



IMAMIA
SUNDAY
SCHOOL



SIRAAT

Name: _____

Class: _____

Teacher: _____

BOOK : 8

AGES: 12 Yrs

IMAMIA SUNDAY SCHOOL
Proposed School Calendar 2013-2014

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

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Introduction

The Book in your hands is part of a twelve-book series named “Sirāt Books”, produced by the ISSC West Madrasah (of Brampton, Canada) as part of 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
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- Br. Khalil Jaffer : For the creation of the ISSC West Madrasah’s Diniyat Syllabus and the production of all the initial Textbook and Workbook drafts and updates.
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- 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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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 (s.w.t) to purify our souls and give us success in our endeavours. This we can do by performing *wudu* and reciting a supplication (*du`a*) before learning and/or teaching. The following is a *du`a* that can be recited before studying. It is given in the *Mafātih al-Jinān* of Shaykh `Abbās al-Qummi.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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

اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِ مُحَمَّدٍ

O Allāh, send your blessings on Muḥammad and his household

اللَّهُمَّ أَخْرِجْنِي مِنْ ظُلُمَاتِ الْوَهْمِ

O Allāh, remove me from the darkness of ignorance

وَ أَكْرَمْنِي بِنُورِ الْفَهْمِ

And favour me with the light of understanding

اللَّهُمَّ افْتَحْ عَلَيْنَا أَبْوَابَ رَحْمَتِكَ

O Allāh, open for us the doors of Your mercy

وَ أَنْشُرْ عَلَيْنَا خَزَائِنَ عُلُومِكَ

And unfold for us the treasures of Your knowledge

بِرَحْمَتِكَ يَا أَرْحَمَ الرَّاحِمِينَ

By Your mercy, O the most Merciful of the Merciful

اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِ مُحَمَّدٍ

O Allāh, send your blessings on Muḥammad and his household

Syllabus for Book 8

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	The Need for Religion	WUDU - Dua for wudu (with English translation) [●] - Revision of Tayammum
2	Qualities of the True Religion - Islām the Only Religion of Allah	Shak in Salāh - How to perform salāt al-iẖtiyāt and sajdāt as-sahw [●]
3	Islām - Allah's Only Religion (cont'd)	Shak in Salāh (Cont'd)
4	IMAMAH – Qur'an and Logical Proofs for why Imāms are Divinely Appointed - Proof of Imāmah in Hadith - Appointment of Imām Ali ('a): Da'wah Dhul Ashira - Ghadir Khum – Hadith al-Qirtas – Hadith al-Manzila – Hadith al-Thaqalayn – Hadith al-Safina - Ayah Ulil Amr	Mutahhirāt & Najāsāt (10 types) Revision - meaning of hadath/khabath
5	IMAMAH – Qur'an, Hadith and Logical Proofs (cont'd)	Mutahhirāt & Najāsāt (Cont'd)
6	QIYAMAH - Death & Immortality of the Soul - Taking of the soul and Sakarāt al-Mawt	Gender-Specific 1: Boys Class - istibra [●] - signs of bulugh - semen as form of najāsah - janābah – wājib ghusl [●]. Girls Class - signs of bulugh - wājib ghusl [●] - haid & istihādha
7	QIYAMAH – Intercession (Shafā'ah) – for whom and by whom	Gender-Specific 2: Continued - Boys Class - Janābah as a mubtilāt of sawm - what is haram on a junub [●] . Girls Class - rules of prayers and fasting during haid and istihādha [●]

Lesson	Tārikh	Akhlāq
1	QASAS AL-ANBIYA – Luqmān ('a) the Wise – his advice to his son	Etiquette at Happy and Sad Occasions
2	SIRAH – Brotherhood between Muhājirun and Ansār – Pact with the Jews – Change of Qibla	MODERATION – Not eating, talking & sleeping excessively. Dressing modestly and simple. The influence of the media. Not imitating the dress and culture of non-Muslims
3	SIRAH – Battle of Badr	Generosity vs. Miserliness
4	SIRAH – Battle of Uhud	Music, Gambling, Islāmic perspective on Sports and Recreation
5	SIRAH – Battle of Ahzāb / Khandaq and Battle of Khaybar	QUR'AN & AHL AL-BAYT – Love for them and holding on to them - Blasphemy and disrespect of Allah, Qur'an, Rasulullāh (s), Ahl al-Bayt ['a] or signs of Allāh (Ka'bah, etc.)
6	AIMMAH - IMAM ALI ('a)	QUR'AN & AHL AL-BAYT – Respect for the sacred (cont'd)
7	AIMMAH – SAYYIDA FATIMA ('a)	SILAT AR-RAHM – Maintaining ties with family members vs. QATA' AR-RAHM - Breaking ties with family

Objectives for Book 8

At the end of the year the student should:

For Aqāid

- understand why Allāh has one religion only
- understand the meaning of shirk and its various forms
- understand Islām's philosophy on suffering and life being a test

- (d) understand why Imāms must be appointed by Allah and proof for Imām Ali ('a)'s right to the khilāfah after Rasulullāh (s)
- (e) understand the concept of sakarāt al-mawt and immortality of the soul
- (f) know the meaning of shafā'ah

For Fiqh

- (a) have memorized the dua to be recited during wudu and know its meaning
- (b) know how to deal with doubts in salāh
- (c) know how and when to perform salāt al-ihtiyāt and/or sajdah as-sahw
- (d) have reviewed the rules of mutahhirāt and najāsāt

For the gender specific class:

- (e) in the girls class have reviewed from the previous year: signs of bulugh, the need for a wājib ghusl during haid and istihādha
- (f) in the girls class know the rules of salāh and sawm during haid and istihādha
- (g) in the boys class have reviewed the rules of istibra
- (h) in the boys class know the signs of bulugh and rules regarding janābah and the wājib ghusl of janābah
- (i) in the boys class also know how janābah affects salāh and sawm and what is harām during janābah

For Tārikh

- (a) know the brief history of Luqmān and his advice to his son as given in the Qur'ān
- (b) understand the arrival of the muhājirun to Madina, the brotherhood with them and the change of Qibla as the Islāmic state took roots in Madina
- (c) appreciate the early struggles of the Muslims in battles against the polytheists (and their allies) at Badr, Uhud, Khaybar and in the Battle of Trenches (Ahzāb) outside Madina
- (d) know the brief biography of Imām Ali ('a) and Sayyida Fatima ('a)

For Akhlāq

- (a) know the Islāmic etiquette at happy and sad occasions
- (b) understand the importance of moderation in Islām
- (c) know the balance between generosity and miserliness
- (d) understand the Islāmic opinion on recreation & sports vs. amusements and indulging in sinful activities
- (e) know the importance of respect for the Signs of Allah
- (f) understand the importance of silat ar-rahm

Aqáid **(Beliefs)**

Lesson 1

The Need for Religion

Religion is called “Deen” in Arabic. But the understanding behind these two words is not the same. *Deen* has a vaster meaning than religion. Religion is usually defined as ‘a system of beliefs’ or ‘the recognition and worship of a higher power’. Deen however is more than just the worship and obedience of a higher Power or following a set of beliefs and rules. It is a complete way of life that guides humans on how to be happy and successful in this world and the Hereafter. In this lesson, when we use the word ‘religion’, we mean ‘deen’.

Some people ask why we should follow a particular religion. They argue as long as we believe there is a God and we are “good” then there is no need to follow any organized way of life or set of rules and therefore there is no need to follow a particular religion or argue which religion is the true religion of God.

This however is a naïve argument. If we think about it carefully we will see it makes no sense.

What is the Need for Deen?

There are many reasons why humans need deen:

- a) Deen ensures our understanding of God is correct and it helps us understand why God created us and what our purpose in life should be.

Even those who are ‘good’ at heart, wish to become better spiritually and would love to worship and serve their Creator. So they need someone to guide them. Love alone can only create extremism and innovative practices. A person who tries to find God on his or her own is only guessing like a man fumbling in the dark. Without Deen, people’s understanding of God is like a group of people in a dark room with an elephant, trying to understand what an elephant looks like. The person who touches its trunk will say, ‘an elephant is like a big hose pipe!’ The person who is near the foot of the elephant will say, ‘an elephant is like a tree trunk!’ The person near the tail of the elephant will say, ‘an elephant is like a feather duster!’ And the person sitting on the elephant will say, ‘an elephant is like a mountain!’ while the person near its head and touching its ears will say, ‘an elephant is like a bird with two large wings that flap about!’

None of these are correct. The only person who truly knows what the elephant looks like is the one who has seen it with the lights turned on. Similarly, without Deen, everyone makes up his own understanding of God and the universe. Only a Nabi who communicates with Allāh can really tell people the truth about Allāh.

- b) Deen gives us laws that we can use to govern our societies.

We know that humans are social creatures and cannot live on their own. In order to survive, they need to interact with other humans and to live with family and society. But we also know that once humans come together, laws must be established and upheld so that the rights of each individual is preserved and there is no injustice in that society. When these laws are made by people, there is always self-interest involved. Even if a group of people make decisions, their lack of knowledge of the future as well as their lack of objectively understanding the true nature of human beings makes it impossible for them to come up with laws that are truly fair and just. Only the Creator can truly tell His creatures what's best for them and Deen is a means through which we know and follow these laws.

- c) Deen stops crime and immorality.

In societies where the laws of Deen are not upheld, crime is prevented by having law enforcement officers (police) and judges and courts. But people will often only obey the law when they know they will be caught. For example, car drivers may jump the traffic light if they think no one is watching them. Someone may even steal something from a shopping mall if he or she thinks no one will find out. Deen teaches people that Allāh is always watching and every action is being recorded and will be accounted for on the Day of Judgement. So people police their own selves. A religious person does not need a police officer to be honest. Their faith is their police and watches them. There would be a lot more crime and chaos in the world if no one believed in God or the Hereafter.

- d) Deen teaches us how to live with moderation and how to organize ourselves socially.

Deen emphasizes the next life and teaches human beings to be moderate in their lives (eating, dressing, spending, and so on) and not to be materialistic. It also encourages people to be selfless and charitable and to think of others first. Deen also teaches us not to be wasteful and not to destroy the environment or hurt other creatures of God. Without deen, people would have no reason not to be selfish and materialistic and they would live on the principle of 'survival of the fittest'.

- e) Deen frees us from superstitions and baseless fears that enslave us and prevent human progress.

Whenever people live without deen, they are driven by greed and fear and they don't give importance to knowledge. The rise in ignorance then encourages people to become superstitious about everything. When a human being does not fear Allāh, he or she will fear everything else. A person who becomes Allāh's slave is truly free and no one can enslave them. But a

person who rejects Allāh will be a slave of everything else: wealth, career, relationships, those in power and authority, and so on.

- f) Deen helps us take our rightful place in the world as Allāh's representatives.

Without deen, human beings see themselves as insignificant creatures amongst millions of others just trying to survive. Their goal in life becomes only to become a professional in this field or that career. They go about everyday from sleeping to work to eating to sleeping again without questioning why they are here or where they are going. Deen gives people a higher purpose. It shows them that life is more than just eating and sleeping. It also makes people realize that Allāh created human beings to represent Him and gave them the ability to become masters of the universe. Imām Ali ('a) used to say, *'Do you think you are an insignificant life form when within you is contained the entire universe?'* The more importance we give to deen the nobler our thoughts and more meaningful our lives become.

- g) Deen connects us to our Creator, gives us knowledge of the Hereafter and leads us to eternal bliss.

Those who do not believe in the Hereafter are always afraid of dying and disappearing into oblivion. And those who believe in life after death but do not believe there is a need for deen, are not sure of what to expect after death. Deen gives us this knowledge of what to expect and how to prepare for eternal life through the anbiyā and rusul who teach us deen.

Some people say even an atheist can be a moral and good person and obey the laws of society. Why then do we need to believe in God or have any deen?

It is a mistake though to think that an atheist can have morals without deen. Firstly, if we believe that humans evolved from animals and everything came about by accident, then how did humans gain a conscience of right and wrong? Where does the atheist get his or her sense of what is good or bad?

If an atheist says he does not steal or kill only because it is necessary to allow people to live in society, then we must ask him: supposing you can steal or loot or kill without anyone knowing or without affecting the order in society, does it mean it is not wrong? He will admit it is still wrong. So we must then ask: where did we get that idea of justice vs. injustice? It is of course the instinct from God.

Also, without deen, an atheist will only obey the law when things are going well for him and her. But if he or she becomes desperate e.g. if he or she loses his or her job and is poor or if there is a civil war, then they have no reason not to break the law or become immoral because they don't believe in God or any consequences for their actions. On the other hand, a person with deen will remain moral and chaste even when they are suffering because they still know they are accountable before Allāh.

Misconceptions about Deen (Religion)

Those who are against religion, usual give the following reasons why they don't like religion:

1. Religion is anti-science and holds back intellectual progress. It is outdated and irrelevant in this modern era.
2. Religion was invented by the rich and powerful only to control the poor and weak so that they would not complain about their pitiful condition. In other words it was to silence the majority and to control them.
3. Religion promotes hatred and violence.

Let us now examine these allegations. All these statements and ideas first came from European thinkers who had known a particular religion only, i.e., Christianity. They assumed that all religions (including Islām) must be the same.

For example, until the 16th century most Christians believed their King was God's representative on the earth and that the earth was flat and the centre of the universe. They also believed that it was the Sun that went around the earth. And they believed that women were evil and it was Eve (Sayyida Hawwa ('a)) who tempted Nabi Adam ('a) to eat from the forbidden fruit tree that caused them to be taken out of Paradise. They also believed that God was a physical being in the image of a man and He sat on throne up in the heavens.

When scientists like Copernicus and Galileo challenged these beliefs and proved that the earth was round and not flat and that it was not at all the centre of the universe, both the Catholics and the Protestants reacted violently against them. The Church behaved like a tyrant whose power is threatened and they began persecuting and torturing scientists ruthlessly.

It is therefore natural that any intelligent person who comes from a Christian background (but does not study other religions) will assume that religion is anti-science, against human progress, and violent.

Some people quote the fights between various religious groups today: Muslims and Jews, Muslims and Hindus, Protestants and Catholics, Hindus and Sikhs, Shi'ahs and Sunnis, and so on. They argue that if there was no religion there would be no hatred and violence.

Actually, the people who fight for "religion" are not religious themselves. If they had understood religion, they would know that religion always calls for peaceful dialogue. Islām for example teaches us:

﴿ادْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحِكْمَةِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ وَجَادِلْهُمْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ...﴾

Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good advice and debate with them in a manner that is best.

- Surah an-Nahl, 16:125

And even if a person refuses to accept the truth, Islām teaches to let them be. It is for Allāh to guide people. We should only deliver the message so that no one can say they never heard of it:

﴿قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا الْكَافِرُونَ. لَا أَعْبُدُ مَا تَعْبُدُونَ. وَلَا أَنْتُمْ عَابِدُونَ مَا أَعْبُدُ. وَلَا أَنَا عَابِدٌ مَا عَبَدْتُمْ. وَلَا أَنْتُمْ عَابِدُونَ مَا أَعْبُدُ. لَكُمْ دِينُكُمْ وَلِيَ دِينِ﴾

*Say, 'O faithless ones! I do not worship what you worship, nor do you worship what I worship; nor will I worship what you have worshipped nor will you worship what I worship. **To you your religion, and to me my religion.**'*

- Surah al-Kāfirun, 109:1-6

﴿قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ تَعَالَوْا إِلَى كَلِمَةٍ سَوَاءٍ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمْ أَلَّا نَعْبُدَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ وَلَا نُشْرِكَ بِهِ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَتَّخِذَ بَعْضُنَا بَعْضًا أَرْبَابًا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَقُولُوا اشْهَدُوا بِأَنَّا مُسْلِمُونَ﴾

*Say, 'O People of the Book! Come to a word common between us and you: that we will worship no one but Allāh, and that we will not ascribe any partner to Him, and that we will not take each other as lords besides Allāh.' **But if they turn away, say, 'Be witnesses that we are Muslims.'***

- Surah Aal-i Imrān, 3:64

In other words those who are intolerant and violent towards people of other religions are actually ignorant or evil. They only wish to use religion as an excuse. Shaytān makes them fight for their own desires but uses religion as an excuse so that others may blame religion. If there had been no religion, such people would still fight, but for different reasons. They would fight others because of their differences in culture, race or ethnicity or the sports team they support or how they do business.

