. A lot of times the person who is ill only needs some company or someone to talk to as a distraction.

When we see others who are very ill, we should express gratitude to Allāh for His blessing of health and ask Him to help us use our health to serve Him. This gratitude is not expressed out of pride but in realization that we are not in any less need of Allāh's help and support at all times.

Visiting a person who is ill can have a profound effect on the patient especially if they are very lonely. A popular story is that of an old lady who always threw trash on Rasullāh (s) as he walked past her house.

When she did not do so for a few days, Rasullāh (s) enquired about her and when he found out she was ill, he went for her *'iyādah*. She thought he had come for revenge but the sincere and thoughtful action of Rasullāh (s) that was only out of his love for all of Allāh's creatures and because he knew she was only hateful to him out of ignorance, had a great effect on her.

When the old lady learnt Rasullāh (s) had only come to see her, she was ashamed of her past behaviour and chose to accept Islām. Tabligh and guiding others to the right path is not always done by preaching -

often it is done by showing love to others and practising good akhlāq. And 'iyādah is the perfect opportunity to show our love for others, who are also Allāh's creatures.

Helping the Poor & Orphans

Even though we sometimes see healthy and young people begging, we should not assume they are lazy and looking to make 'quick money'. Islām condemns begging but encourages Muslims to help those in need.

In particular, the ones in real need are often too ashamed to ask and we need to search and identify them. And along with that, the Qur'ān and hadith speaks highly of those who take orphans under their care.

The following are āyāt of Qur'ān and ahādith on helping orphans and the poor. Your teacher will discuss only some of them and ask you to read the rest on your own. He or she may also ask you to write an essay on one of the āyāt or ahādith below.

The Poor and Orphans in Qur'ān

﴿... لَا تَعْبُدُونَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا وَذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسَاكِينِ وَقُولُوا لِلنَّاسِ حُسْنًا...﴾

... Worship no one but Allāh, do good to parents, relatives, orphans, and the poor, and speak kindly to people...

- Surah al-Baqarah, 2:83

﴿لَيْسَ الْبِرَّ أَنْ تُوَلُّوا وُجُوهَكُمْ قِبَلَ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ وَلَكِنَّ الْبِرَّ مَنْ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالْكِتَابِ وَالنَّبِيِّينَ وَآتَى الْمَالَ عَلَىٰ حُبِّهِ ذَوِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسَاكِينِ وَابْنَ السَّبِيلِ وَالسَّائِلِينَ وَفِي الرِّقَابِ...﴾

Piety is not to turn your faces to the east or the west; rather piety is [personified by] those who have faith in Allāh and the Last Day, the angels, the Book, and the prophets, and who give their wealth for the

love of Him, to relatives, orphans, the poor, the traveller and the beggar...

- Surah al-Baqarah, 2:177

﴿يَسْأَلُونَكَ مَاذَا يُنْفِقُونَ قُلْ مَا أَنْفَقْتُمْ مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَلِلْوَالِدَيْنِ وَالْأَقْرَبِينَ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ
وَالْمَسَاكِينِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ وَمَا تَفْعَلُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ بِهِ عَلِيمٌ﴾

They ask you as to what they should spend. Say, 'Whatever wealth you spend, let it be for parents, relatives, orphans, the poor, and the traveller (in need).' And whatever good you do, Allāh indeed knows it.

- Surah al-Baqarah, 2:215

﴿فَأَمَّا الْيَتِيمَ فَلَا تَقْهَرْ. وَأَمَّا السَّائِلَ فَلَا تَنْهَرْ. وَأَمَّا بِنِعْمَةِ رَبِّكَ فَحَدِّثْ﴾

So as for the orphan, do not oppress him; and as for the beggar, do not scold him; and as for your Lord's blessing, proclaim it!

- Surah ad-Duha 93:9-11

﴿أَرَأَيْتَ الَّذِي يُكَذِّبُ بِالذِّينِ. فَذَلِكَ الَّذِي يَدْعُ الْيَتِيمَ. وَلَا يَحْضُ عَلَىٰ طَعَامِ
الْمَسْكِينِ﴾

Have you seen him who denies the Judgement (Day)? That is the one who drives away the orphan, and does not urge the feeding of the poor.

- Surah al-Ma'un, 107:1-3

Orphans in Hadith

The Messenger of Allāh (s) said, 'In Paradise there is a place called *Dār al-Farh* (The Abode of Joy) – none shall enter it except one who brings joy (*farh*) to the orphans of the believers.'

The Messenger of Allāh (s) said, 'One who takes hold of an orphan from the Muslims to share his food and drink, Allāh will definitely admit him to Paradise unless he commits an unforgivable sin.'

A man complained of being hard-hearted and the Messenger of Allāh (s) advised him, 'Do you wish to soften your heart and have your wishes

granted? Show mercy to the orphan and pat his head, and feed him from your food (i.e. what you eat). Your heart will soften and you will obtain your wishes.'

The Messenger of Allāh (s) said, 'I and the guardian of an orphan shall be like 'this' in Paradise, provided he fears Allāh, the Mighty and Glorious' (and he joined his index and middle fingers when saying 'this').

In his will just before passing away, Imām Ali ('a) said, 'Allāh, Allāh (i.e. I remind you of Allāh's command) concerning the orphans. That they should never be hungry or lost while you are present. For I heard the Messenger of Allāh (s) saying: 'One who supports an orphan until his needs are met, Allāh, the Mighty & Glorious, makes Paradise (Jannah) obligatory (wājib) on him because of that; just like He makes the Fire obligatory on one who consumes the property of orphans.'

Imām Ali ('a) said, 'If any believing man or woman places their hand on the head of an orphan, out of mercy for them, Allāh would write for them a good deed for every hair that their hand passes through.'

The Orphans of Aal Muhammad (s)

The Messenger of Allāh (s) said, 'More in need than the orphan who has lost his father is the 'orphan' who has been cut off from his Imām and is unable to reach him. He does not know what the (shari'ah) law is and what affects him in his religion. So whoever from our Shi'ah is learned in our teachings should take under his wing the one who is ignorant in our shari'ah and is cut off from knowing us. One who guides and sets (such a person) aright and teaches him our shari'ah, shall be with us in the highest level (*al-rafiq al-a'ala*) [of Paradise].'

The Messenger of Allāh (s) said, 'The learned ('ulama) from our Shi'ah will be raised on the Day of Judgement and honoured in proportion to the quantity of their knowledge and their effort in guiding the servants of God; until one of them will be given a million robes of honour made of light (nur). Then a caller of our Mighty & Glorious Lord will call out, [saying]: 'O you guardians of the orphans of the family (Aal) of Muhammad, you who revived and strengthened them when they were cut off from their (spiritual) fathers, their Imāms... here are your

students and the 'orphans' that you supported and strengthened, so give them (intercession) as you gave them knowledge in the world.'

Imām al-Hasan ('a) said, 'The superiority of a guardian to an orphan of Aal Muhammad i.e. one who is cut off from his Imāms and stuck in ignorance – and one who takes such a person out of his ignorance and teaches him – over the superiority of a guardian to an orphan that he feeds and gives waters is like the superiority of the Sun over a hidden (dark) star.'

Imām al-Husayn ('a) said, 'One who becomes a guardian on our behalf to an 'orphan' who is cut off from our love, and he shares with him of our knowledge that had fallen away from him, until he guides him and sets him aright, (then) Allāh, the Mighty & Glorious, says: 'O noble and charitable servant! I am greater in nobility than you (i.e. in how I shall give you). O' My angels! Give him in the gardens, in exchange for every letter that he taught, a million palaces, and add to them what is appropriate for them from all the blessings.'

Lesson 2

Altruism

Altruism means to be selfless (the opposite of selfish) i.e. to prefer others over yourself even when you are in need. For example, when you cheerfully volunteer your time without expecting to get paid, to get credits for school or even to get acknowledged and thanked, you are altruistic because you are only doing it for Allāh's pleasure and to help others.

Most people give their time or money only when they expect something in return. To be truly charitable, we must learn to give our time, money and even our lives for others without expecting anything other than Allāh's pleasure.

The Arabic word for altruism is *ithār*. A beautiful example of *ithār* is Rasulullāh (s)'s family when they fasted for three days and only broke their fast with water because every time they sat down to break their fast, a beggar knocked on their door asking for food and they gave up their share to him. Allāh has praised this one incident in several āyāt of Surah al-Insān (chapter 76) of the Qur'ān. In particular Allāh mentions how Imām Ali ('a), Sayyida Fatima ('a), Imām al-Hasan ('a), Imām al-Husayn ('a) and their maid Fidda (r.a.) did not even want to be thanked for giving their own share of food:

﴿وَيُطْعَمُونَ الطَّعَامَ عَلَىٰ حُبِّهِ مِسْكِينًا وَيَتِيمًا وَأَسِيرًا إِنَّمَا نُطْعِمُكُمْ لِوَجْهِ اللَّهِ لَا نُرِيدُ مِنكُمْ جَزَاءً وَلَا شُكْرًا﴾

They (the blessed) give food, for the love of Him, to the needy, the orphan and the prisoner, [saying,] 'We feed you only for the sake of Allāh. We do not want any reward from you nor any thanks.'

- Surah al-Insān, 76:8-9

The first step to becoming truly charitable, selfless and altruistic is to realize that all human beings are equal. Even when some are poor or sick or handicapped, all humans want peace and comfort and security and love. All humans enjoy pleasure the same way and feel pain the same way.

The second step is to realize that Allāh helps His creatures through other creatures and not directly. For example, when a mother shows kindness and love to her baby, it is Allāh's love that is shining through her to the baby. It is Allāh who is being kind and loving to the baby through the mother.

What does this mean? This means then that when we do good to help others, we should not be proud of what 'we' or 'I' have done. Instead we should thank Allāh for the opportunity to do good and that He chose us through whom He helped one of His creatures, when in fact He could easily have helped His creatures through someone else.