We should therefore never fall for the idea that religion promotes hatred. Religion actually teaches peace and love and it is what gives us hope of one day having a world that is free of evil and injustices.

In Book 7 (Aqāid Lesson 3) we already saw how the Qur'ān is actually in favour of science because the more science progresses, the more it proves that the Qur'ān is the Word of Allāh. And Islām encourages people to progress in science and to make new discoveries. Islām also teaches the weak and poor to stand up for their rights and for justice so that they are not controlled by the few who are rich and powerful. And last but not least, Islām insists that we should understand our religion and not follow it blindly.

Lesson 2

Islām – Allāh's Only Religion

In the previous lesson we reviewed the need for deen (religion) in our lives and discussed some of the common misconceptions about religion. In this and the next lesson, we will now look at the qualities that a true religion from Allāh must have and then discuss why Allāh has only one religion for the human race (that we call Islām). We will also briefly compare the key beliefs of the two major sects in Islām: the Shi'ahs and the Sunnis.

Why Follow One Religion Only?

There are so many religions in the world and the followers of each religion believe theirs to be the true and perfect religion. Some people argue that all religions are true and from God. It may be true that all religions teach people to be honest and not to hurt others, but thereafter, when we start asking who God is, what principles we should live by, what happens after death, the meaning of justice and who deserves leadership amongst humans, and so on, we immediately realize that all religions cannot be right. It would be unfair for Allāh to confuse people by asking them to believe in contradictory beliefs and still believe that all are correct. For example, how can Allāh tell some people that Jesus is His son (*wal 'iyādhu billah – we seek refuge with Allāh from blasphemy!*) and tell others that it is a great sin to believe Allāh has a son? We therefore realize that Allāh has only one religion that He has chosen for the human race but people have modified this one true religion and created their own versions. Some of the core beliefs remain the same but they are not all the same religion that Allāh chose for human beings.

One may ask, 'why do I have to find and follow the original religion of Allāh? Why can't I follow the religion I was raised in if the core beliefs are all the same and all religions teach us to be good?' The simple answer is that we all want to succeed in the Hereafter and live in Jannah (Paradise) for eternity. And we know that religion is a **Path** of Way of life that leads to Jannah. And we also know that the Path that Allāh has chosen for us is the shortest and the fastest way to Jannah. If someone never finds out about this Path, it is possible that they may eventually get to Jannah through a lot of hardship and struggle. But if someone knows of this Path, then it is wrong to stubbornly refuse to get on this Path and to insist that the longer and more difficult path is equally good and pleasing to Allāh.

In other words, even if other religions have some truth in them that is left over from the original religion of Allāh, there is only One religion and path and that is the original religion that Allāh intended for humans to follow and that all the prophets and messengers came to guide people to. Every time people went off this Path, another prophet or messenger was sent to lead people back on to this Path. If all religions were true and it didn't matter which one we followed, then why did Allāh

keep sending more prophets? If, for example, worshipping idols as intermediaries to Allāh was ok, then why does Allāh praise Nabi Ibrāhim (‘a) for breaking the idols in the temple of his city?

As we shall see, this one and only religion of Allāh is called Islām. And the proof that Allāh does not want humans to follow multiple paths is the following verse of Qur’ān:

﴿وَمَنْ يَتَّبِعْ غَيْرَ الْإِسْلَامِ دِينًا فَلَنْ يُقْبَلَ مِنْهُ وَهُوَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ﴾

Should anyone follow a religion other than Islām, it shall never be accepted from him, and he will be among the losers in the Hereafter.

- Surah Al-i Imrān, 3:85

Qualities of a True Religion

So how do we distinguish the one and only true religion of Allāh?

If a religion is to fulfil the needs that we mentioned in the previous lesson, it must have the following qualities:

- A true religion must be established by a Nabi (Prophet) or Rasul (Messenger) sent by the Creator. It cannot be started by an ordinary person, no matter how wise or saintly he may be.
- A true religion caters for the needs of all classes of people, male or female, rich or poor, white or black.
- A true religion treats all human beings equally based on their needs and does not discriminate, regardless of their gender, race, caste, disabilities, etc.
- A true religion allows its followers to ask questions and understand. It does not demand blind faith without questioning. It must satisfy the intelligence of human beings and not ask them to ‘believe first’.
- A true religion promotes peace and love and not violence and hatred.
- A true religion stands for justice and fights injustice. It does not teach people to ‘turn the other cheek’ and accept tyranny.
- A true religion does not have any contradictions even after a long period of time has passed. For example, for Islām to be a true religion, the Qur’ān must be free of contradictions forever.
- A true religion does not allow or ask its followers to do anything unnatural. For example, it is natural for a man to marry a woman. A true religion will not encourage people to remain celibate or allow a man to marry a man, or allow a man to get married again if his wife dies but forbid a widow from getting married again, etc.
- A true religion does not change its basic rules and principles with time.

- A true religion does not contradict reasoning, common sense or what is proven beyond doubt.
- A true religion applies its rules to all and can be practised by any human being. It does not have a separate set of rules for priests and a separate set of rules for others.
- A true religion is full of wisdom. It encourages morality and virtues and discourages immorality and vices.
- A true religion is not just spiritual in content. It also has laws that show human beings how to behave socially, politically, economically, etc. It not only addresses the relation of man to God but also man to other human beings.
- A true religion follows in the footsteps of all previous prophets who were sent by Allāh. It acknowledges them and does not teach anything contradictory. For example, all prophets taught that God is One and it is wrong to worship idols.
- A true religion is not replaced by another religion. Every Nabi and Rasul who comes after another, preaches the same religion and acknowledges the previous Nabi and Rasul as following the same Path that he is preaching. Some of the laws of practice may change from one prophet to another (i.e. in matters that are halāl and harām) but the fundamental beliefs (usul) regarding Allāh and the Day of Judgement and the Hereafter does not change. In other words, the shari'ah may change but deen is only one and universal – it never changes.
- A true religion fights myths, superstitions and materialism. It frees humans from fear and greed and teaches them to be liberated by fearing and surrendering to Allāh only. It does not, for example, encourage people to degrade and humiliate themselves by prostrating before pictures, statues, fire and animals, or to believe in 'bad luck', astrology, and so on.

Lesson 3

Islām - Allāh's Only Religion (cont'd)

Islām – Allāh's Only True Religion

The word Islām means 'peace' but also 'to surrender'. Islām, as taught by the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) is the only religion in the world that fulfils all the qualities of a true religion listed in the previous lesson. Here are some examples of how Islām fulfils these qualities:

1. Islām is not a new religion established by Nabi Muhammad (s). It is the same religion that Nabi Adam ('a) and all Anbiyā after him preached. Rasulullāh (s) is simply the last Nabi.
2. Islām does not teach that a man is superior to woman, instead it teaches all are equal and one person is only better than the other if he or she is more Godwary:

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

Indeed the most honoured of you in the sight of Allāh is the most Godwary among you. Indeed Allāh is all-knowing, all-aware.

- Surah al-Hujurāt, 49:13

3. Islām does not have a caste system of priests and 'untouchables'.
4. Islām, as taught by the Ahl al-Bayt ('a), forbids people from believing without understanding. Hence there is no taqlid in Usul al-Din (aqāid). We have to understand why Allāh is One, why there is a Day of Judgement, etc.
5. Islām forbids the killing or harming of innocent civilians even during times of war. Islām forbids the cheating of others even if they are non-Muslims and enemies of Islām.
6. Islām forbids keeping quiet to injustice. A victim who keeps silent when he or she is oppressed is equally guilty in Allāh's view as the oppressor. The Ahl al-Bayt ('a) in particular taught us never to keep quiet to oppression.
7. The Qur'ān challenges people to find any fault in it or to come up with anything like it and this challenge remains unanswered for the last 1400 years.
8. Islām does not encourage celibacy. It forbids indecency and shamelessness like adultery and leading a gay lifestyle. Islām does not demand anything unnatural from people such as not allowing a married couple to divorce even when there is intolerable hardship or not allowing widows to get married again, and so on.

9. Islām forbids superstitions and meaningless rituals where people celebrate and do things every year for silly reasons. Islām also forbids people to believe in horoscopes, ‘good’ luck and ‘bad’ luck, magic and charms, witchcraft and any practice of belief that holds a human being in fear of anything or anyone besides Allāh.
10. Islām is not just about worship, the masjid and spirituality. It has laws on physical, domestic, social, economic, political and all aspects of human life.
11. Islām encourages integrity, honesty and morality and forbids vices and immorality.
12. Islām, as taught by the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) teaches Allāh as the Creator and Source of all things and all goodness. In Islām, Allāh is not a physical being, sitting on a throne up in the heavens. Allāh is Nameless and Formless. He is beyond imagination. He is everywhere and permeates everything. He is Omnipresent (everywhere) and Omnipotent (All-Powerful). He cannot be known directly but His power and presence is recognized through His Signs (i.e. His Creation).
13. Islām teaches that humans were created to live forever and to be Allāh’s representatives. By surrendering to Allāh, humans can manifest the attributes of Allāh such as goodness, love, kindness, knowledge, power, generosity, and so on. Humans are very special because despite their freewill, they can know Allāh and surrender to Him by choice. And in doing so, they become free of all enslavements and addictions and become the most superior of all of Allāh’s creations. That is why Allāh created everything else to be in service of human beings (the Sun, the Moon, the mountains, oceans, forests, rain, animals, etc.).
14. There is no ‘priesthood’ in Islām. Even the preacher in a masjid (the Imām or Shaykh of the masjid) is governed by the same rules as everyone else. There are no separate rules for the ‘Ulamā. Every Muslim has to learn his or her religion and every Muslim is responsible to look out for and guide another Muslim.
15. Islām means ‘to surrender’ (i.e. to Allāh). It is the most natural and most universal way of life and understanding of religion. It is not named after a place or a person such as Christianity (named after Christ), Judaism (named after a place called Judea), Hinduism (named after Hind, the name for India), Buddhism (named after the Buddha), and so on.

Allāh tells us in the Qur’ān, that He has chosen Islām for human beings and that it is He that named us as Muslims now and even before when other anbiyā were sent and other scriptures were revealed:

﴿إِنَّ الدِّينَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الْإِسْلَامُ...﴾

Indeed, with Allāh religion is Islām

- Surah Al-i Imrān, 3:19

﴿هُوَ سَمَّاكُمْ الْمُسْلِمِينَ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَفِي هَذَا...﴾

...He named you 'Muslims' before, and in this (the Qur'ān)...

- Surah al-Hajj, 22:78

We should therefore thank Allāh that we follow the original Path of guidance that He always wanted human beings to follow.

In fact, Islām is so natural, that the whole universe follows Islām i.e. surrenders to Allāh. When we say we are 'Muslims' we are simply surrendering by choice and our own freewill and becoming a part of the natural path followed by the entire universe:

﴿أَفَغَيْرَ دِينِ اللَّهِ يَبْغُونَ وَلَهُ أَسْلَمَ مَنْ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ طَوْعًا وَكَرْهًا وَإِلَيْهِ

يُرْجَعُونَ﴾

Do they, then, seek a religion other than Allāh's, while to Him submits whoever there is in the heavens and the earth, willingly or unwillingly, and to Him they will be brought back?

- Surah Al-i Imrān, 3:83

And for this blessing of being Muslims, we should share the message of Islām with others. The message of Islām that we share with others is not a complicated one. It doesn't require people to change their culture and who they are. Islām is simply this: to believe that there is only One God, who has no partner, and to surrender to and worship none but Him. This surrender to God is done by accepting all His prophets and messengers, all the Books He revealed and all the angels. Loyalty to Islām is shown by following the teachings of the Qur'ān as taught by Rasulullāh (s) through his successors, the Imāms from the Household (Ahl al-Bayt).

A Jew once asked Imām Ali b. Abi Tālib ('a), 'what is Islām?' Imām Ali ('a) replied him that Islām is:

التَّعْظِيمَ لِأَمْرِ اللَّهِ وَالشَّفَقَةَ عَلَى خَلْقِ اللَّهِ

To respect the command of Allāh and to have love and compassion for the creatures of Allāh.

In other words, Islām is about service to the Creator and service to His creation. Allāh's creation includes all human beings, regardless of their faith or race and all animals, birds and everything we perceive as living or non-living around us and in the universe.

If we ever wish to see how much of a 'Muslim' we are, we should ask ourselves: 'how much do I respect Allāh's orders and how much love do I have for His creation?'

Lesson 4

Imāmah in Qur'ān & Hadīth

Why must Imāms be Divinely Appointed?

Shi'ah Muslims are often asked for proof from the Qur'ān that Imāms must be appointed by Allāh. There are in fact lots of proofs from the Qur'ān that no one can appoint an Imām except Allāh and these are in addition to logical proofs and proofs from the ahādith of Rasulullāh (s).

Before we look at these proofs however, it is important to bear in mind that no Muslim will argue, 'why do we need an Imām?'. All Muslims agree that a spiritual leader to guide the Muslim Ummah (nation) is always needed. Firstly because even the Sunni Muslims who believe that Rasulullāh (s) never appointed a successor, agree that it was necessary for the Muslims to appoint their own leader rather than leave the community without an Imām. And secondly, all Muslims believe in the authentic (sahih) hadith of Rasulullāh (s) that says:

مَنْ مَاتَ وَلَمْ يَعْرِفْ إِمَامَ زَمَانِهِ مَاتَ مِيتَةَ جَاهِلِيَّةٍ

One who dies and does not know the Imām of his time, dies the death of ignorance (jāhiliyya).

Of course 'jāhiliyya' refers to the Age of Ignorance when most people were disbelievers. Therefore 'death of jāhiliyya' means 'death of kufr (disbelief).'

The Wahābbis say the hadith above is forged and not authentic but they still accept that in Sahih Muslim (the most authentic Sunni book of hadith after Sahih Bukhāri), it is recorded that Rasulullāh (s) said:

وَمَنْ مَاتَ وَلَيْسَ فِي عُنُقِهِ بَيْعَةٌ، مَاتَ مِيتَةَ جَاهِلِيَّةٍ

One who dies without having pledged allegiance (to an Imām) dies the death of Jāhiliyya.

And besides, in several Sunni books of Hadith such as Musnad Ahmad b. Hanbal, it is recorded that Rasulullāh (s) said:

مَنْ مَاتَ بِغَيْرِ إِمَامٍ مَاتَ مِيتَةَ جَاهِلِيَّةٍ

One who dies without an Imām, dies the death of ignorance (jāhiliyya)

So if we agree on the need for an Imām, we only have to prove whether this Imām can be elected by people or whether he must be appointed by Allāh.