And when we are selfish or we hurt someone or refuse to help others, we should realize it is Shaytān that is blocking us from being used by Allāh to do good to His creatures. We therefore should do istighfār (ask forgiveness) and 'return' to Allāh (i.e. do tawbah) and become His servants again so that He can use us to do good to others and so that He may be pleased with us. In exchange Allāh promises us His love and to keep us close to Himself in bliss and for eternity. What can be more wonderful than knowing that Allāh is pleased and happy with you and that you live in paradise in the neighbourhood of Rasullāh (s) and his Ahl al-Bayt ('a) forever and ever?

Being Charitable

Allāh encourages us to be charitable and altruistic in many ways. Firstly He reminds us that even when we give others it is Allāh Who gave us what we are giving to others. So He is in fact the real Giver but He is only giving it to others through us so that we may have an opportunity to do good and to purify ourselves:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَنْفِقُوا مِمَّا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ يَوْمٌ لَا بَيْعُ فِيهِ وَلَا خُلَّةٌ وَلَا شَفَاعَةٌ وَالْكَافِرُونَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ﴾

*O you who have faith! Spend **out of what We have provided you** before there comes a day on which there will be no bargaining, neither friendship, nor intercession. And the faithless—they are the wrongdoers.*

- Surah Baqarah, 2:254

Secondly Allāh reminds us that He does not benefit when we are charitable or altruistic. It is only we who benefit because He will give it back to us on the Day of Judgement in the form of much good:

﴿وَمَا تُنْفِقُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَلَأَنْفُسِكُمْ وَمَا تُنْفِقُونَ إِلَّا ابْتِغَاءَ وَجْهِ اللَّهِ وَمَا تُنْفِقُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ يُؤَفَّ إِلَيْكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تُظْلَمُونَ﴾

...And whatever wealth you spend, it is for your own benefit, as you do not spend but to seek Allāh's pleasure, and whatever wealth you spend will be repaid to you in full, and you will not be wronged.

- Surah al-Baqarah, 2:272

Thirdly Allāh reminds us that if hoard our wealth and just keep it for ourselves, it is useless after we die. But if we give in the name of Allāh and for His sake, then He 'converts' it to *thawāb*. So in a sense we can take our wealth with us to the next world:

﴿مَا عِنْدَكُمْ يَنْفَدُ وَمَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ بَاقٍ وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّ الَّذِينَ صَبَرُوا أَجْرَهُمْ بِأَحْسَنِ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ﴾

That which is with you will be spent but what is with Allāh shall last, and We will surely pay the patient their reward by the best of what they used to do.

- Surah an-Nahl, 16:96

Rasulullāh (s) said, 'The land on the Day of Judgement will be (hot like) fire except for the shade of a *mu'min* (faithful Muslim). If he or she gives charity, it will shade him or her.'

Imām Ali ('a) said, 'Blessed is one who gives out his excess wealth but withholds his excess speech.'

And to show that we are not doing anyone a favour by helping them but in fact we need someone to take our help so that we can get rewarded, Imām Ali ('a) said, 'You are in greater need to give what you have earned than the needy person who agrees to take and receive your charity and wealth.'

To show that the only way to take our possessions and wealth to the next world is by giving it to others, Imām Ali (‘a) said, ‘You have nothing to benefit from your worldly life except what you spend of it for your hereafter.’ And Imām Ali (‘a) also said, ‘Whatever extra you have, send it forward (for yourself in the hereafter) and do not delay....’

Rasulullāh (s) once asked his companions, ‘Who amongst you loves the wealth of his heirs (those who will inherit from you) more than his own wealth?’ And the people said, ‘none of us. We all love our own wealth.’ So Rasulullāh (s) said, ‘Then know, your wealth is what you send forward (for yourself through charity) and the wealth of your heirs is what you keep (because that will be left behind when you die and taken by them).’

One of Rasulullāh (s)’s wife, Aisha said, ‘we once slaughtered a sheep and gave it in charity. Then Rasulullāh asked, ‘what is left of it?’ and I (Aisha) said, ‘nothing is left except a shoulder piece.’ And Rasulullāh (s) said, ‘All of it is left except the shoulder piece.’

Question: Why do you think Rasulullāh (s) said this and what do you think he meant by saying ‘All of it is left except the shoulder piece?’ [Discuss in class]

If a person is miserly and does not spend his wealth to help others or only helps people when there is a selfish reason for his or her own gain, then he or she just collects and hoards large amounts of wealth that in the end is left behind. But he or she will still be punished for being miserly and hoarding what other people need. Allāh says in the Qur’ān:

﴿...وَالَّذِينَ يَكْنِزُونَ الذَّهَبَ وَالْفِضَّةَ وَلَا يَنْفِقُونَهَا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَبَشِّرْهُمْ بِعَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ يَوْمَ يُخْمَىٰ عَلَيْهَا فِي نَارِ جَهَنَّمَ فَتُكْوَىٰ بِهَا جِبَاهُهُمْ وَجُنُوبُهُمْ وَظُهُورُهُمْ هَذَا مَا كَنْزْتُمْ لِأَنْفُسِكُمْ فَذُوقُوا مَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْنِزُونَ﴾

Those who treasure up gold and silver, and do not spend it in the way of Allāh, inform them of a painful punishment. On the day when these shall be heated in hellfire and branded on their foreheads, their sides and their backs [and told]: ‘This is what you treasured up for yourselves! So taste what you have treasured!’

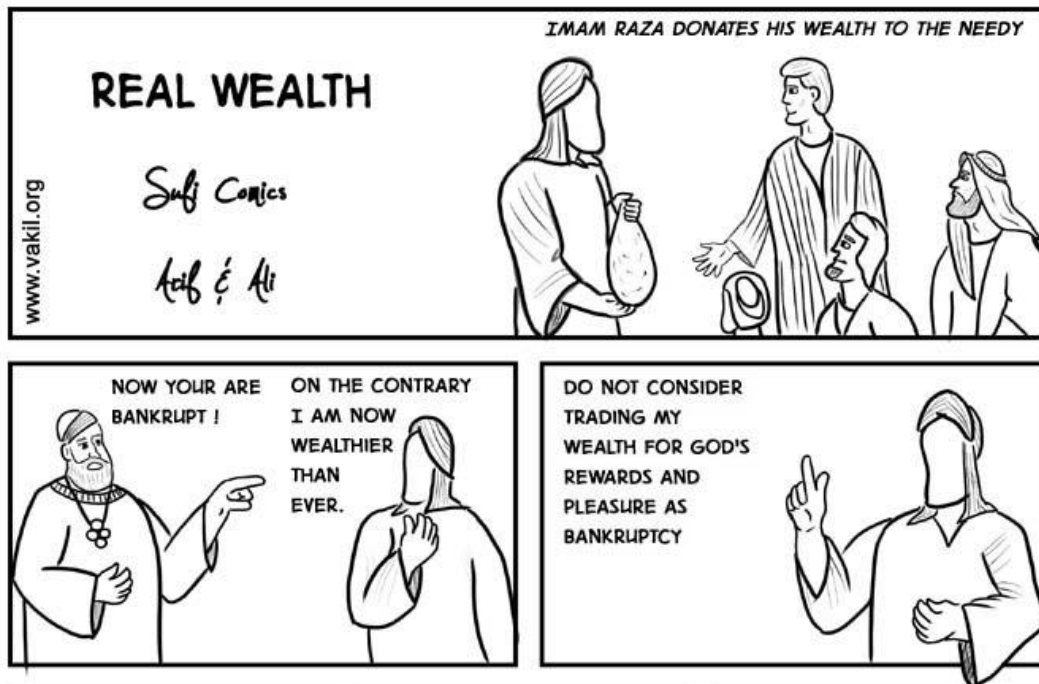
- Surah at-Tawba, 9:34-35

Lastly, we must remember that Allāh does not need us to be charitable or altruistic. He asks us to be generous for our own good. And if we give charity or help others but are reluctant or unhappy then it is no use. Allāh will not accept it and of course we cannot force Him to accept it. For such people Allāh says:

﴿قُلْ أَنْفِقُوا طَوْعًا أَوْ كَرْهًا لَنْ يُتَقَبَلَ مِنْكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ قَوْمًا فَاسِقِينَ وَمَا مَنَعَهُمْ أَنْ تُقَبَلَ مِنْهُمْ نَفَقَاتُهُمْ إِلَّا أَنَّهُمْ كَفَرُوا بِاللَّهِ وَبِرَسُولِهِ وَلَا يَأْتُونَ الصَّلَاةَ إِلَّا وَهُمْ كُسَالَى وَلَا يُنْفِقُونَ إِلَّا وَهُمْ كَارِهُونَ﴾

Say, 'Spend willingly or unwillingly, it shall never be accepted from you; for you are indeed a sinful group.' Nothing stops their charities from being accepted except that they have no faith in Allāh and His Apostle and do not perform the prayer (salāh) except lazily, and they do not spend [in charity] except reluctantly.

- Surah at-Tawba, 9:53-54



Lesson 3

Bribery & Usury vs. Lawful Earning

Islām emphasizes greatly that a person's earnings should always be halāl. When a person earns harām money, everything he or she buys and uses with the harām money affects his or her soul and his or her hereafter (ākhirah). Harām money is not just stolen money. It could also be a bribe taken from someone. It is harām to give or take a bribe from anyone. A bribe is called *rishwa* in Arabic.

Harām money can also come to us when we ask people to pay us extra money just because we lent them some money before. For example, if you lend your friend \$10 but then ask him to pay you back \$15 because you lent him some money, that is harām and is called *usury*. In Arabic usury is called *ribā*.

Our halāl money can also become harām when we don't pay our khums or zakāh, which we will learn about in detail later on. Both *rishwa* and *ribā* are harām because Islām wants people to work hard to earn their living and not to acquire it by taking advantage of other people's needs.

Earning halāl money is so important that it is better to only do what is wājib and earn halāl than to do so many mustahab acts like reciting Qur'ān, praying salāt al-layl, etc. but then to also cheat people, give and take bribes or charge others usury.

Earning a halāl livelihood also means that if I find money lying on the road, I should not pocket it. If I do, anything I use the money for will be harām. If I buy food, it will be harām to eat. If I buy clothes, I can't pray with them because it will be *ghasbi* and in addition to all that, I will of course be punished on the Day of Judgement.

When we find lost money and cannot find the owner, we should give it to the police or the nearest bank if it is a large sum. And if it is a very small amount we can give it in charity in the name of the real owner.

We have many ahādith from Rasullāh (s) and the other ma'sumeen ('a) to teach us that a true *mu'min* is not one who prays and fasts a lot but it is a person who does all that is wājib, keeps away from harām and then

is honest – never lies or cheats others and never bribes or uses harām ways to make money.

If we trust that Allāh is the one who feeds everyone, then there is no need to cheat or charge others interest or bribe or earn harām money in any other way.

Qard al-Hasanah

Qard means ‘loan’ and ‘*qard al-hasanah*’ means ‘a good loan’ or what we can call ‘an interest-free loan’. If Allāh has blessed us with wealth and we cannot give large sums of it away in charity, we can at least give it in loan to other fellow Muslims whom we trust. By giving *qard al-hasanah* to others, we help stop the corrupt practice of usury (*ribā*). The person in need will not have to take a loan from the bank and pay interest to them and we would get the *thawāb* of helping someone and eventually the money would be paid back to us.

When we give away money as interest-free loan, of course we don’t make any profit on it. But Allāh promises to multiply our rewards and give us far more in exchange.

﴿مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يُقْرِضُ اللَّهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا فَيُضَاعِفَهُ لَهُ أَضْعَافًا كَثِيرَةً وَاللَّهُ يَقْبِضُ
وَيَبْسُطُ وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ﴾

Who is it that will lend Allāh a good loan (qard hasanah) that He may multiply it for him severalfold?....

- Surah al-Baqarah, 2:245

﴿إِنْ تُقْرِضُوا اللَّهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا يُضَاعِفْهُ لَكُمْ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ شَكُورٌ حَلِيمٌ﴾

If you lend Allāh a good loan (qard hasanah), He shall multiply it for you and forgive you, and Allāh is all-appreciative, all-forgiving,

- Surah at-Taghābun, 64:17

Hoarding & Excessive Profit

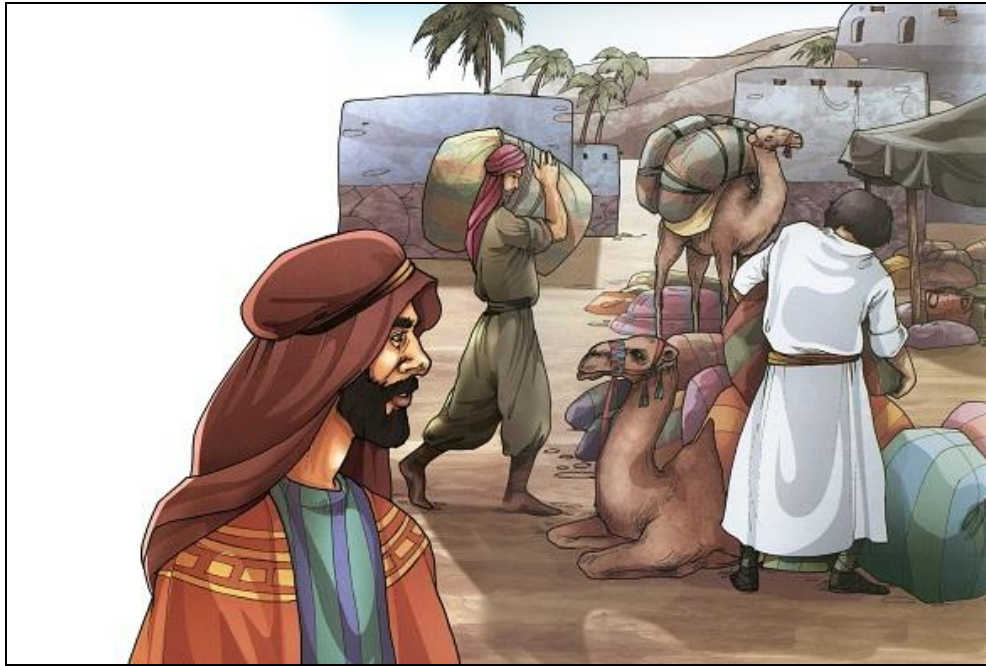
Another way that people earn harām money is by keeping a very high profit on their sales. Some people do this when they know there is a shortage for the goods they are selling and so they take advantage of people’s need for the goods and try and make money out of them. This is also harām especially if a person hoards necessities of life like food supplies and/or keeps a very high profit on them. The following incident in the life of Imām Ja’far as-Sādiq (‘a) gives us an example.

The Unwanted Profit



Imām Ja’far as-Sādiq (‘a) once decided to engage in trade. This was after his family had grown larger and his responsibilities and needs had also increased, and it had become difficult to support all of them with his present means.

And because Imām as-Sādiq (‘a) was also busy with an Islāmic university that he had set up in Madina where he was teaching many students, he was too occupied to go on trade himself. So he decided to appoint someone to do this on his behalf.

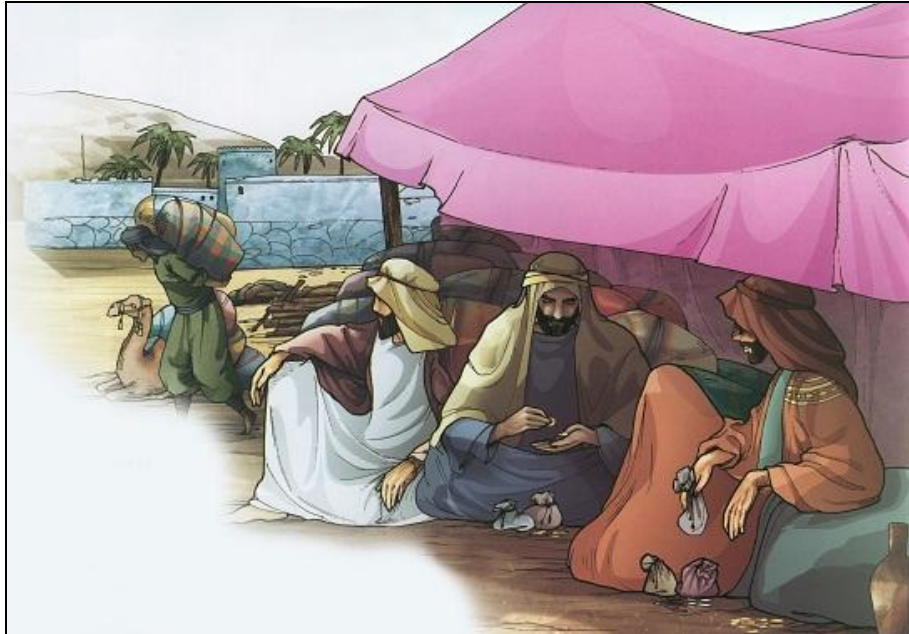


Imām as-Sādiq (‘a) decided to appoint one of the people working for him called Musādif and gave him 1000 dinars and said to him, ‘Prepare to go to Egypt for trade.’

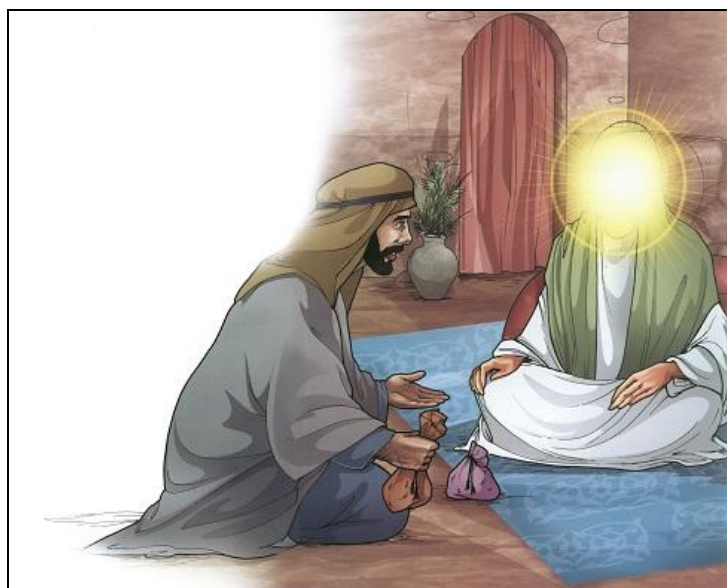
And so Musādif did that. He first went to the marketplace in Madina and inquired what goods the people in Egypt usually buy from Madina. Then he bought them and the next day he set off to Egypt with a group of other traders also heading the same way.



On the way, Musādif's caravan met another caravan that was returning to Madina from Egypt and when they asked them about what they had sold in Egypt, the caravan that was returning to Madina said to Musādif's caravan, 'The goods that you are carrying are in high demand in Egypt right now and the people really need it and have a shortage of it.'



Musādif's caravan was overjoyed to know this and all the traders including Musādif decided they would not sell their goods except at twice their cost. When they arrived in Egypt and realized it was true that there was a shortage for the goods they were carrying, they refused to sell their goods except at twice the cost (100% profit) and therefore made a lot of money.



Musādif returned to Madina with the other traders, overjoyed at the extra profit he had made. On the way back, he kept thinking how happy Imām as-Sādiq (‘a) would be that he made 2000 dinars out of the 1000 dinars the Imām had given him. Then he thought if he did this a couple more times, soon the Imām will become very rich and he (Musādif) will become a famous trader.

When he arrived in Madina and came to see Imām as-Sādiq (‘a), Musādif first gave back the Imām the first 1000 dinars that he had been given to purchase the goods. Then he produced the profit, which were another 1000 dinars. Imām Ja’far as-Sādiq (‘a) asked him, ‘How did you make so much profit and get all this money?!’