Proofs from Qur'ān that an Imām is Divinely Appointed

First, according to the Qur'ān, anyone who claims to invite people towards Allāh either as a Prophet (Nabi) of Allāh or a representative (khalifa or wasi) of the Nabi sitting in the place of the Prophet (s), needs Allāh's permission. Rasulullāh (s) is introduced as a Rasul who summons people only by Allāh's permission:

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

O Prophet! Indeed We have sent you as a witness, as a bearer of good news and as a warner and as a summoner to Allāh by His permission, and as a radiant lamp.
- Surah al-Ahzāb, 33:45-46

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

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

- Surah Ibrāhim, 14:1

Second, Allāh says only He has the right to choose:

﴿وَرَبُّكَ يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَاءُ وَيَخْتَارُ مَا كَانَ لَهُمُ الْخِيَرَةُ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَتَعَالَى عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ﴾

Your Lord creates whatever He wishes and chooses. They have no choice. Immaculate is Allāh and exalted above [having] any partners they ascribe [to Him].
- Surah al-Qasas, 28:68

Third, when Allāh created Nabi Adam ('a), He informed the angels that He was going to appoint a representative (khalifa) on the earth. The angels tried to object but Allāh told them, 'I know what you know not!':

﴿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. human beings) 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 if Allāh did not accept the objections of angels who are sinless and made of pure light, how can non-masum humans expect to take the whole authority of such appointment in their own hands?

Some Muslims argue that the caliphs after Rasulullāh (s) did not see themselves as God's representatives or even Rasulullāh (s)'s representatives but were only political leaders of the Muslim nation (Ummah). But we know from history that this is not true. Those who claimed to be caliphs did not say they were only political leaders. Abu Bakr, the 1st Caliph, called himself, 'The representative (khalifa) of Rasulullāh (s)'; 'Umar, the 2nd Caliph, called himself, 'The khalifa of the khalifa of Rasulullāh (s)'; and the 3rd Caliph Uthmān onwards, they all called themselves 'The representative (khalifa) of Allāh'. The Caliph Uthmān for example used to say, 'I am the servant of Allāh and His deputy (khalifa)' and the Umayyad Caliph Mu'āwiya (the father of Yazid) said, 'The earth belongs to Allāh and I am the deputy (khalifa) of Allāh'. Later caliphs even printed this title on the gold coins they minted that are found in museums today.¹ We must ask: who gave them the right to appoint themselves as Allāh's representative without Allāh's permission, when the Qur'ān clearly shows that Allāh always chooses His own khulafā?

For example, Allāh Himself appointed Nabi Dāwud ('a) and Nabi Ibrāhim ('a) as Khalifa and Imām:

﴿يَا دَاوُودُ إِنَّا جَعَلْنَاكَ خَلِيفَةً فِي الْأَرْضِ...﴾

O Dāwud! Indeed We have made you a caliph (khalifa) on the earth.

- Surah Sād, 38:26

﴿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 Ibrāhim 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

Notice that when Nabi Ibrahīm ('a) asked if his descendants will also be made Imāms, Allāh said He will not make the unjust Imāms. This means those who claimed to be khulafa and aimmah but were unjust, were not appointed by Allāh. But we know also that some of the progeny of Nabi Ibrāhīm ('a) were given a special status i.e. the status of Imāmah because of this verse:

¹ A list of every Umayyad Caliph's claim to be Allāh's Caliph is given in the book "God's Caliph" by Crone & Hinds, p. 6-11 (University of Cambridge, 2003 Edition).

﴿أَمْ يَحْسُدُونَ النَّاسَ عَلَى مَا آتَاهُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ فَقَدْ آتَيْنَا آلَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ الْكِتَابَ
وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَآتَيْنَاهُمْ مُلْكًا عَظِيمًا﴾

*Or do they envy the people for what Allāh has given them out of His grace? We have certainly given **the progeny of Ibrāhim** the Book and wisdom, and We have given them a great kingdom.*

- Surah an-Nisā, 4:54

And of course, all the Imāms from the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) are descendants of Nabi Ibrahim ('a).

Fourth, when Nabi Musa ('a) wanted a vizier to help him in his mission, he did not appoint someone by his own authority. He first prayed to Allāh:

﴿وَاجْعَلْ لِي وَزِيرًا مِنْ أَهْلِي . هَارُونَ أَخِي﴾

Appoint for me a vizier from my family, Aaron, my brother.

- Surah Tā Hā, 20:29-30

And Allāh then granted him his request.

Fifth, Allāh also told Rasulullāh (s):

﴿فَإِذَا فَرَغْتَ فَانصَبْ﴾

So when you are done, appoint.

- Surah ash-Sharh, 94:7

Meaning, appoint your successor to lead the community after you.

Lastly, Allāh also declares that as a general rule, He appoints Imāms:

﴿وَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ أُمَّةً يَهْتَدُونَ بِأَمْرِنَا ...﴾

We made them Imāms, guiding by Our command...

- Surah al-Anbiyā, 21:73

What we understand from the Qur'ān therefore is that the universal practice of previous prophets has been to nominate their successors on Allāh's orders and approval without any interference from the Ummah.

The history of the previous prophets does not offer a single instance in which a prophet's successor would have been elected by a voting of his followers.

There is no reason why in the case of the successors of the Last Prophet (s) this established Divine Law and Practice should change. In fact, Allāh says:

﴿سُنَّةَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَكُنْ تَجِدَ لِسُنَّةِ اللَّهِ تَبْدِيلًا﴾

[It is] Allāh's practice that has passed before, and you will never find in Allāh's practice any change.

- Surah al-Fath, 48:23

So in Islām, the government is not 'for the people, of the people, by the people'. An Islāmic government is 'for the sake of Allāh, of Allāh, by Allāh' and if that is the case, then the person leading the Islāmic government must also be from Allāh or a representative of the one who is from Allāh.

It doesn't make any sense that Allāh should guide human beings for over 10,000 years continuously since Nabi Adam ('a) and then after sending the final Messenger (s), everything goes silent and there is a complete disconnection between the Creator and His creatures and they are left to figure out what to do next on their own. And if we are convinced that Allāh and His Messenger (s) had an opinion, then we must find out what their opinion was because:

﴿وَمَا كَانَ لِمُؤْمِنٍ وَلَا مُؤْمِنَةٍ إِذَا قَضَى اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَمْرًا أَنْ يَكُونَ لَهُمُ الْخِيَرَةُ مِنْ أَمْرِهِمْ وَمَنْ يَعْصِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ ضَلَالًا مُبِينًا﴾

A faithful man or woman may not, when Allāh and His Messenger have decided on a matter, have any choice in their matter, and whoever disobeys Allāh and His Messenger has certainly strayed into manifest error.

- Surah al-Ahzāb, 33:36

Logical Proofs that an Imām is Divinely Appointed

We have given many proofs from the Qur'ān as to why a divine guide must be appointed by Allāh. But there are many logical reasons as well:

The same reasons that prove that the appointment of a Nabi can only be from Allāh are also the reasons that prove that the successors of a Nabi must also be appointed by Allāh only. And there is no sane Muslim who will argue that people can also appoint a Nabi. So all we need to do is ask those who reject the divine appointment of Imāms, 'why can't people appoint their own Nabi?' The most likely reply will be that a Nabi receives revelation from Allāh. If people appoint someone as their Nabi, how will he initiate communication with Allāh? Now it is true that an Imām who is a successor to Rasulullāh (s) does not receive *wahy* (revelation) from Allāh, however Allāh guides him through the special knowledge that is given to him from birth and what he learns from Rasulullāh (s) or the previous Imām. This knowledge is not ordinary knowledge yet it is required in order for a leader of the Ummah to guide the people and to be a guardian to the Qur'ān and its meaning. So if people choose their own Imām, he may be a good administrator or political leader but how will they

ensure he has the knowledge of Rasulullāh (s) and the Qur'ān to continue preserving and spreading the message of Islām?

Also, if we accept a leader or guide that is appointed by people, his first loyalty will not be to Allāh but to the person or people who appointed him and supported his authority. He will always try to please people because if they were to withdraw their confidence in him he would lose his position. Fulfilling the duties of an Imām requires one to have neither fear nor favour, with no political considerations. We only have to study history to see tons of evidence how this influenced every leader in Islām appointed by people, except for Imām Ali b. Abi Tālib ('a) and the brief rule of Imām Hasan b. Ali al-Mujtaba ('a).

And even if we suppose that people can make a good judgement on whom to choose as a leader, how do they know the inner feelings and thoughts of the person and his true nature? How often do we hear of a person whom everyone thought was 'good' and then he surprised everyone with his behaviour and actions? Take for example, the case of Abd al-Malik bin Marwān who used to spend all his time in the masjid in salāh and recitation of the Qur'ān. He was reciting Qur'ān when news reached him of the death of his father and that the people were waiting to pledge their allegiance to him as the next Caliph. He closed the Qur'ān and said to the Qur'ān, 'This is the parting between you and me!'

If Allāh is perfect and His Book is perfect and His Messenger (s) and Message is perfect and the purpose is to guide people to perfection and to eternal bliss, then the spiritual development and souls of people is a very serious matter. It cannot be left to politics and to people's greed and fears to choose their own leaders and rule as they please. Even when people do that, there has to be an Imām who is the true guide and leader and who represents Allāh's Cause on the earth, whether people follow him or not. We, the Shi'ah of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a), believe these true guides were the twelve Imāms from the Ahl al-Bayt ('a).

All Muslims believe that the hadith of Rasulullāh (s) that says, 'there shall be twelve Imāms after me' is an authentic one. But no sect of Islām has only twelve Imāms except the Shi'ah Ithnā Ashari Muslims.

Others have tried to pick their twelve 'best' Imāms of Khalifas but have still failed to show anyone even close to the excellence and perfection of the Imāms from the Ahl al-Bayt, may the blessings and peace of Allāh be on His Messenger and on them, forever. Amen.

These are the chosen ones of Allāh, about whom Allāh has said:

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

Indeed Allāh desires to keep away all impurity from you, O People of the Household (Ahl al-Bayt), and to purify you with a thorough purification.

- Surah al-Ahzāb, 33:33

Lesson 5

Imāmah in Qur'ān & Hadīth (cont'd)

Proofs of Imāmah from Hadith

There are numerous proofs in both Shi'ah and Sunni hadith books for the validity of Imāmah in Islām as well as the appointment of Imām Ali b. Abi Tālib ('a) as the first Imām of Islām. Many of these ahādith have a history or incident behind them that is discussed under Tārikh lessons. For this lesson, we will only review the ahādith with brief comments.

The Imāms are Twelve in Islām

Rasulullāh (s) said, 'I am the chief of the Prophets and Ali b. Abi Tālib is the chief of successors, and after me my successors shall be twelve, the first of them being Ali b. Abi Tālib and the last of them being al-Mahdi.'

Ahmad b. Hanbal² in his Musnad reports that Rasulullāh (s) said, 'after me there shall be twelve khalifa, all from the Quraysh.' Then he returned to his home and the Quraysh came to him and asked, 'then what will happen?' and he replied, 'then there shall be turmoil' (i.e. the end of the world).

The Hadith of Thaḡalayn

Rasulullāh (s) said, 'O People, I leave among you two important matters (thaḡalayn), which if you hold on to, you will never go astray. They are the Book of Allāh and my family ('itrah), my Ahl al-Bayt; and these two will never separate until they return to me at the Fountain (of Kawthar on the Day of Judgement).'

This hadith is widely reported by both Shi'ah and Sunni authentic books of hadith.

The Hadith of Safina

Rasulullāh (s) said, 'The example of my Ahl al-Bayt is like the example of the ark of Nuh. One who got on it was saved and one who turned away from it, drowned and was destroyed.'

² The Sunni Imām and founder of the Hanbali sect.

Other Ahādith

Rasulullāh (s) said, 'My Ahl al-Bayt are a safety for the people of this world just like the stars are a safety for those who live in the heavens.'

In other words, without the Ahl al-Bayt ('a), the world would perish. And by Ahl al-Bayt ('a), Rasulullāh (s) meant the Imāms who are guides for mankind after him.

Imām Muhammad al-Bāqir ('a) said, 'By Allāh, we are Allāh's treasure-keepers in His heaven and on His earth. We are the treasure-keepers, not of gold and silver, but of His knowledge.'

Zurārah reports from Imām al-Bāqir ('a) who said, 'The Imāms are twelve. Among them are al-Hasan and al-Husayn, and then the Imāms are from the children of al-Husayn.' And Abu Basir reports that Imām al-Bāqir ('a) said to him, 'We are twelve Imāms.'

The Right of Imām Ali ('a) in Qur'ān and Hadith

Now that we know there are twelve Imāms in Islām and that these Imāms are from the Ahl al-Bayt ('a), we must prove that the first Imām is Imām Ali b. Abi Tālib ('a) and thereafter the eleven Imāms would come from him.

We know from history that after Rasulullāh (s) passed away a group of people got together and after a lot of fighting amongst themselves, elected Abu Bakr as their Caliph. The majority of Muslims today are Sunni Muslims and they believe that Rasulullāh (s) never appointed any successor after him therefore those who ruled as caliphs and Imāms in history are the rightful leaders of Islām.

We, the Shi'ah of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a), insist that the rightful Imām was Imām Ali b. Abi Tālib ('a) and he was declared by Rasulullāh (s) as his successor on many occasions including the very first time Rasulullāh (s) addressed people (at Da'wah Dhul Ashirah) and the very last time that Rasulullāh (s) addressed a large number of Muslims (at Ghadir Khum).

The truth about whether Rasulullāh (s) appointed Imām Ali ('a) as his successor or not is very easy to find by studying the books of hadith and history carefully and thinking this through logically. For example:

We know that Rasulullāh (s) did not pass away suddenly from this world. When he went for his final pilgrimage to Makkah, three months before he passed away, he told all the Muslims at Ghadir Khum that he was leaving the world soon.

We also know that it is impossible that Rasulullāh (s) never even thought about who would guide the Muslims and lead them after him. Even the Muslims who do not believe in Imāmah agree that as soon as Rasulullāh (s) passed away, it was necessary

to appoint the next Imām even before Rasulullāh (s) was buried. And all the Caliphs who could appoint their successors before dying did so because they knew it was impossible for a society to exist with a leader.

So Rasulullāh (s) would have had three choices before passing away:

1. Not to appoint a successor.
2. Describe the qualities of a successor but not appoint anyone.
3. Appoint a successor by Allāh's will.

There is no hadith from Shi'ah or Sunni Muslims to say that Rasulullāh (s) said he was not appointing a successor or that Allāh asked him not to or that he would only tell people the qualities of a true leader and they should decide themselves. This absolute silence is very strange. It doesn't make sense that Rasulullāh (s) would be ill for many days and would pass away without saying anything about his successor and no one would ask him as well.

And we know that all Muslims agree that Rasulullāh (s) declared Imām Ali ('a) as the master (mawla) of everyone at Ghadir Khum and Imām Ali ('a) represented Rasulullāh (s) on many occasions during his lifetime.

The only possible and reasonable belief we can conclude is that Rasulullāh (s) did in fact inform the Muslims who to follow but they disobeyed his orders after him.

All Muslims agree that Rasulullāh (s) passed away on a Monday and on the Thursday before that, he asked people to bring a paper and pen so he could dictate something to them so that they would never go astray after him. But Umar b. al-Khattāb (who later became the 2nd caliph) said the Prophet (s) was talking nonsense (God forbid!) and all the people started arguing and shouting amongst themselves and so nothing was written. This is well known in Muslim history as 'The Calamity of the Thursday' (Raziyat Yaum al-Khamees).

Imām Ali ('a) in Qur'ān

Allāh commands the Muslims in the Qur'ān:

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

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

- Surah al-Nisā, 4:59

The above verse of Qur'ān is known as the Ayah of Ulil Amr. Both Rasulullāh (s) and the Ulil amr (one with authority) are mentioned by one verb: "obey". This means Allāh wants the Ulil Amr to be obeyed in the same way as Rasulullāh (s).

If this is so, then the person who is obeyed like Rasulullāh (s) must also be like Rasulullāh (s) in his knowledge, courage, justice, infallibility, and all virtues. This is because Allāh also says:

﴿مَنْ يُطِعِ الرَّسُولَ فَقَدْ أَطَاعَ اللَّهَ...﴾

Whoever obeys the Messenger certainly obeys Allāh...

- Surah an-Nisā, 4:80

In other words, obeying the Ulil Amr is also like obeying Allāh and disobeying him is like disobeying Allāh. And we know that no one after Rasulullāh (s) was more knowledgeable and courageous than Imām Ali ('a).

In another verse of the Qur'ān, Allāh says:

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

رَاكِعُونَ﴾

Your guardian (wali) is only Allāh, His Messenger, and the faithful who maintain the prayer and give the zakāt while bowing down.

- Surah al-Māidah, 5:55

This is known as the Ayah of Wilāyah (religious guardianship). All historians have recorded that this verse refers to Imām Ali ('a) because he gave his ring to a beggar while he was performing ruku' in a mustahab salāh.

On the night when Rasulullāh (s) had to leave Makkah for Madina i.e. the night of Hijrah, Imām Ali ('a) put his life in danger and slept in the bed of Rasulullāh (s) pretending to be him while Rasulullāh (s) himself left for Madina. Allāh praises Imām Ali ('a) saying:

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

And among the people is he who sells his soul seeking the pleasure of Allāh, and Allāh is most kind to [His] servants.

- Surah al-Baqarah, 2:207

Imām Ali ('a) is praised in very many āyāt of Qur'ān including the ayah of mubāhala (3:61), the ayah of tathir (33:33), and the ayah of salawāt (33:56).

Imām Ali ('a) in Hadith

Rasulullāh (s) said to Imām Ali ('a), 'O Ali, you are to me as (Nabi) Hārun was to (Nabi) Musa except there will be no prophet after me.'

This hadith is known as the Hadith of Manzila and is mentioned by Shi'ah and Sunni authentic books of hadith. It clearly shows that Rasulullāh (s) wanted Imām Ali ('a) to be his successor. This hadith also proves that there is no Nabi after Rasulullāh (s) and that he was the last Nabi and Rasul from Allāh.

Another widely-accepted and well-known hadith is the Hadith of Ghadir when Rasulullāh (s) took hold of Imām Ali ('a)'s hand and told a large crowd of Muslims – over one hundred thousand, 'whoever's master (mawla) I am, then this Ali is his master too' (*man kuntu mawlāhu fa hādha Aliyyun mawlāhu*). In other words, Rasulullāh (s) was saying that Imām Ali ('a) was now the master of the Muslims in the same way that he, Rasulullāh (s), was their master.

Other well-known ahādith from Rasulullāh (s) that both Shi'ah and Sunni scholars have reported include:

Rasulullāh (s) said, 'I am the city of knowledge and Ali is its gate. So whoever wants to come to the city (of knowledge), let him come to it from its gate.'

Rasulullāh (s) said, 'Ali is with the Truth and the Truth is with Ali. O Allāh, turn Truth wherever Ali turns!'

Rasulullāh (s) said to Imām Ali ('a), 'You are from me and I am from you' and he also said, 'Loving Ali is faith and hating him is hypocrisy.'

Some famous Sunni books of hadith like Mustadrak al-Hakim, Kanz al-'Ummāl and Yanābi al-Mawaddah report that Rasulullāh (s) said, 'whoever wishes to live and die like me and to live in Paradise after death should accept Ali as his master and follow the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) after me, for they are my Ahl al-Bayt ('a) and they have been created out of the same knowledge and understanding as myself. Woe to those followers of mine who disregard their (the Ahl al-Bayt's) relationship to me. May Allāh never let them benefit from my intercession.'

A question may come to mind: If so many Muslims heard the Hadith of Ghadir and all these other ahādith from Rasulullāh (s), then why did they still follow others and not insist that their Imām was Imām Ali ('a) after Rasulullāh (s)? Why didn't anyone raise an objection when Abu Bakr was elected as the Caliph? There are several reasons for this:

1. Following the Crowd: The group that elected Abu Bakr was not a large crowd. However they included influential individuals like Abu Bakr, 'Umar and Sa'd b. 'Ubādah. When they returned to Madina and announced what they had decided at Saqifa, many people accepted this without question and before thinking it through. For many, it was traditional to pay allegiance to anyone whom their tribal leader paid allegiance. So once one person (the tribe elder) did that, all the rest would follow without question. For example, once the leaders of the Aws and Khazraj tribes in Madina paid allegiance to Abu Bakr, their entire tribes did the same. This is also why the majority of Muslims

today are regarded as being 'Sunni'. In reality, we can see that the majority in every country, even today, simply follows the government and does not fight it even if they know they are things that are wrong. Either they feel powerless or they cannot be bothered. The rulers of the Muslims for the most part were the Banu Umayya and the Banu Abbās, who were known for their hatred for the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) and their attempts to hide the rights and position of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) in Islām. The majority of the Muslims always followed them as rulers of the time and it was their interpretation of Islām that came to be the Islām of the majority that non-Muslims call Islām today. Any scholar or Imām who didn't agree with the rulers of the time was tortured or killed. The preachers and Friday prayer Imāms in all cities were expected to say and preach whatever the rulers wanted them to do that. That is true even today in most Muslim countries where preachers are not free to say the truth if it is against the government.

2. Jealousy against Imām Ali ('a). Many companions of Rasulullāh (s) were jealous of Imām Ali ('a) because of his merits. He was younger to many of them but had proven time and again that he was superior to them in knowledge, piety, swordsmanship, courage, and so forth. Rasulullāh (s) had loved him dearly and raised him like his own son and married him to his only daughter, Sayyida Fātima ('a). This jealousy even changed to hatred in the case of some and they could not tolerate to see him sitting in place of Rasulullāh (s).

There were a few brave and sincere companions of Rasulullāh (s) who spoke out in favour of Imām Ali ('a) and were known as his Shi'ah because they refused to take the easy and convenient path of keeping quiet and just going with the majority. These companions included Salmān, Ammār b. Yāsir, Miqdād and Abu Dharr amongst others (may Allāh bless them all). But they also were not tribal leaders and neither could they get a large number of people to follow them nor were they able to defend themselves when they were persecuted by the caliphs.

One who seeks the truth today should also not be lazy and just go with the crowd. He or she should take the time and understand the need for Imāmah and ponder on the ahādith that all Muslims have reported from Rasulullāh (s) that 'one who dies without an Imām dies the death of Jāhiliyya' i.e. of kufr.

How we discuss the right of Imām Ali ('a) with other Muslims is very important. It should never be to incite hatred and cause division. Imām Ali ('a) himself would never want that. But Imām Ali ('a) can become the source of unity for Muslims if his true place in Islām is recognized by one and all.

The love of Imām Ali ('a) and acknowledging him as the rightful Imām after Rasulullāh (s) is a sign of faith (imān) and that is why, in our kalima to show our faith, we don't just recite:

Aqāid

La ilāha ilallāh
Muhammadur Rasulullāh

There is no god but Allāh,
Muhammad is the Messenger of Allāh.

We also insist on reciting three other lines that ensure we not just ordinary Muslims or disloyal Muslims who betrayed the trust of Rasulullāh (s) after him. Rather we are Muslims of the highest level of faith and loyalty to Allāh and Rasulullāh (s). These additional three lines are:

Aliyyun waliyullah
Wasiyyu Rasulullāh
Wa khalifatahu bila fasl

Ali is the Wali of Allāh,
(and he is) the trustee of Rasulullāh (s),
and (he is) his immediate successor.

Lesson 6

The Human Soul

Death of the Body & Immortality of the Soul

Most people are terrified of death. This is because they don't know what lies ahead for them after death. The fear of death has a purpose however. It ensures that all creatures struggle to survive and to preserve themselves from harm and destruction.

Islām wants Muslims to protect themselves from death but it also does not want them to love this world over the Hereafter.

﴿بَلْ تُؤْثِرُونَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةَ خَيْرٌ وَأَبْقَى﴾

Yet you prefer the life of this world, while the Hereafter is better and more lasting.

- Surah al-A'la, 87:16-17

﴿... يَوَدُّ أَحَدُهُمْ لَوْ يُعَمَّرُ أَلْفَ سَنَةٍ وَمَا هُوَ بِمُزَحَّزِحٍ مِنْ الْعَذَابِ أَنْ يُعَمَّرَ ...﴾

Each of them is eager to live a thousand years, though it would not save him from the punishment, were he to live [that long].

- Surah al-Baqarah, 2:96

And the only way to get to the Hereafter is through death, which is a bridge between this world and the next. Islām teaches us that our physical body is only a shell and vehicle that allows us to move about and live on this planet but our real self is the soul that survives after the body stops functioning. In other words, Muslims must believe that humans are not created for extinction – they are created to live forever. However the physical body cannot live forever and therefore Muslims are asked to accept death as something natural. If a Muslim gives importance to the life after death and to the eternal life in the Hereafter after which there is no death again, then he or she will spend their time on the earth wisely; and having prepared for the Hereafter, they will see death of the body as only a bridge that must be crossed in order to move to the next Life.

The Qur'ān confirms that nothing will ever escape death:

﴿كُلُّ نَفْسٍ ذَائِقَةُ الْمَوْتِ ...﴾

Every soul shall taste death...

- Surah Aal-I Imrān, 3:185

﴿أَيْنَمَا تَكُونُوا يُدْرِكُكُمُ الْمَوْتُ وَلَوْ كُنْتُمْ فِي بُرُوجٍ مُّشِيدَةٍ...﴾

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

- Surah an-Nisā, 4:78

Imām Ali ('a) was asked to describe death. He said, 'it will be one of three things: either it will bring you good news of eternal bliss, or bad news of eternal punishment or a state of uncertainty where you don't know if you are of the good or the evil.'

Imām Hasan ('a) was asked about death and he said, 'It is the greatest joy that comes to a believer when he is transported from a world of misfortunes to eternal happiness. And it is the greatest ruin that comes to a faithless when he is transported from his paradise to a fire that neither stops nor ever ends.'

Imām Husayn ('a) said to his companions in Karbala: 'Patience O children of nobility! For what is death except a bridge that you will cross from misery and harm to wide gardens of bliss and eternal blessings? Who amongst you hates moving from a prison to a palace? It is your enemies who will cross from palaces to prisons and painful punishment. My father narrated to me from Rasullāh (s) that he said: "the world is a prison for the faithful (mu'min) and paradise for the faithless (kāfir) and death is a bridge that takes those to their gardens of paradise and these to the (fire of) Hell"... I have never lied nor been lied to.'

Imām Ali b. al-Husayn Zayn al-Abidin ('a) said about death and leaving the body, 'For a faithful it is like removing lice-infested clothes and breaking off heavy handcuffs and chains and exchanging them with the most beautiful clothes and fragrances.' And the opposite is for the faithless.

When Imām Muhammad al-Bāqir ('a) was asked about death, he said, 'it is like the sleep that comes to you every night except that this is a long sleep that only ends on the Day of Resurrection.' And he said for some sleep brings beautiful dreams and for others it brings nightmares. And the same is for death.

The other Imāms said similar words. When Imām Muhammad al-Jawād ('a), our ninth Imām, was asked why Muslims fear and hate death, he said, 'that is because they are ignorant of it and so they hate it. If they understood it and if they were truly the friends of Allāh, they would love it and they would know that the Hereafter is far better than this world.'

So death of the body is not the end of life. It is the start of a new life for our true self – the soul.

Rasullāh (s) said:

مَا خُلِقْتُمْ لِلْفَنَاءِ بَلْ خُلِقْتُمْ لِلْبَقَاءِ، وَإِنَّمَا تَنْقَلِبُونَ مِنْ دَارٍ إِلَى دَارٍ

You were not created to perish; rather you were created to remain forever. You will only be transported from one world to another.

The human soul resembles the physical body of the person it lives in. If we were able to see a soul outside the body, we would recognize the person whose soul we are looking at. Sometimes however, because of our actions, our souls look much better or much worse than our physical appearance. That is why on the Day of Judgement, some people will appear to be extremely handsome or beautiful as youthful individuals with a profound personality. And some people will look like animals or even a deformed creature that resembles the mix of various animals, whose traits they had in this world.

We must therefore never forget that we are really a soul and not a body, even if we have a body in this world and in the Hereafter Allāh will give us other, ever-lasting bodies. To put this differently, we are not physical beings who experience spirituality. Rather we are spiritual beings who are undergoing a physical experience in this world so as to learn and perfect our true souls.

Once we have learnt the lessons of life in this world and prepared our souls for Paradise, Allāh either keeps us alive to teach others or takes us away so that we can shed our physical bodies like old clothes and start our next journey towards Jannah (Paradise).

Sakarāt al-Mawt

Sakarāt al-Mawt means 'Pangs of Death'. It is the pain and agony that is felt when one is about to die. If a person is good and of the people of Jannah, then his experience of *sakarāt al-mawt* is not painful. He may have a high fever or sweat or breathe heavily but in the end, he sees the beauty of the next world and he or she is happy to leave this world and longs to go to the next world.

On the other hand, if a person was evil, then his or her endless suffering starts with *sakarāt al-mawt*. As he or she dies, they may scream in pain or rub their heels together and struggle as their soul leaves the body.

The Qur'ān says:

﴿وَجَاءَتْ سَكْرَةُ الْمَوْتِ بِالْحَقِّ ذَلِكَ مَا كُنْتَ مِنْهُ تَحِيدُ﴾

Then the agony of death will bring the truth: 'This is what you used to shun!'

- Surah Qāf, 50:19

﴿كَلَّا إِذَا بَلَغَتِ التَّرَاقِيَ. وَقِيلَ مَنْ رَاقٍ. وَظَنَّ أَنَّهُ الْفِرَاقُ. وَالتَّفَّتِ السَّاقُ بِالسَّاقِ. إِلَى رَبِّكَ يَوْمَئِذٍ الْمَسَاقُ﴾

No indeed! When the soul reaches up to the collar bones, and it is said, 'Who will take him up?'³ and he knows that it is the [time of] parting, and each leg intertwines the other leg,⁴ that day he shall be driven toward your Lord.

- Surah al-Qiyāmah, 75:26-30

Rasulullāh (s) said, 'one pang (*sakrah*) from the *sakarāt al-mawt* is more severe than three hundred strikes of the sword.'

And of course for those that are evil, this is just the beginning. Imām as-Sādiq ('a) said, 'between this world and the Hereafter there are a thousand mountain-passes (i.e. challenges to cross). The easiest of them is death.'⁵

One of the sufferings of *sakarāt al-mawt* is that a person becomes very thirsty. It is therefore recommended to give water to a person who is dying and if he or she is a believer, we should turn their feet towards qibla and recite Surah Yā Sin and other surahs of the Qur'ān and duas, to calm them down.

How the Soul Leaves the Body for Believers and Unbelievers

Some people die suddenly but others fall sick and lie in bed for a few days before dying.

A person dying may show various signs during *sakarāt al-mawt*, such as sweating, his or her eyes rolling, breathing becoming heavy, voice raised, tongue sinking back, and so on. But when it is finally time to die, a person sees the Angel of Death (Malak al-Mawt) who commands the soul to leave the body and as this begins to happen, a person begins to lose control of his or her limbs one by one. First his or her legs go numb from the toes up to the waist. Then he or she loses the ability to move his or her arms and thereafter he or she cannot speak any more. Then the ears can no longer hear any sounds and as the soul reaches the throat, the eyes see the world and its people for the last time and finally the soul comes out from the nose and mouth and a person takes his or her last breathe. This is the end of the physical body but not the person, whose soul lives on.

The soul of a person who is dead hovers around the dead body and watches his or her family crying and also as the body is washed, shrouded and buried.

³ That is, by the angels of mercy and the angels of wrath present at the side of the dying person, as to which of them will take charge of him.

⁴ Due to great hardship and the pangs of death.

⁵ Mulla Fayd Kashani, '*Aalam ma ba'ad al-Mawt*, p. 42

For those who are good, even though they are afraid of death at first, they are delighted when they see the next world and how beautiful it is.