And so Musādif told the Imām the whole story. How he and his fellow traders found a black market for their goods because there was a shortage in Egypt and how they all took an oath that they would not sell their goods for anything less than 100% profit; and how they decided they would make one dinar profit for every dinar of their cost.

Imām as-Sādiq (‘a) was not pleased with this act of Musādif at all. He said to Musādif, ‘*Subhān Allāh!* You all swore in the name of Allāh to take advantage of other Muslims when they were in need and to sell to them for over a 100% profit?!’



Then the Imām ('a) took the 1000 dinars that he had originally given Musādif and said, 'This 1000 dinars is the capital I had given you, so I will take it back. As for the profit you made in this trade, I don't want it.'

Then Imām as-Sādiq ('a) said, 'O Musādif! Fighting with a sword in battle is easier than earning a lawful (*halāl*) living!'

Lesson 4

Never Support the Unjust

Most humans are not cruel or evil by nature and they do not believe it is good to be unjust to others. But most humans end up helping or supporting the few that are truly unjust or evil. This happens because of a lack of courage, a lack of intelligence or out of greed for the world.

As Muslims we must be careful not to be ‘used’ by others for their own unjust goals in life otherwise we become a part of their evil. Even a tyrant cannot commit injustices to Allāh’s creatures unless he finds someone to support him. Examples in history like Fir’aun and Yazid all prove this point. Yazid for example was not in Karbala himself. Yet he was able to kill Imām Husayn (‘a) by bribing people, promising them wealth and positions of authority, threatening and intimidating others, and so on.

If we learn to be courageous, knowledgeable and content with little in life so that we are not constantly greedy for more, then others cannot ‘buy’ our support in any manner.

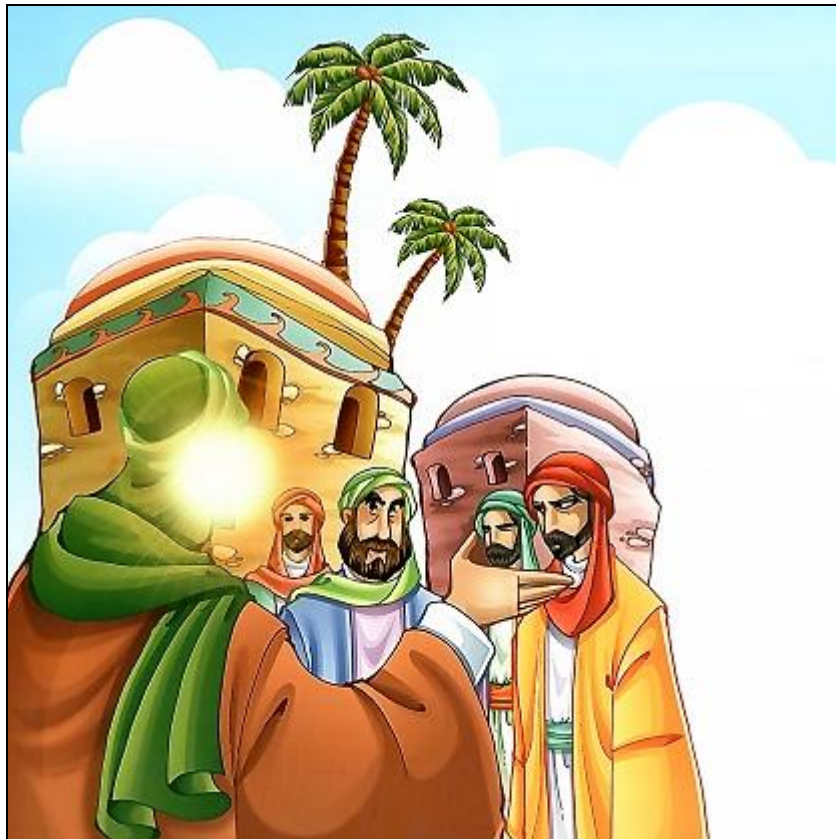
One way to check if we truly love Allāh more than the world and if we have the courage and faith to oppose the unjust, is to study examples in history and ask ourselves: *what would I have done?* For example, what would I have done when everyone was too afraid to oppose the tyrant Namrud who was trying to burn Nabi Ibrahim (‘a) and he was alone? What would I have done when the tyrant Fir’aun wanted to crucify the magicians who repented and wanted to kill Nabi Musa (‘a)? What would I have done when the Quraysh surrounded the house of Rasulullāh (s) and wanted to kill him on the night of hijrah? What would I have done in the Battle of Uhud? What would I have done when Rasulullāh (s) passed away and Imām Ali (‘a) was denied his right? What would I have done if I were in Karbala? And so on...

The following is a story about a companion of our seventh Imām, Imām Musa al-Kādhim (‘a) called Safwān. Safwān was both courageous and pious. He was not greedy for the world so when the tyrant Hārūn ar-Rashid almost used him for his own sinful goal, a simple reminder from Imām al-Kādhim (‘a) was sufficient to help Safwān save his faith (*imān*).

Safwān the Camel Owner

The Abbāsi Caliph Hārūn ar-Rashid was a sworn enemy of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a). He used to misuse the wealth of the Muslims for his own enjoyment and drink alcohol and have singers and dancers perform before him. He would never show mercy to others and was very proud and arrogant. If any Muslim would oppose his wishes, he would punish them severely.

Hārūn also claimed to be the Caliph and the successor of Rasūlullāh (s) when in fact the rightful successor was Imām Musa al-Kādhim ('a). Hārūn used to imprison, punish and even kill anyone who loved or followed the Imāms from the Ahl al-Bayt ('a).

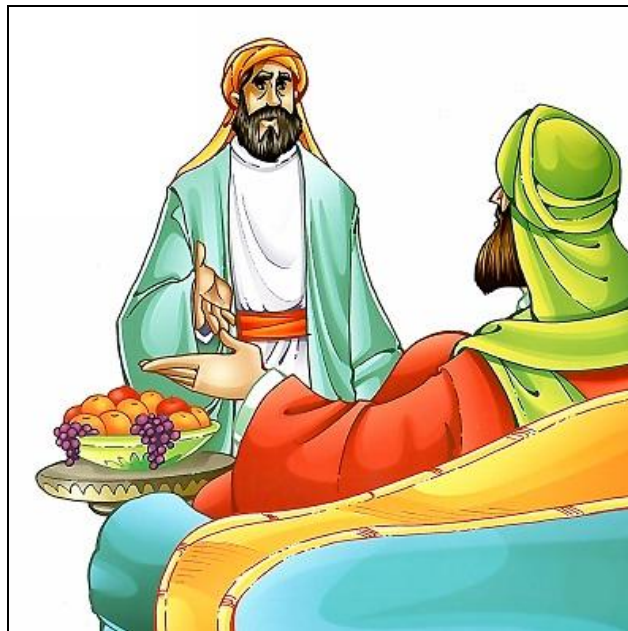


Imām Musa al-Kādhim ('a) knew Hārūn ar-Rashid very well and used to warn others about the hatred of Hārūn for the Shi'ah of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a).

One year, Hārūn decided to go for Hajj to Makkah and to show people that he was a good Muslim. He decided to go with all his ministers and officials and carry a lot of food and clothes and money and so he needed many camels to help carry all his possessions.



So he called for a man who owned many camels and whose name was Safwān al-Jammāl and asked to rent all his camels so that he could go for Hajj from Baghdad to Makkah. And Hārūn promised to give him a large sum of money for renting his camels, after he returned from Hajj.



Safwān agreed to the Caliph Hārūn's request because he was not able to refuse. He knew that this Caliph was a tyrant and that if he refused Hārūn would either kill him or take all his camels away by force. Especially because Hārūn knew that Safwān was a Shi'ah and loved Imām Musa al-Kādhim ('a), the man whom Hārūn hated the most.

And so Safwān said to Hārūn, 'I will keep all the camels for you when you go for Hajj.'



One day, Safwān decided to go and meet Imām Musa al-Kādhim (‘a) just to see how the Imām was doing and to learn from him. When he met Imām al-Kādhim (‘a), the Imām received him with honour and then said to him, ‘O Safwān! All your deeds are good and I am pleased with you. Except for one deed.’

Safwān was surprised and asked Imām al-Kādhim (‘a) what that one action was that the Imām was unhappy with and did not like about him?

Imām Musa al-Kādhim (‘a) said to him, ‘You are renting your camels to Hārūn to go to Hajj and he will use your camels to carry the wealth that belongs to Muslims to entertain himself and for his own sinful habits.’

Safwān was surprised. How did the Imām know this? He said, ‘Dear Imām, I did not rent my camel with the intention of supporting any sin. I rented them for going for Hajj. And I won’t take the caravan myself. My workers will go with them.’



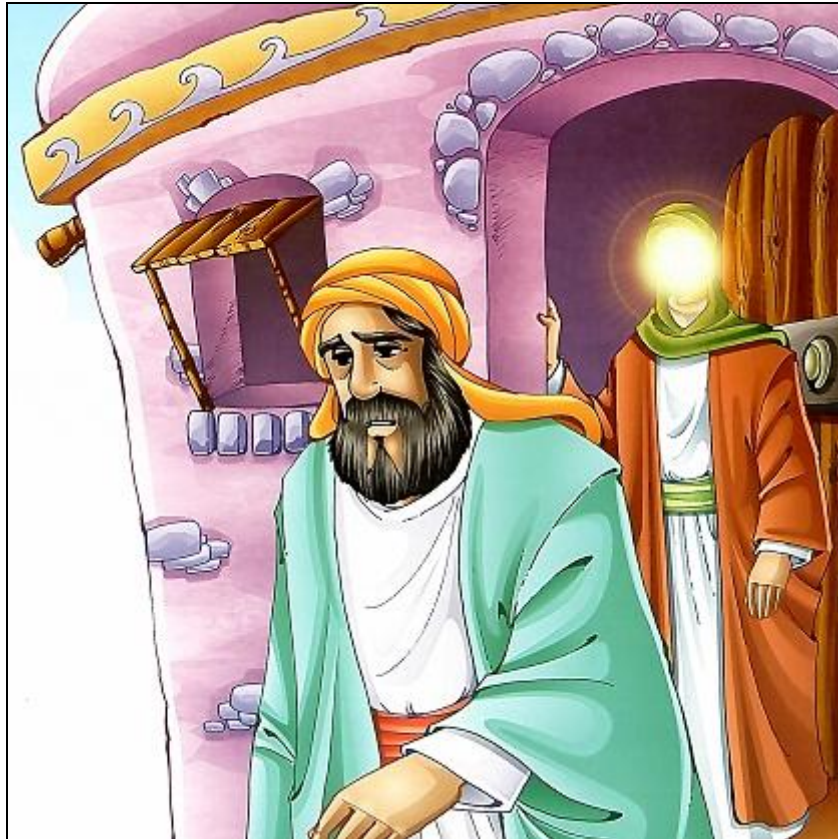
Imām al-Kādhim (‘a) said to him, ‘When Hārun returns from Hajj, are you hoping to receive payment for renting your camels?’



‘Yes mawla,’ replied Safwān. ‘So do you hope for Hārun’s well-being and success until he returns so that he can pay you for the camels?’ asked

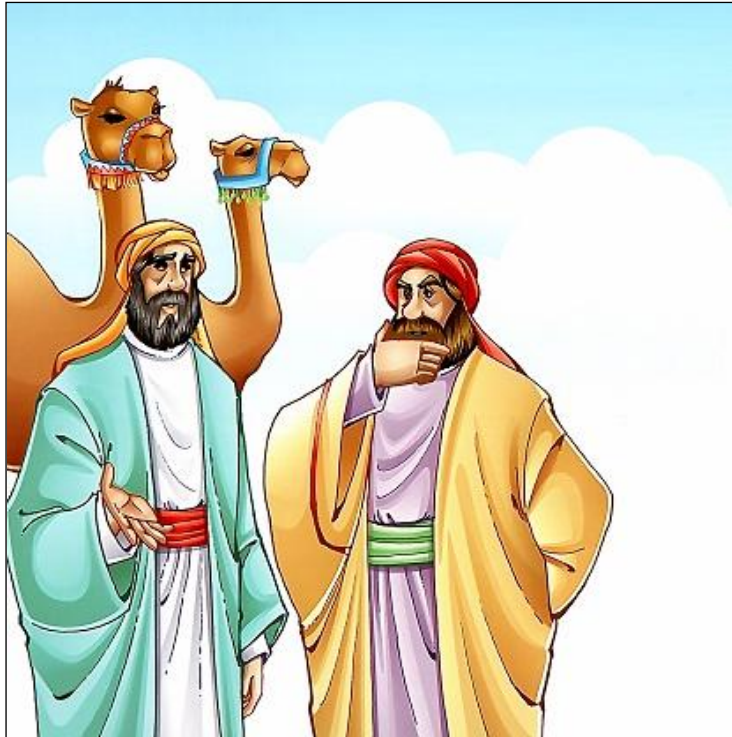
the Imām. And Safwān admitted, 'Yes, I wish he does come back and pay me.'

'But,' said the Imām ('a), 'no one wishes for the well-being of such an evil tyrant except someone who is evil like him and such a person will go to Jahannam on the Day of Judgement!!'



Safwān realized his mistake. He felt ashamed before Imām Musa al-Kādhim ('a). So he apologized to him and left. Then he decided that he would sell all his camels before the evil Hārun would need the camels. He realized that Hārun imprisons innocent Muslims and tortures and kills them and steals their property and wealth and therefore he is a tyrant who should not be supported in any way.

Safwān went to the market and started selling all his camels. Traders and caravan groups came and began buying all his camels until all were sold. Safwān did this because he wanted to please his Imām and not to do something that would displease and hurt his Imām.



When Hārūn came to know that Safwān had sold all his camels, he was shocked. He summoned Safwān to his palace and said angrily, 'Safwān! I understand that you have sold all your camels!!'

'Yes, I sold them all,' replied Safwān.

'Why?!' demanded Hārūn.

'Well,' said Safwān, 'I am now getting old and I cannot look after them. It was getting too difficult and tiring for me.'

Hārūn stood up angrily and shouted, 'Get out of here! I know who gave you this idea. It is my enemy Musa bin Ja'far, who does not want you to support me in anything. Get out of my palace quickly before I have you killed!'



And so Safwān left, smiling to himself and pleased that he had been brave and done the right thing and pleased his Imām by not supporting a tyrant.

Lesson 5

Astrology & Witchcraft

Many people love to read and follow their 'star' (zodiac sign) everyday. Islām does not allow us to believe in 'stars' or to study astrology. Allāh wants a Muslim to trust Him and not to depend on what some people think the stars are predicting.

When a person makes a habit of believing in their zodiac sign or 'star', it makes them superstitious. If they want to do something good or spend in charity but their star predicts it is bad luck, they will not do it. But when a person places his or her trust in Allāh only, then Allāh always does what is good for him or her.

Even if we believe the 'stars' do have some truth, our knowing what they say will not change what will happen but it may weaken our faith and courage. And besides, an intelligent person does not believe that the same thing will happen to millions of people around the world only because they share one zodiac sign! And even if there was a way to know what will happen in the future, trying to control our future and make decisions on what the stars predict will only make us more fearful and weak. On the other hand, if we leave matters in Allāh's hands and we plan and forge ahead with trust in Him, it makes us courageous, confident and strong. Regardless of the outcome, we would increase in our faith and love for Allāh.

Remember Allāh created everything - even the 'stars' - and He decides when everyone will be born and when they will die. So never believe in 'stars' because it is harām to do so. Always pray to Allāh to do what is good for you in the future and He will always protect you and guide you.

We should also not be curious about magic and witchcraft. Practising witchcraft of any kind is harām and very evil. Even though some books and movies show magic to be cool, it is actually the practice of Shaytān. A Muslim depends on the power of Allāh and not on his or her own power. A Muslim wants Allāh to control everything and does not want to have the power to control things himself or herself.

Shaytān loves people who practice magic, witchcraft or astrology because it weakens their faith and trust in Allāh and gives Shaytān more power to control them.

Those who dabble with any form of sorcery and magic always, without exception, end up harming themselves and their loved ones. That is why it is harām to be involved in any kind of magic or witchcraft activity. Do not even listen to or sit with or befriend a person who always talks about these occult sciences and practices.

Whenever you are afraid of magic or witchcraft, recite Surah al-Nās and Surah al-Falaq and they are the best protection against all forms of evil.

The following story teaches us to place our trust only in Allāh.

The Astrologer of Kufa



Amir al-Mu'minin, Imām Ali (‘a) one day announced that his army should get ready to go and fight in Nahrawan against the Khawārij who had disobeyed Imām Ali (‘a) and were harming and killing innocent Muslims.

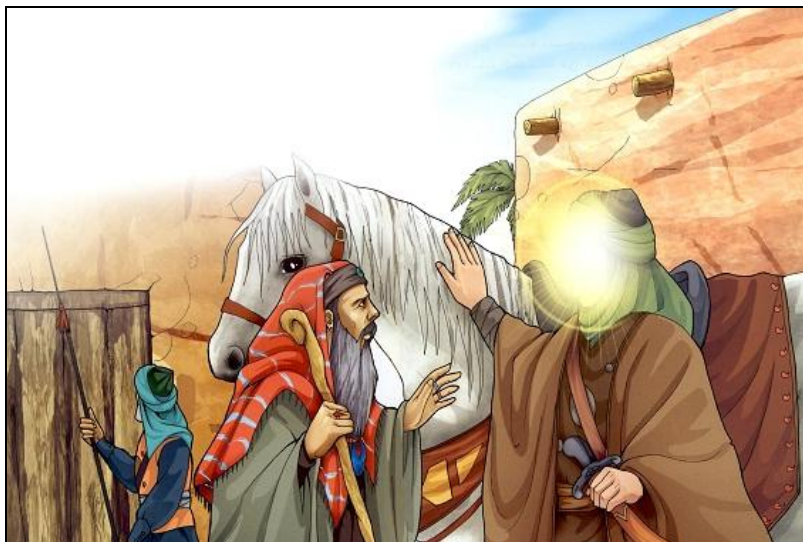
The men bade farewell to their families and their city, hoping to one day return from the war, safe and with victory.



In that city, there was an astrologer who believed he knew hidden matters and that he could predict good days and unlucky days based on the stars and their positions.

When he came to know that Imām Ali (‘a) was planning to leave for war, he came to him and said, ‘O Amir al-Mu’minin, I wish to inform you of a very important matter.’

‘What is it?’ asked Imām Ali (‘a). ‘Do not leave right now,’ said the astrologer. ‘Wait for three hours and then leave because if you leave right now, it will bring bad luck to you and your followers.’



Imām Ali (‘a) said to the astrologer that only Allāh knows hidden matters. The Qur’ān says, only Allāh knows when the world will end and He knows what is in the wombs. No one knows what he or she will earn

tomorrow and no one knows where he or she will die. Then the Imām ('a) said to the astrologer, **'So whoever believes you, has disbelieved in the Qur'ān.'**



Imām Ali ('a) turned to the people and said to them, 'O people! Beware not to take any interest in astrology! A person who studies astrology will take an interest in magic. An astrologer is like a magician and a magician is a sorcerer and a sorcerer is a disbeliever in Allāh and a disbeliever will end in Hellfire!'



Imām Ali ('a) raised his hands towards the heavens and prayed to Allāh to grant them patience and victory and to protect them from these misguiding thoughts.

Then Imām Ali (‘a) said to the astrologer, ‘We will go against your words and leave now when you believe it is an unlucky hour.’ Then he ordered the army to leave for Nahrawān.



When the battle took place, the army of Imām Ali (‘a) fought bravely and all the enemies were killed except eight who ran away. And less than ten men in the army of Imām Ali (‘a) were martyred.