In a hadith al-qudsi, Allāh (s.w.t.) says: 'I do not hesitate to do anything except taking the soul of My servant, a mu'min. He or she hates death and I dislike causing him or her anything he or she dislikes. But it is inevitable.'

For one who wasted his or her life, there is immense regret when dying and they plead with Allāh to give them more time:

﴿حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءَ أَحَدَهُمُ الْمَوْتُ قَالَ رَبِّ ارْجِعُونِ. لَعَلِّي أَعْمَلُ صَالِحًا فِيمَا تَرَكْتُ
كَلَّا إِنَّهَا كَلِمَةٌ هُوَ قَائِلُهَا وَمِنْ وَرَائِهِمْ بَرْزَخٌ إِلَىٰ يَوْمِ يُبْعَثُونَ﴾

When death comes to one of them, he says, 'My Lord! Take me back, that I may act righteously in what I have left behind.' 'By no means! These are mere words that he says.' And ahead of them is a barrier (barzakh) until the day they will be resurrected.

- Surah al-Mu'minin, 23:99-100

﴿وَأَنْفَقُوا مِنْ مَّا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ أَحَدَكُمُ الْمَوْتُ فَيَقُولَ رَبِّ لَوْلَا أَخَّرْتَنِي
إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ قَرِيبٍ فَأَصَّدَّقَ وَأَكُنْ مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ. وَلَنْ يُؤَخَّرَ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِذَا جَاءَ أَجْلُهَا
وَاللَّهُ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ﴾

Spend from what We have given you before death comes to any of you, then he will say, 'My Lord, why did You not leave me for a short time so that I might have given charity and become one of the good!' But Allāh shall never leave a soul when its time has come, and Allāh is well aware of what you do.

- Surah al-Munāfiqun, 63:10-11

To make us realize how helpless we are, Allāh challenges us to stop a person from dying if we can:

﴿فَلَوْلَا إِذَا بَلَغَتِ الْحُلُقُومَ. وَأَنْتُمْ حِينِيذٍ تَنْظُرُونَ. وَنَحْنُ أَقْرَبُ إِلَيْهِ مِنْكُمْ وَلَكِنْ لَا
تُبْصِرُونَ. فَلَوْلَا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ غَيْرَ مَدِينِينَ. تَرْجِعُونَهَا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ﴾

So when it (i.e. the soul) reaches the throat [of the dying person], and at that moment you are looking on [at his bedside] - and We are nearer to him (i.e. the dying person) than you are, though you do not realize - then why do you not send it back, if you are not truly dependent [on us and] if you are truthful?

- Surah al-Wāq'ah, 56:83-87

A person whose soul has left the body begins to see a whole new world with things he always doubted but now is sure about: the angels, the devils, the reality of his or her actions, and so on. He may have extreme joy if he was very good or may experience extreme regret if he wasted his life by running after worldly things and wasting time by playing useless games and engaging in meaningless pleasures.

Hence Imām Ali (‘a) said, ‘people are asleep. When they die, they wake up!’

If a person always loved Allāh and his or her greatest pleasure in life was to remember Allāh, to worship Allāh and his or her love for Rasulullāh (s) and the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) then there will be no one happier than him or her after death. Because he or she will realize that all their suffering is now over and there is nothing but happiness and joy forever. But if his or her love was other than Allāh then he or she will feel ashamed and regret that they gave importance to things that don’t really matter after death and they neglected what matters the most.

Imām Ali (‘a) said, ‘it is forbidden for any soul to leave this world until it knows if it is from the people of paradise or from the people of hellfire.’

Imām as-Sādiq (‘a) said, when a true and sincere Shi’ah is about to die and his soul reaches the throat, then he sees Rasulullāh (s) and Imām Ali (‘a) and the other Imāms. And he sees the angels Jibrāil (‘a), Mikāil (‘a) and Malak al-Mawt (the Angel of Death) (‘a). Then Jibrāil comes near to Malak al-Mawt (‘a) and says, ‘this person used to love Rasulullāh (s) and his Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) so be kind and gentle with him’.

Then the Angel of Death comes to the man and asks him, ‘O servant of Allāh, have you freed your neck (from Hell)? Have you taken your guarantee of safety? Did you take hold of the Greatest Protection in this world?’

And Allāh inspires the person and he says, ‘Yes’.

‘And what is that?’ asks the Angel of Death.

‘The love and loyalty (wilāyah) of Imām Ali b. Abi Tālib (‘a),’ the Shi’ah replies.

‘You have spoken the truth’ remarks the Angel of Death, ‘you are now safe from what you feared and you shall have what you hoped for. Rejoice in the company of Rasulullāh (s) and Ali (‘a) and the Imāms (‘a).’

In one hadith we are taught that the soul of a mu’min (believer) leaves the body as gently as pulling a hair out of soft butter. And the soul of one who is evil (and who rejected the truth) leaves the body like placing a delicate silk cloth on a bush of thorns and then violently pulling the cloth out of the thorn-bush.

Imām Ali (‘a) has also said that every dying person sees him, whether he is a believer or a hypocrite. If he is faithful, he is pleased to see Imām Ali (‘a) and if he is a hypocrite he is frightened to see Imām Ali (‘a).

Rasulullāh (s) told Imām Ali (‘a) that those who love him will be glad on three occasions: first at the time of death when he will visit them; second at the time of questioning in the grave when he will help them to answer the questions, and lastly at the time of coming before Allāh, when he will introduce them and intercede for them.

In conclusion then, death is inevitable (cannot be stopped or escaped). And since we have to die, rather than ignoring it or pretending it is never going to happen, we should learn about it and prepare for it so that when it is time to die, we are happy to return to Allāh and we look forward to a better life than this world that is also eternal.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Sufi Comics Hafiz & Ali



Lesson 7

Intercession (Shafā'ah)

What is Shafā'ah?

Allāh, out of His Mercy, has opened many doors for human beings to seek His pleasure and forgiveness. Two very important doors are Tawbah (Repentance) and Shafā'ah (Intercession).

Shafā'ah is the Islāmic belief that on the Day of Judgement, Allāh will permit His special servants and the angels to intercede on behalf of sinful believers and ask Allāh to forgive their sins to save them from the fire of Hell.

It is true that Allāh can forgive His servants directly and without an intermediary but one of the purposes of shafā'ah is to honour the Anbiyā, Rusul, Aimmah and special servants of Allāh and to reveal their status before Allāh by giving them permission to ask Allāh on behalf of others.

Of course, shafā'ah does not mean that Allāh plans to punish someone but the intercessors will interfere and change Allāh's mind. It means that Allāh will already plan to forgive them but instead of doing it directly, He will do it through the intercession of His chosen servants. This is to honour His chosen and special servants and to show mankind their special status. In other words, the intercessors also, will only intercede for those whom they know Allāh wishes to forgive. They will not ask Allāh to be unjust and unfair and forgive someone who is undeserving.

Some Sunni Muslims (e.g. the Wahābbi) deny the concept of Shafā'ah and say that on the Day of Judgement no one will be able to intercede on behalf of another. All the Shi'ah and many Sunni Muslims believe in Shafā'ah.

For Whom & By Whom

Intercession (shafā'ah) will only be for the sincere believers who tried their best in this world but still cannot make it to Jannah without additional mercy and forgiveness from Allāh. And in fact, no one will be able to make it to Jannah only based on their actions. If Allāh was to judge people by their actions alone and with strict justice, all would fail. We therefore hope for Allāh's kindness, mercy and grace and not our actions alone. That is why we are taught to pray to Allāh in duas:

اللَّهُمَّ عَامِلِنَا بِفَضْلِكَ وَلَا تُعَامِلْنَا بِعَدْلِكَ

O Allāh! Judge us by Your Grace and not by Your Justice!

And Luqmān the Wise (‘a) said to his son:

*‘My son, the world is a fathomless ocean in which many learned people have drowned. So make your ship in the world, faith (imān) in Allāh and let your provisions be Godwariness (taqwa). Let the sail of your ship (i.e. what drives you in this world) be trust in Allāh (at-Tawakkul ‘ala Allāh). **Then if you are saved, it shall be only by Allāh’s mercy and if you perish it will be because of your sins.***⁶

Shafā’ah will not be for unbelievers, polytheists, hypocrites and those who did not believe in Shafā’ah in this world.

On the Day of Judgement many will be allowed to do shafā’ah (i.e. to intercede) for others. For example, a scholar (‘ālim) will be allowed to intercede for some of his students and followers, a pious parent may intercede for his or her children and vice versa, all the prophets and messengers will also intercede for their faithful followers. But by far, the greatest power of intercession will be given to Rasulullāh (s) and his Ahl al-Bayt (‘a). Everyone will wish they can get close to Rasulullāh (s) and the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) so they can ask them to intercede on their behalf.

Rasulullāh (s) was always concerned about his nation (Ummah) and the sincere Muslims. On the Day of Judgement, Allāh will allow Rasulullāh (s) to intercede for as many people as he wishes and in whom any good can be found, until Rasulullāh (s) himself is pleased and fully satisfied.

We should therefore always pray to Allāh (s.w.t.) to bless us with the opportunity to visit Rasulullāh (s) and the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) in this world and to be blessed with their shafā’ah on the Day of Judgement. We can pray to Allāh for this as follows:

اللَّهُمَّ ارْزُقْنَا زِيَارَتَهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَشَفَاعَتَهُمْ فِي الآخِرَةِ

O Allāh grant us their ziyārah in the world and their shafā’ah in the Hereafter.

Shafā’ah in the Qur’ān

The reason why some Muslims reject the concept of shafā’ah is because they recite only some of the verses of the Qur’ān on shafā’ah without look at other verses on the same subject.

For example, here are two verses of the Qur’ān that seem to suggest that no one will be able to intercede on behalf of another:

⁶ Shaykh Saduq, *Aqāid ash-Shi’ah al-Imāmiyah*

﴿وَاتَّقُوا يَوْمًا لَا تَجْزِي نَفْسٌ عَنْ نَفْسٍ شَيْئًا وَلَا يُقْبَلُ مِنْهَا شَفَاعَةٌ وَلَا يُؤْخَذُ مِنْهَا عَدْلٌ وَلَا هُمْ يُنصَرُونَ﴾

Beware of the day when no soul shall compensate for another, neither any intercession shall be accepted from it, nor any ransom shall be received from it, nor will they be helped.

- Surah al-Baqarah, 2:48

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَنْفِقُوا مِمَّا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ يَوْمٌ لَا بَيْعٌ فِيهِ وَلَا خُلَّةٌ وَلَا شَفَاعَةٌ...﴾

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.

- Surah al-Baqarah, 2:254

On the other hand, there are many verses of Qur'ān that confirm there will be intercessors. For example:

﴿... لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يَشْفَعُ عِنْدَهُ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ...﴾

To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth. Who is it that may intercede with Him except with His permission?

- Surah al-Baqarah, 2:255

﴿... مَا مِنْ شَفِيعٍ إِلَّا مِنْ بَعْدِ إِذْنِهِ...﴾

There is no intercessor, except by His permission.

- Surah Yunus, 10:3

﴿... وَلَا يَشْفَعُونَ إِلَّا لِمَنْ ارْتَضَى...﴾

...and they do not intercede except for someone He approves of...

- Surah al-Anbiyā, 21:26-28

﴿وَلَا تَنْفَعُ الشَّفَاعَةُ عِنْدَهُ إِلَّا لِمَنْ أَذِنَ لَهُ...﴾

Intercession is of no avail with Him except for those whom He permits...

- Surah Sabā, 34:23

﴿وَكَمْ مِنْ مَلَكٍ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ لَا تُغْنِي شَفَاعَتُهُمْ شَيْئًا إِلَّا مِنْ بَعْدِ أَنْ يَأْذَنَ اللَّهُ لِمَنْ
يَشَاءُ وَيَرْضَى﴾

How many an angel there is in the heavens whose intercession is of no avail in any way except after Allāh grants permission to whomever He wishes and approves of!

- Surah an-Najm, 53:26

Explaining the Verses of the Qur'ān

If Allāh intends to allow His awliya (special servants) to intercede for others on the Day of Judgement, then why does He say there will be no intercession on the Day of Judgement, in some of the verses in the Qur'ān?

The reason is that the verses that reject intercession are referring to the tyrants who have influence in this world but will not be able to use their influence to help themselves or others on the Day of Judgement.

To understand this better, think about those who hold power in this world (e.g. kings, presidents, governments, etc.). They sometimes intercede for others even when it is wrong. For example, a judge might know that a criminal deserves to be punished but decides not to punish him. The criminal may rouse in the judge an overwhelming feeling of pity by his passionate appeal for mercy. Or he may win him over with a bribe. Or an influential man intercedes with the judge on behalf of the criminal and the judge cannot ignore that intercession. Or the criminal becomes a state-witness leading to the conviction of even greater criminals, and is himself, therefore, released without any punishment. Or his colleagues get him freed from the clutches of the authorities. Whatever the cause may be, it is a well-established custom in the worldly governments and human societies to let the wrong-doers go free at times. In its simplest form, cause and effect teaches humans to seek intercession of everything. For example, hunger seeks the intercession of money to get food. Cold seeks the intercession of shelter to get warmth. A university graduate seeks the intercession of a manager in a company to get a job. And so on.

The idol-worshippers in Arabia, before Rasulullāh (s) began preaching Islām, believed that in the life after death the same can be done. For example, they offered sacrifices to their gods seeking assistance in their needs; the offerings were supposed to intercede on their behalf. Sometimes help was even sought by offering a human sacrifice. They carried this idea of continuation of the life so far that they would bury a man with all types of necessities of life, including his ornaments and arms, in order that he might use them on his onward journey; sometimes even his wives and soldiers were buried alive with him to keep him company. You will see a lot of such findings in archaeological museums around the world e.g. from the tombs of the Egyptian Pharaohs. Some such ideas have persisted even among the Muslims - with all their diverse cultures and languages, but in modified forms.

The Qur'ān has clearly rejected all such superstitious beliefs and baseless ideas:

﴿يَوْمَ لَا تَمْلِكُ نَفْسٌ لِنَفْسٍ شَيْئًا وَالْأَمْرُ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلَّهِ﴾

It is a day when no soul will be of any use to another soul and all command that day will belong to Allāh.

- Surah al-Infitār, 82:19

﴿وَلَقَدْ جِئْتُمُونَا فُرَادَىٰ كَمَا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ وَتَرَكْتُمْ مَا خَوَّلْنَاكُمْ وَرَاءَ ظُهُورِكُمْ
وَمَا نَرَىٰ مَعَكُمْ شُفَعَاءَ كُمْ الَّذِينَ زَعَمْتُمْ أَنَّهُمْ فِيكُمْ شُرَكَاءَ لَقَدْ تَقَطَّعَ بَيْنَكُمْ وَضَلَّ
عَنكُمْ مَا كُنْتُمْ تَزْعُمُونَ﴾

Certainly you have come to Us alone, just as We created you the first time, and left behind whatever We had given you. We do not see your intercessors with you—those whom you claimed to be [Our] partners in [deciding] you[r] [fate]. Certainly all links between you have been cut, and what you used to claim has abandoned you!

- Surah al-Anfāl, 6:94

There are many similar verses; and they all show that in the Hereafter such 'intercession' is not accepted.

So the verses of the Qur'ān that reject intercession are refuting this idea that people can have their own independent intercessors. But on the other hand, it does not mean that Allāh Himself will not allow or accept His chosen servants to intercede for others. In fact, He actually plans for it to honour these servants and use it as an opportunity to forgive others believers.

Another point to note:

The Qur'ān has a unique style where it first reject any false idea that anyone has independent knowledge, control, power, etc. and then it acknowledges those whom Allāh has given power, knowledge, etc. and whose abilities are dependent on Allāh.

For example, take the issue of hidden knowledge ('ilm al-ghayb). First Allāh rejects anyone having it except Him:

﴿قُلْ لَا يَعْلَمُ مَنْ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ الْغَيْبَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ...﴾

Say, 'No one in the heavens or the earth knows the Unseen except Allāh,

- Surah an-Naml, 27:65

﴿وَعِنْدَهُ مَفَاتِحُ الْغَيْبِ لَا يَعْلَمُهَا إِلَّا هُوَ...﴾

With Him are the treasures of the Unseen; no one knows them except Him.

- Surah al-Anfāl, 6:59

Then Allāh acknowledges those blessed with hidden knowledge from Him (not independent of Him):

﴿عَالِمُ الْغَيْبِ فَلَا يُظْهِرُ عَلَىٰ غَيْبِهِ أَحَدًا إِلَّا مَن ارْتَضَىٰ مِن رَّسُولٍ...﴾

Knower of the Unseen, He does not disclose His Unseen to anyone, except to a messenger He approves of.

- Surah al-Jinn, 72:26-27

The same is the case with various verses on the subjects of creating, sustaining, giving death, authority and similar things. Some verses reserve them for Allāh alone then other verses clarify that others too may do these things with Allāh's permission. This is a well-known style of the Qur'ān.

Shafā'ah in Hadith⁷

1. Rasulullāh (s) said, 'if a person does not believe in my shafā'ah, then Allāh will not let him reach my shafā'ah (on the Day of Judgement).'
2. Imām Ja'far as-Sādiq ('a) said, 'whoever denies three things is not one of our Shi'ah: the Mi'rāj (of Rasulullāh (s), that it was a physical and not spiritual journey only), the questioning in the grave, and Shafā'ah.'
3. From Imām Ali b. Musa ar-Rida ('a) who said, 'one who disbelieves in the shafā'ah of Rasulullāh (s) will not receive it.'
4. From Imām Ja'far as-Sādiq ('a) who said, 'a faithful (mu'min) will be allowed to intercede for his loved ones unless they are Nāsibi (i.e. they hate the Ahl al-Bayt ('a)). If a person is a Nāsibi, even if every prophet and every angel were to intercede for him, he will still not be forgiven.'
5. Imām Muhammad al-Bāqir ('a) advised his Shi'ah: 'Do not ask our enemies for favours because it will give them an excuse to ask us for help on the Day of Judgement' (i.e. they will come to the Imāms and say, 'we helped your Shi'ah, so help us now.')
6. From Rasulullāh (s), he said, 'I will intercede on the Day of Judgement and I will be granted, Ali will intercede and he will be granted and my Ahl al-Bayt will intercede and they will be granted.'
7. From Imām Ja'far as-Sādiq ('a), who said, 'by Allāh, we will intercede for our Shi'ah; by Allāh, we will intercede for our Shi'ah; by Allāh we will intercede

⁷ Taken from *Bihār al-Anwār*, vol. 8, the section on Shafā'ah & from *Tafsir al-Mizan* of Allamah Tabatabai.

for our Shi'ah until people will say: "we have no one to intercede for us (like this) nor any close friend!"

8. 'Ubayd b. Zurārah said: Imām Ja'far as-Sādiq ('a) was asked whether a believer would have the right of intercession. He said: 'Yes.' Then someone said: 'Will even a believer need the intercession of Muhammad (s) on that day?' He said: 'Yes. The believers too will come with wrongs and sins; and there will be none but he shall need the intercession of Muhammad on that Day.' ('Ubayd) said: 'And someone asked him about the words of Rasulullāh (s): "I am the Chief of the children of Adam, and I say this without boasting." He said: "Yes." (Then) he said: "He will hold the chain-link of the door of Paradise and open it; then he will fall in sajdah, and Allāh will say to him 'Raise your head and intercede, your intercession shall be granted, and ask, you shall be given.' Thereupon he will raise his head and intercede – and his intercession will be accepted; and he will ask and be given."'
9. Bishr b. Shurayh al-Basri narrates: I said to Imām Muhammad al-Bāqir ('a): 'Which verse in the Book of Allāh is the most hope-inspiring?' He said: 'And what do your people say?' I said: 'They say, (it is the verse),

﴿قُلْ يَا عِبَادِيَ الَّذِينَ أَسْرَفُوا عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ لَا تَقْنَطُوا مِن رَّحْمَةِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ جَمِيعًا إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ﴾

Say [that Allāh declares,] 'O My servants who have committed excesses (i.e. sins) against their own souls, do not despair of the mercy of Allāh. Indeed Allāh will forgive all sins. Indeed He is the All-forgiving, the All-merciful.

- Surah az-Zumar, 39:53

He said: 'But we, the Ahl al-Bayt, do not say so.' I said: 'Then what do you say about it?' He said: 'We say (it is the verse),

﴿وَلَسَوْفَ يُعْطِيكَ رَبُّكَ فَتَرْضَىٰ﴾

Soon your Lord will give you [that with which] you will be pleased.

- Surah al-Duha, 93:5

Then Imām al-Bāqir ('a) said, '(It means) the intercession, by Allāh the intercession, by Allāh the intercession.'

10. And from Sunni sources, ad-Daylami reports from Abu Hurayra who said, Rasulullāh (s) said, 'the intercessors are five: the Qur'ān, kinship, trustworthiness (al-amānah), your Prophet (Nabi) and the family (Ahl al-Bayt) of your Prophet.'

The Objections to Shafā'ah and Replies to Them

First Objection: Allāh has threatened to punish the wrongdoer; now suppose He waives the punishment on the Day of Judgment. It means either it is unfair and unjust to forgive the one who should be punished or Allāh broke His promise (wal 'iyādhu billah!).

Reply: Then what do we say about Allāh's orders given to test the loyalty of Nabi Ibrahim ('a) that were changed at the last moment i.e. not to kill his son Ismā'il? It was a waiver too. Likewise, it may be that Allāh has always planned to punish the sinful disbelievers but to rescue the sinful believers who sincerely try their best but still need to be forgiven. Therefore intercession is not a break of a promise. It is a provision planned for in advance to help the sincere believers.

Second Objection: It is the established practice of Allāh that His actions never contradict. Whatever He decrees and orders, without any exception, runs on an established pattern. And this is the foundation that the system of cause and effect has been built upon. Allāh says:

﴿... فَلَنْ تَجِدَ لِسُنَّةِ اللَّهِ تَبْدِيلًا وَكَنْ تَجِدَ لِسُنَّةِ اللَّهِ تَحْوِيلًا﴾

Yet you will never find any change in Allāh's practice, and you will never find any revision in Allāh's practice.

- Surah al-Fātir, 35:43

Intercession would create a contradiction in the action of Allāh. If intercession caused waiver of punishment from all the sinners, of all their sins, then it would defeat the very purpose of the shari'ah and would turn the whole system into a joke. And if only some of the sinners, or only some of their sins were forgiven, then there would occur contradiction in Allāh's rules and system of justice. Intercession is used by humans in this world to exert influence, favour some over others, bribe, etc. But Allāh is just to all. He cannot favour some over others.

Reply: No doubt Allāh's actions are based on justice. But Allāh has created a system of cause and effect and He does not deal with all issues in one way only. There are many contradictory effects based on their causes. For example, Allāh feeds everyone. But some are poor and some are rich. Allāh gives death to everyone. But some live a short life and some long. It is because of different causes. E.g. one works harder and deserves more than another. Some results are good for one person's eternal life but bad for another e.g. beauty, health, wealth, intellect, strength, etc. Similarly, intercession is not given indiscriminately to anyone who wants it or claims it. It is only for the deserving and there is no contradiction even if only some benefit from it.

Third Objection: In this world, intercession causes a judge to change his original will e.g. to punish a criminal. A just judge may not accept an intercession unless he finds new evidence and his original decision and knowledge changes. An unjust judge will accept and change his judgement (e.g. for a bribe) even if he knows it is wrong (i.e. his knowledge has not changed). Now Allāh's knowledge never changes. It is impossible for Him to make a mistake. So if Allāh knows a person deserves to be forgiven, then He can forgive him with no need for intercession. And if Allāh knows a person deserves to be punished, then if He accepts intercession, it means He had to revise His judgement and knowledge!

Reply: Intercession has nothing to do with change of will or knowledge. What actually changes is the thing willed about or known. Allāh knows that a certain man will pass through various stages in his life; for a time his condition will be excellent - and Allāh wills about him a certain will, and He knows that later his condition will change - and He wills about him another will. The same happens with our knowledge and will. We know that soon night will come and we will not be able to see in darkness, but a few hours later the sun will rise dispelling the darkness. When night comes, our will is directed to light a lamp, and later when the morning comes our will is directed to extinguish that lamp. In this case, there was no change at all in our knowledge and will; what changed was the objects of that knowledge and will.

What is impossible is for Allāh not to know that a person's condition will change in the future. Or for Him to will something to change and the thing remains unchanged. In other words, it is impossible for Him to be mistaken in His knowledge or for His will to be ineffective. We see an apparition far away and take it to be a man; on coming nearer we find that it was a horse. In this case, our "knowledge" was incorrect and we were mistaken. Likewise, we intend to do a certain work, then we realize that it would be wrong to do so; here our "will" was cancelled and became ineffective. Such disagreement is certainly impossible for Allāh. So Allāh knows even now who will be a sinner, who will need intercession and who will receive it and who won't deserve it and won't get it.

Fourth Objection: Had Allāh promised intercession, or had His prophets brought this message to their nations, the people would be encouraged to disobey the commandments of Allāh, and to transgress the limits of the shari'ah. It would have defeated the whole purpose behind religion.

Reply: How then will we explain verses showing that Allāh's mercy and forgiveness is all-encompassing? For example:

﴿إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَغْفِرُ أَنْ يُشْرَكَ بِهِ وَيَغْفِرُ مَا دُونَ ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ...﴾

*Indeed Allāh does not forgive that any partner should be ascribed to Him, but **He forgives anything besides that** to whomever He wishes.*

- Surah an-Nisā, 4:48

And also:

﴿قُلْ يَا عِبَادِيَ الَّذِينَ أَسْرَفُوا عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ لَا تَقْنَطُوا مِن رَّحْمَةِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَغْفِرُ
الذُّنُوبَ جَمِيعًا إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ﴾

Say [that Allāh declares,] ‘O My servants who have committed excesses (i.e. sins) against their own souls, do not despair of the mercy of Allāh. Indeed Allāh will forgive all sins. Indeed He is the All-forgiving, the All-merciful.

- Surah az-Zumar, 39:53

And even polytheism (*shirk*) is forgiven with repentance. Secondly, intercession would only encourage people to sin if: (a) people were told by their names that they will have intercession regardless of what they do, or (b) intercession was promised for everyone and every kind of disobedience or even specific types of sins.

But Allāh has kept both things vague. He has never said what sins or which sinners might benefit from intercession, nor has He said whether all or only some of the punishment would be waived; nor has He made it clear whether or not the intercession would be effective in every condition and at all times. In view of this, it would be foolish for anyone to assume he/she will definitely deserve intercession regardless of what sins he/she commits. To give people hope, Allāh says:

﴿إِن تَجْتَنِبُوا كَبَائِرَ مَا تُنْهَوْنَ عَنْهُ نَكَفَّرْ عَنْكُمْ سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ وَنُدْخِلْكُمْ مُدْخَلًا كَرِيمًا﴾

If you avoid the major sins that you are forbidden, We will absolve you of your misdeeds, and admit you to a noble abode.

– Surah an-Nisā, 4:31

Does this mean that this verse encourages people to sin? No. It means if you try your best and keep yourself as pure as possible, then do not lose hope in the mercy of Allāh. In fact intercession gives hope to people in Allāh’s mercy and kindness.

Fiqh **(Laws)**

Lesson 1

Du'a for Wudu

Wudu is an act of worship ('ibādah). When we perform wudu we should already be thinking of preparing ourselves to stand before Allāh in salāh. We should not be talking to others, watching TV or engage in any worldly activity when performing wudu. One way to help us focus on wudu is to make a habit of reciting the du'a for wudu aloud whilst performing it.

The du'a for wudu is beautiful because it is short and easy to remember and has a separate part to recite for each action of wudu. And all the parts of the du'a for wudu refer back to the Day of Judgement so it helps us focus on the hereafter and makes us humble as we prepare to stand before our Creator, Allāh.

Make sure you recite the du'a for wudu in Arabic but that you also understand the meaning of what you are reciting. What you memorize when you are young, you will always remember even when you are an adult.

Du'a for the Mustahab Parts of Wudu

<p>Before you start, when you first see the water</p>	<p>بِسْمِ اللَّهِ وَبِاللَّهِ وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي جَعَلَ الْمَاءَ طَهُورًا وَلَمْ يَجْعَلْهُ نَجِسًا</p>
	<p>In the Name of Allāh and with Allāh's help I start. All praise is for Allāh Who made water tāhir and not najis.</p>
<p>When washing hands before starting wudu</p>	<p>اللَّهُمَّ اجْعَلْنِي مِنَ التَّوَّابِينَ وَاجْعَلْنِي مِنَ الْمُتَطَهِّرِينَ</p>
	<p>O Allāh! Make me of those who repent and purify themselves.</p>

When rinsing mouth	<p>اللَّهُمَّ لَقِّنِي حُجَّتِي يَوْمَ الْقَاكِ وَ اطْلِقْ لِسَانِي بِذِكْرِكَ</p>
	O Allāh! Let me meet my proofs the Day I meet You and make my tongue fluent with Your remembrance.
When rinsing nose	<p>اللَّهُمَّ لَا تُحَرِّمْ عَلَيَّ رِيحَ الْجَنَّةِ وَ اجْعَلْنِي مِمَّنْ يَشُمُّ رِيحَهَا وَ رَوْحَهَا وَطِيبَهَا</p>
	O Allāh! Do not deprive me of the scent of Paradise and make me of those who get to smell its scents and enjoy its pure rewards.

The du'as for the wājib parts of wudu are given on the next page separately and to fit one page so you can make a copy of it and stick up somewhere easy to see at home e.g. your bedroom or even near the kitchen sink if you wish to read it whilst doing wudu.