The battle ended with a great victory for Imām Ali (‘a) and his army. The Muslims rejoiced. As for the astrologer, he didn’t know where to hide his face from people because of how embarrassed he was after he was proven to be wrong and his prediction was completely false.

Lesson 6

Thanking Allāh & Being Content

﴿... وَاشْكُرُوا لِي وَلَا تَكْفُرُونِي﴾

... and thank Me, and do not be ungrateful to Me.

- Surah al-Baqarah, 2:152

Everything we are and everything we have are blessings from Allāh. When we don't thank Allāh or appreciate that He is the One Who is our Benefactor, we become like beasts who are oblivious of who their Lord and Sustainer is. To thank and show gratitude is therefore to be human.

If a person does not thank us for something we do for them, we feel they are being ungrateful or rude. Similarly, it is a sign of being ungrateful when we don't thank Allāh. Even worse is when we keep expressing dissatisfaction with what we have in life and keep wishing we had more.

In Arabic, thanking Allāh is called '*shukr*' and it is expressed by saying '*al-Hamdu lillāh*' (All praise is for Allāh) or by saying '*Shukran lillāh*' (All thanks is for Allāh). And contentment is called '*qanā'ah*'. Qanā'ah means to be pleased with what Allāh has given us. Of course it is not wrong to pray to Allāh for more or to work hard to get more. But it should never be with a sense of dissatisfaction and unhappiness. People who are always complaining that life has been unfair to them lack qanā'ah.

Allāh tells us that if we thank Him, He will give us more but if we are ungrateful, we will only earn His wrath and punishment:

﴿وَإِذْ تَأَذَّنَ رَبُّكُمْ لَئِن شَكَرْتُمْ لَأَزِيدَنَّكُمْ وَلَئِن كَفَرْتُمْ إِنَّ عَذَابِي لَشَدِيدٌ﴾

And when your Lord proclaimed, 'If you are grateful, I will surely increase you [in blessing], but if you are ungrateful, My punishment is indeed severe.'

- Surah Ibrāhim, 14:7

What is important to keep in mind is that Allāh has nothing to gain or lose whether we thank Him or not. But He insists that we thank Him for our own good. Because the more we thank our Creator and appreciate

His role in our lives, the more we grow spiritually and come closer to Him. Otherwise, as we said earlier, we remain like beasts that are unaware of who they are, where they came from or where they are going.

That is why Allāh tells us:

﴿...وَمَنْ يَشْكُرْ فَإِنَّمَا يَشْكُرُ لِنَفْسِهِ وَمَنْ كَفَرَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَنِيٌّ حَمِيدٌ﴾

...and whoever gives thanks, gives thanks only for his own sake. And whoever is ungrateful, [let him know that] Allāh is indeed all-sufficient, all-laudable.'

- Surah Luqmān, 31:12

Even when you thank another person, it is yourself who looks good and is honoured. The person who is thanked does not benefit from it.

Imām Ali Zayn al-Abidin ('a) said, 'All praise is to Allāh who, had He concealed from His servants the knowledge of praising and thanking Him for the continuous favours that He bestows on them, then they would have still benefited from His favours but they would not have praised Him and they would still be sustained by Him but they would not thank Him. And if that were to happen then they would cease to be human and they would become like animals and beasts that He describes saying, *'...they are like cattle; rather, they are more astray...'* (Surah al-'Arāf, 7:179).'

When Imām Ja'far as-Sādiq ('a) was asked about the most honourable creatures before Allāh, he said, 'One who thanks Allāh when he is blessed and he bears patience when he is tested (with suffering).'

So Allāh deserves to be thanked for every breathe we take. And even when we thank Allāh, it is because He blessed us to think about thanking Him. So then we must thank Him again for allowing us to thank Him and letting us think of saying *'Al-hamdulillāh'* or *'Shukran lillāh'*. And that again requires another thanks. In the end, Allāh only wants us to realize His blessings on us and to be grateful and content.

Our eleventh Imām, Imām Hasan al-Askari ('a) said, 'Only one who appreciates a blessing will thank (Allāh).'

Not to thank Allāh is therefore a sign of ungratefulness for His blessings. It means we are mean and we enjoy Allāh's gifts and favours every time but cannot be bothered to thank Him for them. Allāh tells us that most people never bother to thank Him:

﴿وَلَقَدْ مَكَّنَّاكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَجَعَلْنَا لَكُمْ فِيهَا مَعَايِشَ قَلِيلًا مَّا تَشْكُرُونَ﴾

Certainly We have established you on the earth, and made in it [various] means of livelihood for you. Little do you thank.

- Surah al-'Arāf, 7:10

﴿قُلْ هُوَ الَّذِي أَنْشَأَكُمْ وَجَعَلَ لَكُمُ السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَارَ وَالْأَفْئِدَةَ قَلِيلًا مَّا تَشْكُرُونَ﴾

Say, 'It is He who created you, and made for you hearing, eyesight, and hearts. Little do you thank.'

- Surah al-Mulk, 67:23

How to Thank Allāh

So besides saying 'al-hamdu lillāh' and shukran lillāh', how do we truly thank Allāh and show that we are grateful for His blessings?

True thanking of Allāh is by obeying Him. Imām Ali ('a) said, 'Even if Allāh had not warned people of punishment for sinning, it would still be wājib not to disobey Him as thanksgiving for His blessings.'

When we sin, we use the time and energy and health and body and limbs and eyes and hands that Allāh has given us as favours, to disobey Him. True gratefulness means you don't use His favours to sin against Him.

Thereafter, we should also find ways to express our thanks. For example, after every salāh, we should prostrate and thank Allāh in *sajdat ash-shukr*. And every time we realize a favour of Allāh or receive or hear something good, we should thank Allāh. Our ninth Imām, Imām Muhammad al-Jawād ('a) said, 'When you don't thank Allāh for a blessing, it is like committing a sin and then not asking for forgiveness from Allāh.'

And in fact, if we are true and sincere Muslims then we must show utmost contentment by thanking Allāh at all times – even when something bad befalls us, we should say, *'al-hamdu lillāhi 'ala kulli hā'* (All praise is to Allāh in every circumstance).

Once a group of people came to our fourth Imām, Imām Ali Zayn al-Abidin (‘a) and claimed they were his Shi’ah and his true followers.

The Imām asked them what they did when they received something nice. They replied that they thanked Allāh. The Imām then asked them what they did when something nice was taken away from them. They said they got upset, but came to terms with the loss. The Imām then asked what they did when they got nothing. Puzzled, they replied that they did nothing.

Imām Zayn al-Abidin (‘a) replied that these were not the actions of his Shi’ah, but those of a dog:

- When dogs are given something, they wag their tails in thanks.
- When something is taken away from them they bark a little to complain, then walk away.
- When they get nothing, they do nothing.

Imām Zayn al-Abidin (‘a) then explained that his true followers and Shi’ah are those who thank Allāh:

- When they get something.
- When something is taken away, and
- Even when they get nothing.

Another aspect of thanking Allāh is that even when people do us a favour or help us or give us a gift, we should first thank Allāh and then thank the person or people.

When we tell people who don’t believe in God that Allāh has given us everything, they laugh and say, ‘No one has given me what I have. Even the money I have, I have earned it all by myself with my hard work.’

This shows that they are ungrateful. Their example is like that of a little boy who was sitting at home on his birthday. Suddenly the doorbell rang, and the boy rushed to see who it was. When he opened the door, he saw the postman with a HUGE parcel. The postman gave the parcel to

the boy and left. Excited, the boy rushed to open it. When he unwrapped it, he saw a big, new, shiny bicycle. He was very happy.

Then, later on in the evening, the phone rang, and the boy went to pick it up. When he picked up the phone, he heard his grandmother on the other side of the line, she said to him: 'Happy birthday! Did you like the bicycle that I sent you?'

The boy replied, 'You did not send the bicycle, the postman did!'

What would this story tell us? It would show that the boy did not understand that the postman only delivered the bicycle, and did not send it. In the same way, when something good comes our way, we sometimes fail to realize that it came from Allāh and that the person who gave it was only a means through which Allāh blessed us. That is why, when we receive any blessing, we should first thank Allāh (to acknowledge it came from Him) and then thank the person who gave us or helped us.

And finally, a huge part of thanking Allāh and showing our gratitude to Him is to use His favours and blessings to serve His creation and help others. Whether we are blessed with wealth or knowledge or some other talent (artistic ability, physical strength, etc.) we should use it to serve Allāh by helping others.

In summary, true thanking Allāh is:

- Knowing you can never thank Him enough.
- Not disobeying Him.
- Saying '*al-hamdu lillāh*' frequently and on all occasions, good or bad.
- Sharing with others what Allāh has blessed us with e.g. money, time, knowledge, and health.
- Thanking people when they do us a favour or help us.

Thanking Others

We are told in hadith, ‘One who does not thank people, has not thanked Allāh.’

This is because Allāh helps us through other people. So when we thank the people who were the means of Allāh, we actually also thank Allāh.

The way to thank others is to say, ‘Jazākumullah’, which means ‘may Allāh reward you.’

Muslims don’t believe anyone can do much good without Allāh’s help. That is why we don’t just say, ‘have a nice day’. It’s not up to the person to ‘have a nice day’. We say ‘may Allāh bless your today.’

Or for example, we don’t say to other Muslims, ‘have a safe trip’ or ‘drive safely’. It’s really not up to the person to do much more beyond what anyone would do and no one puts himself or herself in danger intentionally. Unless of course when we say that we mean ‘I pray to Allāh that you have a safe trip’.

Otherwise the words ‘have a safe trip’ on their own are meaningless unless we say, ‘Fi Amānillah’ – ‘May you be in Allāh’s care’ or ‘may Allāh protect you and keep you safe’. When we **add Allāh** to the wish, it is meaningful because Allāh is able to make a difference and our greeting or farewell or wish becomes a prayer.

In the same manner, ‘thank you’ does not do much for the person we thank except that it makes us look good and perhaps makes him feel good. But ‘Jazākumullāh’ (“May Allāh reward you”) is a prayer in which we are thanking the person, expressing our gratitude and as well asking Allāh to reward them for helping us.

Lesson 7

Sins of the Tongue

The tongue can be used for much good (praying, reciting Qur'ān, giving good advice to others, bring joy to people, expressing love, and so on) but it can also be used for much evil, such as lying, cheating, being rude, swearing, uttering blasphemy, and so on.

In this lesson we will review some of the major sins related to the tongue. In particular we will study what Islām says about *kidhb* (lying), *ghibah* (backbiting), *tuhmah* (slander), as well as flattery and boasting.

Lying (Kidhb)

﴿إِنَّمَا يَفْتَرِي الْكَذِبَ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْكَادِبُونَ﴾

Only those fabricate lies who do not believe in the signs of Allāh, and it is they who are the liars.

- Surah al-Nahl, 16:105

Rasulullāh (s) was asked, 'Can a *mu'min* be a coward?' He said, 'Yes.' He was asked, 'Can a *mu'min* be a miser?' He said, 'Yes.' Then he was asked, 'Can a *mu'min* be a liar?' and he said, 'No.'

Imām Ali ('a), 'A person will never taste the sweetness of faith (*imān*) until he or she gives up lying, seriously or in jest.'

A perfect example of honesty is our Holy Prophet Muhammad (s), who was known as the truthful one (*as-Sādiq*) even by his enemies.

A man once said to Rasulullāh (s) that he committed many sins but was willing to give up one of them. Rasulullāh (s) told him to give up lying. The man thought he got off easy. But the next day, as soon as he thought of committing a sin, he realized that if Rasulullāh (s) or anyone else asks him about it, he couldn't lie. This stopped him from other sins and forced him to give up other sins as well. This is why lying is called 'the key' to the door of sins. It is only through lying that we cover up other sins.

Listening to Lies

Listening to lies eagerly or even willingly, is equally a great sin. One of the qualities of Jannah is that there is no lies spoken there:

﴿لَا يَسْمَعُونَ فِيهَا لَغْوًا وَلَا كِذَّابًا﴾

Therein they shall hear neither vain talk nor lies.

- Surah an-Naba, 78:35

So if we wish to be among the people of Jannah, we should not listen to lies either. When we know someone is lying and we cannot stop them, we should simply stand up and leave.

When we tolerate liars or laugh with them, it gives them the impression that 'lying is ok' or normal. Instead we should express shock and disgust when someone lies and never be friends with a liar.

Lying About Rasulullāh (s) and the Ahl al-Bayt ('a)

One of the worst forms of lying is to lie about the meaning of an āyah of the Qur'ān or to lie about a hadith of a ma'sum ('a). That is why people who preach to others have to be extra careful. Some of the ways in which the Muslim scholars and lecturers have to take extreme care are:

- Not to quote hadith from unreliable books. To only quote hadith from well-known and trusted sources.
- Not to exaggerate especially when reciting the masāib (tragedy) of Karbala.
- Not to add one's own opinions to the meaning of an āyah of Qur'ān or hadith unless it is made clear to the listeners that this is just a personal opinion.
- Not to swear in the name of Allāh falsely.

Rasulullāh (s) said, 'One who attributes something to me, which I have not said, shall sit in Hellfire.' If we know a preacher has the habit of quoting unreliable reports or books of hadith or makes up stories,

especially in masāib, we should not go and listen to them when they preach. Otherwise we share in their sin of lying.

Allamah Dastghayb in his book *Dhunub al-Kabira* narrates that a preacher once came to a pious scholar called Agha Muhammad Ali and said with fright, 'I dreamt that I am tearing at the flesh of Imām Husayn ('a) with my teeth. What does this dream mean?'

Agha Muhammad Ali thought about it for a while and then said, 'You must be a preacher, who recites the masāib of Imām Husayn ('a).' The man said, 'Yes.' And so Agha Muhammad Ali told him, 'It is because you make up things or say unreliable reports about Imām Husayn ('a). You should either stop preaching or quote only from reliable books.'

Another similar incident is recorded in the book, *Shifā as-Sudoor*. A preacher was reciting a majlis in the presence of Ayatullah Muhammad Ibrāhim Kalbāsi. In the midst of his masāib, he said, 'Then Imām Husayn ('a) called out to his sister and said, "Zaynab, O! Zaynab." When Ayatullah Kalbāsi heard this, he got upset and loudly exclaimed (scolding the preacher), "Imām Husayn ('a) did not say 'Zaynab' twice, he had said it only once!"

These examples show us how important it is to be very careful when quoting any hadith or incident relating to Rasullullāh (s) and his Ahl al-Bayt ('a).

Lying in Jest

Islām does not allow lying even whilst joking. Unless of course everyone listening to the joke knows it is not true.

Rasullullāh (s) has said, 'Allāh curses the liar even if he lied in jest.'

This also means when we are being polite to people we should not lie. For example, we should not tell people 'come home some time' if we don't really mean it and we don't really want them to come. They may realize we are not serious but we form a habit of saying lies only to make ourselves look good to others. It is far better to just keep quiet even if the person may think he or she is not welcome to your home.

'White' Lies

A 'white' lie is when we conceal the truth without actually uttering a lie. It means to say something that could be interpreted in more than one way.

White lies are permissible under special conditions. For example, if a person's life is in danger and to protect him we say, 'he is not here' and by that we mean he is not at the door, then that is ok. And in fact it is wājib to even lie outright so as to save an innocent life.

Similarly, it is harām for a Muslim to reveal or confess to others the sins he or she commits. So if someone asks a Muslim, 'have you committed this sin?' then to save his or her honour and also not to publicize a sin and make it trivial, it is ok to say something unclear like, 'Do you really expect me to commit such a grave sin?' or 'May Allāh protect me from such a sin!'

Similarly if your friend tells you that others say he or she has a particular fault and you know that it *is* true but if you confirm it then your friend's feelings will be hurt, you still cannot lie and say, 'They are liars, you don't have this fault in you'. Instead you can try and help your friend by choosing a more gentle way to tell him or her the truth.

In summary, 'white' lies for the sake of convenience or because we lack the courage to say the truth are not permissible. They are still harām like lies because we intentionally lead someone to believe something untrue. However if not saying a white lie or even an outright lie causes another more serious harm like endangering a life or publicizing a sin or hurting someone's feeling, then the minimum 'white' lie is permissible.

When Lying is Permissible

As we have said, outright lying is permitted if it is save your or someone else's life, honour and even property.

When it comes to saving the life of a Muslim, Rasulullāh (s) allowed Muslims to even take a false oath and he said, 'Swear falsely by Allāh, but save your Muslim brothers from unjust murder.'

Another occasion when lying is permitted is to bring peace between two parties, whether it is a husband and wife or even two countries about to go to war.

Imām Ja'far as-Sādiq ('a) said, 'Speech is of three types: truth, lies and reconciling people.' Someone then asked him what 'reconciling people' meant and he replied, 'It is when you hear someone speaking ill about someone but you tell the other person that the former was saying good about you.' In other words the Imām did not even categorize this as a lie but rather gave it another category altogether.

Rasulullāh (s) said, 'After the fulfillment of wājib acts, the best action is to bring about peace and reconciliation among people because this is an act that spreads goodness in the world.'

When recording his final will to Imām Ali ('a), Rasulullāh (s) also said, 'O 'Ali, Allāh even likes a lie for the sake of peace and dislikes truth that spreads mischief.'

In other words if the truth will cause hate and fights and spread gossip and mischief, we should conceal it and if making something up will bring peace and give people time to get to know each other than that is what we must do.

Hiding the truth during war against the faithless is also permitted so as to give the faithful Muslims an advantage over their enemy e.g. the number of soldiers or number of wounded and dead, and so on.

Lying to Allāh, Rasulullāh (s) and the Ahl al-Bayt ('a)

We have discussed lying *about* Allāh or Rasulullāh (s) or the Ahl al-Bayt ('a). But now we discuss lying *to* them.

It is important to pay attention to what we say in our prayers (salāh) and supplications (du'as) and salutations (ziyārāt). For example:

- Are we not lying when we saying 'Allāhu Akbar' (Allāh is the Greatest) but our actions show that we think money, games, friends or family are the greatest thing in our lives?

- What do you think of a person who says in salāh ‘*diyyāka na’budu wa idyāka nasta’in*’ (You only do we worship and from You only do we seek help) but then day and night they ‘worship’ things like sports and games?
- What about when we say in the Fajr du’a, ‘I place all my trust in Allāh’ (*wa ufawidu amri ilallāh*). Or when we recite, ‘I am pleased with Allāh as my Lord’ (*raditu billāhi rabban*). Do you think some people say this but they are lying?
- What about when we recite duas and say to Allāh, ‘I weep out of fear of you and the fear of my sins’. Are we being sincere or lying?
- When we salute Rasulullāh (s) and the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a), in some ziyārāt, we say, ‘O Imām! I accept your words and act on your commands and teachings’. And in some places we say to them, ‘I am at peace with those who are at peace with you and I am at war with those who are at war with you. I am with you and against your enemies.’ Can a person say this in words while his or her actions show they are lying?

The solution of course is not to stop praying or reciting duas and ziyārāt. A Muslim should never lose hope in Allāh’s mercy, kindness and love. The solution is to change our habits and actions so that when we recite these we are not lying.

Backbiting (Ghibah)

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اجْتَنِبُوا كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الظَّنِّ إِنَّ بَعْضَ الظَّنِّ إِثْمٌ وَلَا تَجَسَّسُوا وَلَا يَغْتَبَ بَعْضُكُم بَعْضًا أَيُحِبُّ أَحَدُكُمْ أَن يَأْكُلَ لَحْمَ أَخِيهِ مَيْتًا فَكَرِهْتُمُوهُ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَوَّابٌ رَّحِيمٌ﴾

O you who have faith! Avoid much suspicion. Indeed some suspicions are sins. And do not spy on or backbite one another. Will any of you love to eat the flesh of his dead brother? You would hate it. And be conscious of Allāh; indeed Allāh is all-forgiving, all-merciful.