Du'a for the Wājib Parts of Wudu

While washing face for wudu	<p>اللَّهُمَّ بَيِّضْ وَجْهِي يَوْمَ تَسْوَدُّ فِيهِ الْوُجُوهُ وَ لا تُسَوِّدْ وَجْهِي يَوْمَ تَبْيِضُ فِيهِ الْوُجُوهُ</p>
	<p>O Allāh! Make my face bright on the Day when faces will be darkened. And do not darken my face on the Day when faces will be made bright.</p>
While washing right hand	<p>اللَّهُمَّ اعْطِنِي كِتَابِي بِيَمِينِي وَ الْخُلْدَ فِي الْجَنَانِ بَيْسَارِي وَ حَاسِبِي حِسَابًا يَسِيرًا</p>
	<p>O Allāh! Give me my book of deeds in my right hand and (the right of) permanent stay in Paradise in my left hand and make my reckoning an easy and a favourable one.</p>
While washing left hand	<p>اللَّهُمَّ لا تُعْطِنِي كِتَابِي بِشِمَالِي وَ لا مِنْ وَرَاءَ ظَهْرِي وَ لا تَجْعَلْهَا مَغْلُولَةً إِلَى عُنُقِي وَ أَعْوُدُ بِكَ مِنْ مُقَطَّعَاتِ النَّيرانِ</p>
	<p>O Allāh! Do not give my book of account in my left hand nor from behind my back nor make it chained to my neck. I seek refuge in you from Hellfire.</p>
During mas-h of head	<p>اللَّهُمَّ غَشِّنِي بِرَحْمَتِكَ وَ بَرَكَاتِكَ وَ عَفْوِكَ</p>
	<p>O Allāh! Cover me with your mercy, blessings and forgiveness.</p>
During mas-h of feet	<p>اللَّهُمَّ ثَبِّتْنِي عَلَى الصِّرَاطِ يَوْمَ تَزَلُّ فِيهِ الْأَقْدَامُ وَ اجْعَلْ سَعْيِي فِي مَا يُرْضِيكَ عَنِّي يَا ذَا الْجَلَالِ وَ الْإِكْرَامِ</p>
	<p>O Allāh! Keep me firm on the path (to paradise) on the Day when the feet will slip. And let my efforts be for things that will make You pleased with me, O' the Magnificent and Most Honourable!</p>

A Quick Review of Tayammum

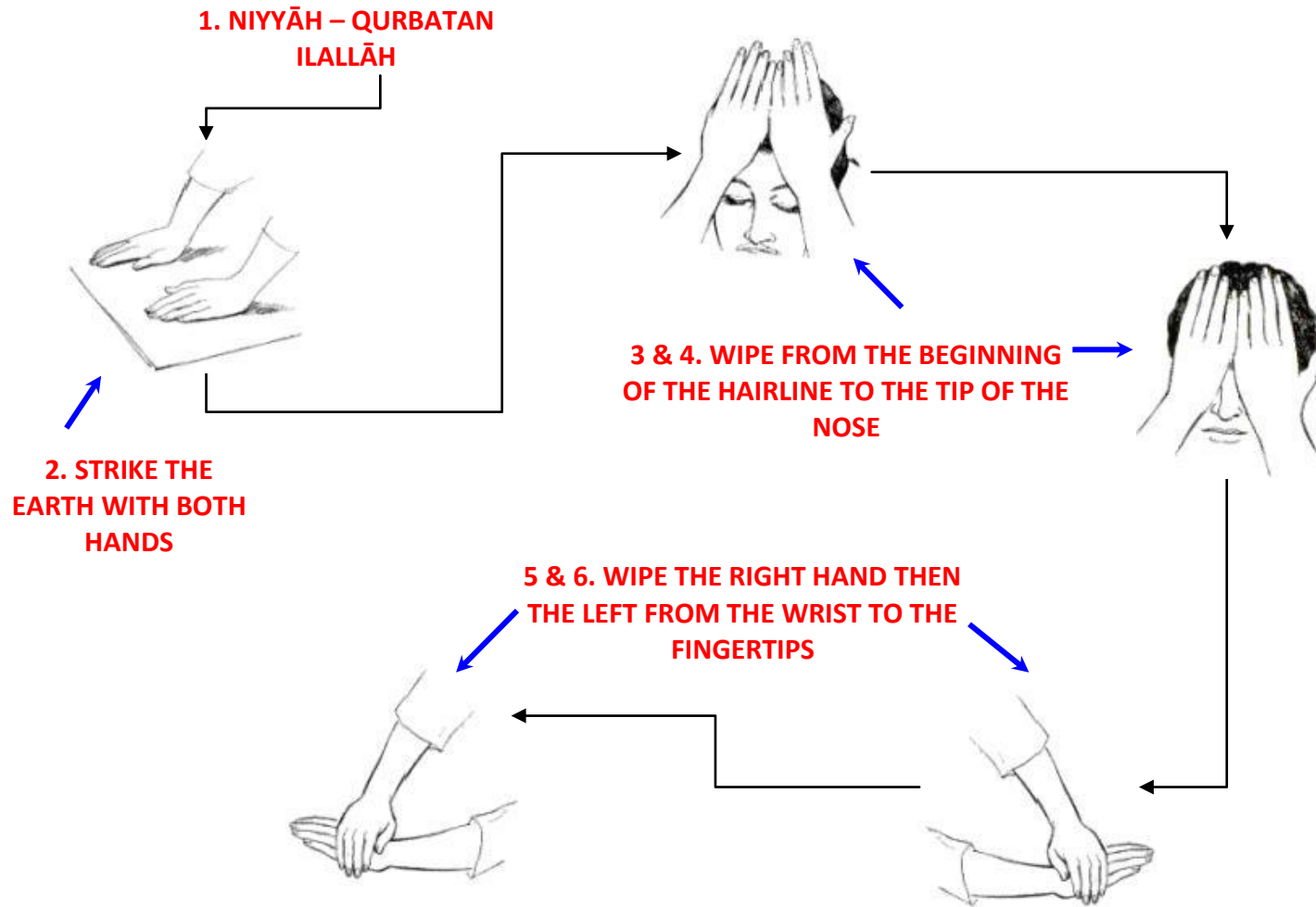
Allāh tells us in the Qur'ān in Surah an-Nisā (4) āyah 43 (and very similarly in Surah al-Māidah, 5:6):

﴿وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ مَرْضَىٰ أَوْ عَلَىٰ سَفَرٍ... فَلَمْ تَجِدُوا مَاءً فَتَيَمَّمُوا صَعِيدًا طَيِّبًا فَامْسَحُوا
بِوُجُوهِكُمْ وَأَيْدِيكُمْ مِنْهُ﴾

*And if you are sick or on a journey...and you cannot find water, then do tayammum
on clean ground and wipe a part of your faces and your hands...*

Tayammum is wājib when you have no water and you have to perform wudu or ghusl. You have learnt how to perform Tayammum in Book 5 (Fiqh Lesson 5). The diagram below is a summary of how to do tayammum. You can also review the notes in Book 5 on when tayammum is permitted and what surfaces you can do tayammum on. Your teacher may test you on this to see if you still remember.

How to Perform Tayammum



It is mustahab to repeat steps 2, 5 and 6 again.

Lesson 2

Shak in Salāh

Types of Doubts

Whenever you have a doubt in salāh, it will be one of three possible types of doubts:

1. A doubt to be Ignored.
2. A doubt that cannot be fixed – you have to say your salāh again.
3. A doubt that can be fixed and has a remedy.

Doubts to Ignore

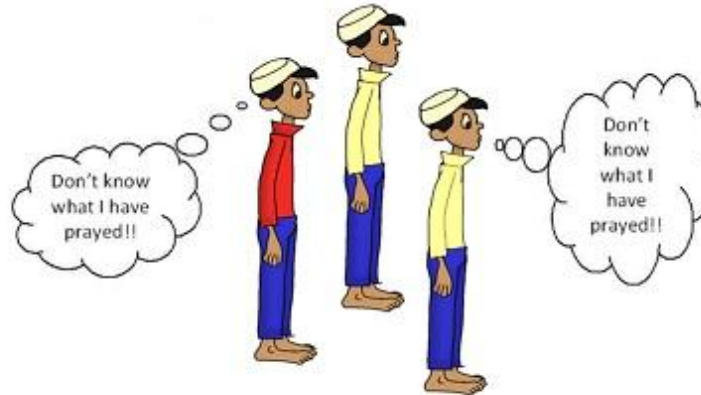
1. Doubts in a mustahab salāh. Ignore the doubt. Go with your best hunch.
2. Doubts in Jamā'ah (congregational) salāh. If you are following and you have a doubt, go with what the Imām of the salāh does. If you are leading the salāh, those following behind you will correct you.
3. Doubts of a person who doubts excessively about everything. Such a person is called *Kathir ash-Shak* (Excessive Doubter).
4. Doubts about a part of the salāh after you've moved on to the next part. For example, doubts about ruku when you are already in sajdah.
5. Doubts about a salāh *after* completing the salām. Unless of course your doubt would make the salāh bātil either way. For example, if after you complete a 4 rak'ah salāh, you doubt whether you prayed 3 rak'ahs or 5 rak'ahs, then either way your salāh is bātil. But *after* you complete salām of a 4 rak'ah salāh if you doubt whether you prayed 3 or 4 rak'ahs, then you can ignore the doubt.
6. Doubts about a salāh whose time has passed (i.e. it has become *qadā*).

The above six doubts to be ignored are shown with pictures on the next page:

Doubts to Ignore in Salāh



Doubt in a **Mustahab** Salāh.



Doubt in **Jama'ah** Salāh. The Person in Doubt follows the one who is sure.



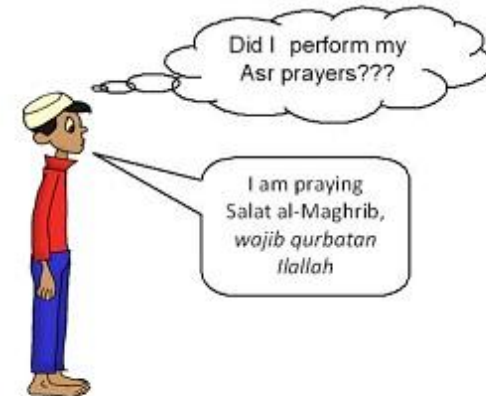
Kathir ash-Shak (Compulsive Doubter).



Doubt **after Salāh** is complete.



Doubt **after a part of Salāh** is complete.



Doubt **after time has passed**.

Remember: There is a difference between having a 'doubt' and being sure. If you're *sure* you missed a rak'ah or a part of it, you must repeat the salāh or act on its remedy (as explained later).

Doubts that make Salāh Bātil

Some doubts have no remedy in salāh. This means there is no way to fix it. You must repeat the salāh. The most common doubts that make a wājib salāh bātil and have no fix are:

1. Doubt about the number of rak'ah in a wājib 2 rak'ah or 3 rak'ah salāh (like salāt al-fajr or salāt al-maghrib).
2. Doubt about the number of rak'ah in a wājib 4 rak'ah salāh but *before* you complete the first two rak'ahs i.e. before the end of the 2nd sajdah in the 2nd rak'ah.
3. In a wājib 4 rak'ah salāh, if you have no recollection at all of how many rak'ahs you have prayed. Most doubts are between two known rak'ahs e.g. is it 3rd or 4th rak'ah, is it 2nd or 3rd rak'ah, etc. But when one is completely confused and has no idea, this makes the salāh bātil regardless of whether you get confused before the 2nd sajdah of the 2nd rak'ah or after it.

Note: When you have any of the above doubts, the correct procedure is not to break the salāh immediately, but to pause and think. If you have a strong feeling that removes the doubt, you should act according to that. Otherwise, as a last resort, the salāh should be stopped. You can stop the salāh by turning away from the qibla and then restart the salāh with a renewed niyyah.

Doubts that make Salāh Bātil and Cannot be Fixed



Doubt about number of Rak'ahs in a wājib two rak'ah or three rak'ah salāh.



Doubt about number of Rak'ahs in a wājib four rak'ah salāh before the 2nd sajdah of 2nd rak'ah.



Doubt about number of Rak'ahs in a wājib 4 rak'ah salāh but completely confused which rak'ah you are in.

Note to Teacher:

There are other kinds of doubts that make salāh bātil but they are not taught in this lesson because they are very unlikely to occur. These uncommon doubts that make salāh bātil involve the number of rak'ah that are non-consecutive e.g. doubt whether it is the 3rd or 5th rak'ah, doubt whether it is the 4th or 6th rak'ah, and so on. Most people doubt about the number of rak'ahs that are consecutive like 3rd and 4th rak'ah or 4th and 5th rak'ah. For these uncommon types of doubts (that are not covered here), the student should know where to find them in the risāla of the marj'a but should be taught in class only if time permits and after the common doubts above have been understood clearly.

Lesson 3

Shak in Salāh (cont'd)

Doubts with a Remedy

The following doubts have a cure (remedy). When you have any of these doubts, you must act according to the remedy given. But remember, a doubt can be corrected only if it occurs in:

- a. a wājib 4 rak'ah salāh, *and*
- b. after the completion of the 2nd sajdah of the 2nd rak'ah.

The remedy is usually to pray Salāt al-Ihtiyāt and/or to perform Sajdat as-Sahw. You will learn how to perform these further below.

Remember also: If a doubt changes to a strong feeling that removes the doubt, then act according to that feeling, ignore the doubt, and do not apply the remedy.

To make it easier to guess the remedy, remember the following rules:

1. Whenever you doubt the number of rak'ahs, always assume the higher number, unless it is more than 4 rak'ahs. In which case assume the lower number. For example, if you doubt, "is it my 2nd or 3rd rak'ah?", assume it is 3rd. If you doubt "is it my 3rd or 4th rak'ah?", assume it is 4th. However if you doubt "is it my 4th or 5th rak'ah?" assume it is 4th (since 5th is not possible).
2. Whenever there is a possibility that you performed less rak'ahs, then for each rak'ah possibly missed, you will need to perform 1 rak'ah Salāt al-Ihtiyāt. For example, if you doubt, "is it my 3rd or 4th rak'ah?", the remedy is to assume the higher number i.e. that it is your 4th rak'ah. And then you pray a 1 rak'ah Salāt al-Ihtiyāt just in case it was your 3rd rak'ah.
3. Whenever there is a possibility that you performed more rak'ahs, then for each extra rak'ah possibly done, you do two Sajdat as-Sahws. For example, if you doubt, "is it my 4th or 5th rak'ah?", the remedy is to assume the lower number i.e. that it is your 4th rak'ah and after you finish the salāh, you perform 2 Sajdat as-Sahw just in case it was your 5th rak'ah.

Now review the cases below. In the interest of time, the teacher will only review one or two examples to show you how to look up the table. The student must study the table on their own for any tests/exams:

#	Doubt Whether the rak'ah is:	During qiyām	During ruku	After Ruku	During sajdah	After 2 sajdahs of 2 nd rak'ah	Remedy
1	2 nd or 3 rd	The Salāh is void (bātil)				The Salāh is valid	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assume it is 3rd rak'ah. 2. finish 4th rak'ah as usual. 3. Remedy: 1 rak'ah salāt al-ihṭiyāt standing.
2	2 nd or 4 th	The Salāh is void (bātil)				The Salāh is valid	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assume it is 4th rak'ah. Finish salāh as usual. 2. Remedy: 2 rak'ah salāt al-ihṭiyāt standing.
3	2 nd , 3 rd or 4 th	The Salāh is void (bātil)				The Salāh is valid	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assume it is 4th rak'ah. Finish salāh as usual. 2. Remedy: 2 rak'ah salāt al-ihṭiyāt standing and another 2 rak'ah sitting.
4	3 rd or 4 th	The Salāh is valid					<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assume it is 4th rak'ah. Finish salāh as usual. 2. Remedy: 1 rak'ah salāt al-ihṭiyāt standing.
5	4 th or 5 th	The Salāh is valid	The Salāh is void (bātil)			The Salāh is valid	<p>If it is during Qiyām:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. sit down immediately, recite tashahhud & salām, complete the salāh. 2. Remedy: 1 rak'ah salāt al-ihṭiyāt standing . 3. mustahab to also perform 2 sajdāt al-sahw for extra qiyām. <p>If it is after the 2 sajdahs:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assume it is 4th rak'ah. Finish salāh as usual. 2. Remedy: 2 sajdāt al-sahw
6	3 rd or 5 th	The Salāh is valid	The Salāh is void (bātil)				<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. sit down immediately, recite tashahhud & salām, complete the salāh. 2. Remedy: 2 rak'ah salāt al-ihṭiyāt standing. 3. It is ihtiyāt mustahab to also perform 2 sajdāt al-sahw for extra qiyām.
7	3 rd , 4 th or 5 th	The Salāh is valid	The Salāh is void (bātil)				<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. sit down immediately, recite tashahhud & salām, complete the salāh. 2. Remedy: 2 rak'ah salāt al-ihṭiyāt standing and another 2 rak'ah salāt al-ihṭiyāt sitting. 3. It is ihtiyāt mustahab to also perform 2 sajdāt al-sahw for extra qiyām.
8	5 th or 6 th	The Salāh is valid	The Salāh is void (bātil)				<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. sit down immediately, recite tashahhud & salām, complete the salāh. 2. Remedy: 2 sajdāt al-sahw. 3. It is ihtiyāt mustahab to also perform another 2 sajdāt al-sahw for extra qiyām.