- Surah al-Hujurāt, 49:12

The āyah of the Qur’ān above shows us that backbiting about a person is the same as eating their flesh after they die.

Rasulullāh (s) defined backbiting by saying, 'Ghibah is remembering your (Muslim) brother in a way he dislikes.'

Imām Ja'far as-Sādiq ('a) defined it by saying, 'Ghibah is to reveal (the evil) about a Muslim what Allāh has kept hidden.'

And in fact we should not even backbite a non-Muslim because speaking ill of others is an addictive habit and it harms us more than it harms the person we speak ill of.

Imām Ali ('a) said, 'Ghibah is a sign of a hypocrite (*munāfiq*)' and he also said, 'the most disgusting habit to Allāh is backbiting.'

Imām Ja'far as-Sādiq ('a) said, 'If you backbite others then others will backbite you. Don't dig a hole for your Muslim brother (or sister) otherwise you will fall into it. As you do to others, so shall be done to you.'

And our fourth Imām, Imām Ali Zayn al-Abideen ('a) warned us, 'Beware of *ghibah* because it is the food of the dogs of Hellfire.'

Listening to Ghibah

Imām Ali ('a) has said, 'One who listens to backbiting is like one who backbites.'

This is because if we show an interest in what a person is saying when he is backbiting, it encourages the backbiter to keep his habit and do it more often. But if we show disgust and walk away or tell him to stop backbiting, he may feel bad but will learn to give up the habit. And on the Day of Judgement he will thank you for stopping him from backbiting.

Rasulullāh (s) said, 'If a person hears his Muslim brother (or sister) being backbitten in a gathering and defends him or her and stops the people from backbiting, Allāh will defend and protect him in this world and the hereafter. And if a person can defend another Muslim who is being backbitten but keeps quiet and does nothing, Allāh will humiliate and disgrace him in this world and the hereafter.'

So when you can't defend a Muslim when others are backbiting him or her, you should do *istighfār* (ask Allāh for forgiveness) and stand up and leave so that you don't listen to it and become a part of it.

Why Ghibah is Harām

Ghibah causes disunity and hatred in a community. It breaks up families and creates ill feelings that can last for a lifetime.

Ghibah is a major sin and only cowards who lack the courage to say to people what they dislike about them directly will speak about them behind their backs. Ghibah is also cowardly because the person being backbitten is not there to defend himself or herself. Even if you hear wicked things about others, you should give them a chance to defend themselves before you believe what you hear.

Ghibah is also a sign of jealousy because the person backbiting cannot tolerate to see the person he or she is backbiting so they try and 'bring them down' by lowering their esteem in the eyes of others.

Allāh hides the sins of people and takes pride in being *Sattār al-'Uyub* (The Concealer of Defects). When we expose the sins and defects of others and talk about it to people, we not only humiliate others but also remove the veil and cover that Allāh had put over their deeds. What right do we then have to expect Allāh to cover and hide our faults?

Ghibah is also addictive and habit-forming. If one is not careful they soon start doing it every time they meet others. We should never trust a backbiter because just as they tell us about others, you can be sure they tell others about us.

We should also be aware that sometimes ghibah is done without the tongue. For example, when a person passes by and we wink to someone else and imitate his or her look or how he or she walks, etc. All of this is a great sin that can cause a person to end up in Hellfire unless they seek forgiveness from the person they have backbitten.

And when we hear others backbiting, we shouldn't become their messengers either. A man once spoke bad about our first Imām, Imām

Ali b. Abi Tālib (‘a) when the Imām was not present. Someone came to report it to Imām Ali (‘a) but the Imām was angry at him and said, ‘He shot an arrow at me but missed. You picked the arrow from the ground and stabbed me with it!’

The Kaffāra (Penalty) of Ghibah

Sometimes we make a mistake and speak bad about someone to others.

To make up and compensate for a mistake is called *kaffāra* in Arabic. The *kaffāra* for ghibah is to ask the person whom you did ghibah about to forgive you.

If the person has died or moved to another country or if you feel that if you tell him or email him and ask his forgiveness he will not understand and it may make it worse, then the *kaffāra* is:

1. Ask Allāh for forgiveness and promise not to do ghibah again.
2. Pray to Allāh to forgive the person whose ghibah you did.
3. Think of the good qualities of the person and praise him when you can.
4. Whenever you remember your Muslim brother or sister whose ghibah you did, pray for them and ask Allāh to bless them and forgive them.

You can even do some good deed on behalf of the person whose ghibah you did. For example, you can give some money as *sadaqa* on behalf of the person and ask Allāh to give the *thawāb* of the *sadaqa* to that person. Or you can recite a *tasbih* of salawāt on behalf of your Muslim brother or sister.

Rasulullāh (s) has said, ‘Allāh does not forgive a person for ghibah until he asks for forgiveness from the person whose ghibah he did.’

When Ghibah is Permissible

Like lying, there are occasions when revealing a person's fault is permissible. These are:

1. If a person sins openly and shamelessly like for example a Muslim who drinks alcohol in public. Such a person is called a *fāsiq*. However we can only speak of what they do publicly. If they also commit another sin in private, we cannot mention it to others.
2. To mention the injustices of oppressors is not ghibah. For example if we talk of Yazid and his crimes it is not ghibah. He was both a *fāsiq* and an oppressor (*dhālim*).
3. If revealing the evil of someone is important in advising and saving another Muslim. For example if a person wishes to do business with someone dishonest or they have received a marriage proposal for their daughter from a dishonest man, then it is *wājib* to reveal the dishonesty of the man so as to save your fellow Muslim from suffering loss or harm.
4. If by speaking to someone else, a person can be stopped from sin then it is permissible e.g. telling a parent about their child's bad habit. This would be done as a form of *nahi 'anil munkar*.

Sometimes people who backbite others try to defend themselves by saying, 'but it's true!' That however is what ghibah is – to say what is true about a person when they are not present but they would not like to hear it. If what we say is not true then it is even worse and is called *tuhmah* (slander) meaning, a false accusation.

Tuhmah

Tuhmah (also called *Buhtān*) is like Ghibah except that what is said about another person is not even true and is false accusation.

The Qur'ān warns us that when people who have a habit of gossiping tell us something, we should not believe them right away:

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

O you who have faith! If an open sinner (fāsiq) should bring you some news, verify it, lest you should harm some people out of ignorance, and then become regretful for what you have done.

- Surah al-Hujurāt 49:6

Imām as-Sādiq ('a), 'When a *mu'min* accuses his fellow Muslim brother or sister of something untrue (i.e. does *tuhmah*), his faith (*imān*) dissolves like salt dissolves in water.'

At the same time, we should not go to places or do things that will make people suspect us. Imām Ali ('a) said, 'A person who goes to a place where sin is committed, will be accused of sin.'

The Qur'ān warns us though not to falsely accuse others or slander them just on mere suspicion:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اجْتَنِبُوا كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الظَّنِّ إِنَّ بَعْضَ الظَّنِّ إِثْمٌ وَلَا تَجَسَّسُوا...﴾

O you who have faith! Avoid much suspicion. Indeed some suspicions are sins. And do not spy on or backbite one another....

- Surah al-Hujurāt, 49:12

Flattery

Praising others on their face is called flattery. It is also a sin committed by the tongue and it is disgusting habit. A person who praises you on your face is rarely sincere. A person who sincerely loves you will praise you to others when you are not present. A flatterer on the other hand will praise you on your face but backbite you when you are absent.

Miqdād, the companion of Rasulullāh (s) said, 'Rasulullāh (s) ordered us to throw dust on the face on anyone who flatters us.'

And Imām Ali ('a) said, 'One who flatters you slaughters you.'

A man once praised someone while Rasullāh (s) was there. So Rasullāh (s) said to him thrice, 'You have slit the throat of your friend.'

The reason for this is because when a person is praised on his face, it makes him or her proud and reduces his or her sincerity. It can cause a person to stop working for Allāh and even to fail in the hereafter.

If you think someone is good, always praise them to others but not in their presence. You can encourage them to continue doing good but without showering them with lavish praises. It is definitely *harām* to praise a tyrant, a public sinner (*fāsiq*) or an anti-Islāmic ruler.

Flattery also results in many evil traits in the flatterer and not just the person being flattered. First, it encourages lying, since one of its means is exaggeration and pleasing is its aim. It also encourages immodest behaviour and hypocrisy.

What to Do when Someone Praises You

When some people praised Imām Ali ('a) on his face, he prayed to Allāh said, 'O Allāh, You know me better than myself. And I know myself better than them. O Allāh, make me better than they think and forgive me for what they do not know.'

Even worse than flattering a person about what is true about him is to flatter him about a quality that he does not possess. Imām Ali ('a) said not to believe a person who flatters you about things that you know are untrue because it is as if he is making fun of you.

We should not even accept the flattery of a hypocrite. One day a hypocrite, who was in fact among the enemies of Imām 'Ali ('a), came to him and praised him exaggeratedly. Imām Ali ('a) said to him, 'I am below what you say of me but above what you think of me!'

Praising Oneself

Praising oneself is also called boasting or bragging. Young people sometimes love to praise themselves and show off jokingly but it is wrong because it quickly becomes a habit and in time a person actually

begins to believe they *are* what they praise themselves for. Allāh tells us not to praise our own good qualities even if they are true.

﴿أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ يُزَكُّونَ أَنفُسَهُمْ بَلِ اللَّهُ يُزَكِّي مَن يَشَاءُ...﴾

Have you seen those who present themselves as pure? Rather, it is Allāh who purifies whomever He wishes...

- Surah an-Nisa, 4:49

Imām as-Sādiq (‘a) explained the meaning of ‘present themselves as pure’ in the āyah above and said it means to say, ‘I prayed yesterday...’ or ‘I am fasting tomorrow...’ and so on.

Rasulullāh (s) said, ‘One who boasts “I am the best of people” is actually the worst of them and one who says, “I am definitely going to Jannah” will go to Jahannam.’