Notes to Teacher:

1. In some cases, instead of praying 1 rak'ah Salāt al-Ihtiyāt standing, there is an option to pray 2 rak'ah Salāt al-Ihtiyāt sitting instead. To keep it simple, this option is not mentioned in the table on the previous page, but can be found in the risāla of the marj'a.
2. There are some other instances that can be remedied but are very rare to occur and therefore not mentioned in this lesson e.g. doubt whether it is the 5th or 6th rak'ah, doubt whether it is the 3rd or 5th rak'ah, doubt whether it is the 3rd, 4th or 5th rak'ah and so on. These too can be reviewed from the marja's risāla if time permits. The student should know how to look up the solutions in the risāla of the marj'a.

Other Types of Doubts

You will notice that all the above doubts were about the number of rak'ahs in a salāh. Sometimes we may have other types of doubts:

1. If a person doubts about whether they have prayed at all or not and there is still time to pray, then he or she should pray that salāh. If the doubt occurs after the time of the salāh has passed, they should ignore the doubt.
2. If while praying, a person has a strong doubt or is sure and realizes that one of the muqadamāt of salāh was not done properly e.g. wudu or wājib ghusl was not done, or that one is wearing clothes that are najis, or that the place of salāh is ghasbi, etc. then the salāh should be immediately interrupted. If a person realizes this after the salāh is finished, the salāh is bātil and must be repeated. And even if the time for the salāh is over, the *qadā* salāh must be performed.

Salāt al-Ihtiyāt & Sajdat as-Sahw

Salāt al-Ihtiyāt and Sajdat as-Sahw are used to fix any salāh when a doubt occurs in it. If you follow the remedies in the table that was given in the previous page, you don't have to repeat your salāh.

How to Perform Salāt al-Ihtiyāt

Salāt al-Ihtiyāt means 'The Precautionary Salāh'. It is performed as a precaution, just in case we missed a rak'ah.

Salāt al-Ihtiyāt can be performed either sitting or standing. Two rak'ah sitting is equivalent to 1 rak'ah standing. We will learn how to pray it standing.

Method of Performance

1. Immediately after finishing the 4 rak'ah wājib salāh and without turning away from qibla, stand up and make your niyyah e.g. "I pray Salāt al-Ihtiyāt one (or two) rak'ahs wājib qurbatan Ilalāh".
2. Perform the takbirat al-ihram and recite Surah al-Fātiha (both in silent whisper). There is no second surah.
3. Then perform ruku and the two sajdahs.
4. If it is a 1 rak'ah salāt al-ihram, recite tashahhud and salām and the salāh is complete. If it is a 2 rak'ah salāt al-ihram, the 2nd rak'ah should be performed like the first (with no second surah and no qunut) and then complete with tashahhud and salām.

Sajdat as-Sahw

There are six reasons for which Sajdat as-Sahw may be required immediately after completing a salāh:

1. If you talk by mistake in salāh. (If you talk on purpose, your salāh is bātil and it must be repeated all over.)
2. If you forget to recite tashahhud e.g. in the 2nd rak'ah.
3. If you recite salām in the wrong place by mistake.
4. When you miss a sajdah by mistake.
5. You add or leave out by mistake any such thing that is not rukn⁸ e.g. if you sit down before performing ruku' or if you stand before reciting tashahhud and then sit down again.
6. In a wājib 4 rak'ah salāh, you doubt after the 2nd sajdah of the 2nd rak'ah whether it is your 4th or 5th rak'ah. You should assume it is your 4th rak'ah, and complete the salāh and then perform Sajdat as-Sahw.

Method of Performance

1. Immediately after the salāh is over, make niyyah of performing Sajdat as-Sahw e.g. "I am performing Sajdat al-Sahw for missing Tashahhud (or Salām or Sajdah or Qiyām, etc; as the case may be) wājib qurbatan Ilallāh."
2. Go into sajdah.
3. Recite the following in sajdah:

⁸ You learnt about rukn and ghayr rukn in Book 5 (Fiqh Lesson 6).

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ وَ بِاللَّهِ السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ وَ رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ وَ بَرَكَاتُهُ

Translation: In the name of Allāh, and through Allāh. May Allāh bless Muhammad and the Family of Muhammad.

4. Sit up. Don't say anything. Go into sajdah again and recite the same as first sajdah.
5. sit up and recite tashahhud and the last phrase of the salām only (*as-salāmu 'alaykum wa rahmatullāhi wa barakātuhu*).

Note: For everything you added or omitted in your salāh, you should perform a set of 2 Sajdat as-Sahw as given above. For example, if you spoke something by mistake in your salāh and you missed tashahhud, you should do the 2 Sajdat as-Sahw twice. Or if you spoke two separate times by mistake, you should also repeat the above twice as well.

Lesson 4

Mutahhírát and Najását

You already studied Mutahhírát and Najását in Book 5. In this lesson we will review the topics in more detail.

Before the review, you should already know the following:

In Islām, there is difference between something unclean and something that is najis. Najis means 'ritually unclean' but not necessarily dirty. Najāsah requires a special cleaning process to become tāhir (ritually pure) again. For example, mud or dust or oil may look dirty or feel unclean but it is not najis. That means you can even pray salāh with dust or mud on your body or clothes. On the other hand, urine or alcohol may even be transparent. But in Islām they are considered to be najis (ritually unclean). If they touch your clothes, though you cannot see it and there is no 'dirt' visible, you must change your clothes or purify them before you can pray with them.

The opposite is also true. There is a difference in Islām between something clean vs. something that is tāhir. Tāhir means 'ritually clean' or not najis. If a glass of water has a drop of alcohol in it, it may look clean but it is not tāhir. On the other hand, your shirt may have mud on it and may not look clean but it is still tāhir, because mud is not najis.

It is very important that you understand the difference between tāhir and najis versus clean and unclean in the general sense. Ask your teacher for more examples until you understand this difference very well.

How Something Tāhir becomes Najis

There are ten things that are najis by nature. They can never become tāhir by simply washing them. Some of them can never become tāhir no matter what you do. These ten things are called *najāsāt al-'ayn* (singular: *najis al-'ayn*).

Everything else in the world is tāhir (ritually pure). It only becomes najis if it comes into contact with one of the ten najāsāt al-'ayn and there is some wetness or dampness exchanged between them. If a thing that is tāhir becomes najis, it is called *mutanajjis*. Mutanajjis means 'made najis but not najis by its own nature'. Since a thing that is mutanajjis is not one of the ten najāsāt al-'ayn, there is always a way to make it tāhir again.

Before we can pray, everything around us must be tāhir. For example, the water we use for wudu, the clothes we wear while praying, our body, the prayer mat, and so on.

Remember: For a thing to become najis, it must:

1. come into contact with one of the ten najāsāt al-‘ayn (plural of najis al-‘ayn).
2. there has to be some wetness or dampness between them.
3. You must be sure. Nothing becomes najis just by suspicion. If you are in doubt then you should assume the thing that was tāhir is still tāhir. To be sure that a thing is najis:
 - a. You must have seen it becoming najis yourself.
 - b. Someone who is the owner of a thing tells you it is najis e.g. a cook tells you the food or pot is najis.
 - c. Two ‘ādil (just) Muslims tell you they know something is najis.

Note:

In the case of food, meat is an exception to the rule. For all foods, when you don't know for sure if something is najis or not, you can assume it is tāhir e.g. fruits and vegetables. But in the case of meat, you must be 100% sure it is halāl and tāhir. If you are doubtful, you cannot eat it. You can be sure meat is halāl if a Muslim butcher tells you so and appears to be trustworthy or a Muslim restaurant owner tells you the meat is halāl and seems to be a practising Muslim. If you are invited to a practising Muslim's house to eat, you do not have to ask and you can assume the meat is halāl. Unless of course the Muslim restaurant owner, butcher or host does not seem to be practising Islām and for example, doesn't pray salāh, drinks or serves alcohol and/or eats or serves pork. In this case, you should not trust them.

Najāsāt al-‘Ayn

The 10 najāsāt al-‘ayn are:

1. Urine
2. Faeces
3. Blood
4. Semen
5. Any dead body (human or animal)
6. Dogs
7. Pigs
8. Any intoxicating liquid e.g. alcohol, beer, wine.
9. Kāfir
10. The sweat of an animal fed on najāsah (such as excrement) or the sweat of person who is in the state of janābah because of a committing a harām act.

Urine and Faeces

The urine and faeces of humans and animals whose meat is harām are najis. The excrement of small animals whose blood does not come out with a gush (like

some kinds of fish and insects) and also the excrement of animals whose meat is halāl to eat (e.g. cows, goats, sheep, etc.) are not *najis al-‘ayn* and are tāhir.

Blood

The blood of humans and the blood of animals whose blood comes out with a force is najis al-‘ayn. The blood of animals whose blood does not spurt (like fishes and insects) is tāhir.

When blood is seen as a red speck in an egg, the parts of the egg where the blood has not spread is tāhir but as *ihtiyāt wājib*, you should not eat an egg that has even a small speck of blood.

If some blood is seen on clothes and you are not sure whether it is the blood of a mosquito or human blood, it is tāhir. Remember: For something to be najis, you have to be sure.

Semen

The semen of men and of animals whose blood comes out with a gush (spurting blood) is najis al-‘ayn.

Dead Body

Once human beings die and their body becomes cold, the dead body is najis, whether it is the body of a Muslim or non-Muslim. But the body of a Muslim can be made tāhir by giving it a special wash called *Ghusl al-Mayyit*.

The carcass of an animal that has spurting blood and that has not been slaughtered according to the shari‘ah is najis. This includes animals that die a natural death. But the dead body of an animal whose meat is halāl and has been slaughtered according to the laws of shari‘ah is tāhir.

Dogs and Pigs

Dogs and pigs are najis al-‘ayn. Any food or drink that has been touched by a dog or a pig is najis and it is harām to eat it.

If a dog licks a pot or container, it should be first rubbed with clean earth mixed with a little water and then washed. Then it should be purified at least twice with running water.

Intoxicating Liquids

Wine, beer and all other intoxicating liquids are najis al-‘ayn. Drugs that are intoxicating but are not in liquid form are harām to use but are not najis al-‘ayn.

Industrial alcohol that is used in perfume and some paints is *tāhir*. This means if such paint touches something it doesn't become *najis*. Similarly, we can use perfume with industrial alcohol and pray with it on our clothes and bodies.

Kāfir

A *kāfir* is a person who denies Allāh, or believes that Allāh has a partner, or does not accept the prophethood of Prophet Muhammad (s). Similarly, a Muslim who denies what is *wājib* in Islām (e.g. *salāh*, *sawm*, *hajj*) becomes a *kāfir*. But a Muslim who does not pray or fast, etc. does not become a *kāfir* if he or she does not openly deny that it is *wājib*.

Those who exaggerate in their love for Rasulullāh (s) and the Ahl al-Bayt ('a), elevating them to the rank of Allāh, as well as those who hate and curse Rasulullāh (s) and the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) are also classified in *fiqh* as *kāfirs*.

The body of a *kāfir* is *najis al-'ayn* meaning it makes others *najis* if there is any physical contact that involves wetness or dampness e.g. shaking hands when one of the hands is damp or wet.

Some people believe it is wrong to call any human being *najis*. This is because they think '*najis*' means 'unclean' or 'dirty'. Remember *najis* does not mean dirty. Even a Muslim's blood or dead body is *najis*. Later you will learn that at the certain times even Muslim men and women become *najis* and have to take a special bath (*ghusl*) to become *tāhir* again. As soon as a *kāfir* becomes a Muslim, they become *tāhir*.

You should also understand that just because something is *najis* does not mean we should hate it. For example, just because the body of a dog is *najis* does not mean we should hate dogs. They too are creatures of Allāh. Imām Hasan ('a) was once seeing sharing his food with a dog. Similarly, if a *kāfir* is *najis* it does not mean Muslims should hate them. The rules of *tahārah* and *najāsah* need to be known and understood because they affect our *ibādāt* (acts of worship) like *salāh*.

Sweat of Harām

If an animal has been eating *najāsāt* such as excrement, its sweat becomes *najis al-'ayn*, until such time when it is fed clean food and its body is said to be purged of the dirt. If a person becomes *junub* because of engaging in a *harām* act, his or her sweat is also *najis al-'ayn* until they have done *ghusl* of *janābah*. We will learn more about *janābah* in Lesson 7 and in Book 9 *inshā* Allāh.

Lesson 5

Mutahhirāt and Najāsāt (cont'd)

Mutahhirāt

We have said that most things in the world are tāhir and only become najis when they come into contact with a najis al-‘ayn and that too, only if the two come into direct physical contact and there is some wetness or dampness exchanged between them.

Najāṣah can also be passed on and carried forward. For example, if your wet hand or a wet cloth touches something that is najis al-‘ayn, it becomes najis. Thereafter if the wet hand or cloth that is now najis touches something else, that too becomes najis, and so on. If the najis cloth falls into a bucket of water for example, and there are other clothes in it, then the bucket, the water and the other clothes all become najis.

There are 10 things that can purify something that is mutanajjis and make it tāhir again. These 10 things are called mutahhirāt (‘The Cleansers’) because of their ability to make najis things tāhir again.

The Cleansers (Mutahhirāt)

1. Water
2. The Ground (Earth)
3. The Sun
4. Physical Transformation (Istihāla)
5. Chemical Transformation (Inqilāb)
6. Translocation (Intiqāl)
7. Islām
8. Association (Tab‘iya)
9. Removal of Najāsah from the Body (Istibra)
10. Disappearance of a Muslim (Ghaybat al-Muslim)

1. Water

Pure (mutlaq), clean (tāhir) water cleanses everything. The experts of fiqh (fuqaha) have divided water into different kinds, each with different sets of rules.

First of all, water can be pure (mutlaq) or mixed with something (mudāf). For example, watermelon juice, rose water, water mixed with mud, etc. are not najis but are mudāf water. You cannot do wudu with them and you cannot use them to clean something najis.

To clean a mutanajjis you need mutlaq water that has not changed in its colour, taste or smell. Review the notes on **Types of Water** in Book 5 (Fiqh Lesson 3).

If a solid object becomes najis with alcohol it should be washed three times. If a solid object becomes najis with urine it should be washed until the urine is removed and then washed again once more. Liquids that become najis cannot be made tāhir.

How to Make a Mutanajjis Tāhir with Water

When tāhir and mutlaq water is little in quantity (less than 400 litres or 100 gallons), it is called 'qalil' in Arabic. Such water, if it is touched by anything najis, also becomes najis itself.

However when tāhir, mutlaq water is in a large quantity, called *kurr water* (approx. 400 litres or 100 gallons), it doesn't become najis as long as the najāsah is not enough to change the taste, colour or smell of the water e.g. water in a lake or a large swimming pool. Similarly, running water (like water from a faucet or hosepipe that comes from a source that has *kurr water* or more) is also able to clean a najāsah without becoming najis itself.

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

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

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

2. Earth

'Earth' means soil, stone (or brick) paved paths, or the like.

The earth acts like a cleanser (mutahhirāt) by walking on it when the soles of our feet or shoes become najis.

The conditions are three: the earth itself should be clean (not najis), secondly the earth should be dry, and thirdly, the najis substance (e.g. blood or urine) should come off by walking on the earth.

Also, the earth cleanses only that najāsah that came about in the first place from walking; if the najāsah is the result of something other than walking, then the earth cannot be used to make the sole tāhir again.

To use the earth as a cleanser, you should rub the sole of your feet (or shoes) that are najis and walk at least fifteen steps or as long as is required to remove any lingering signs of najāsah.

3. The Sun

The Sun cleans the earth, buildings, walls and all such large immovable objects when they become najis. First the najāsah on them has to be removed and the area has to be made wet. Thereafter the **direct** rays of the sun are sufficient to dry it and make it tāhir again.

4. Physical transformation (Istihāla)

'Transformation' means that the najis thing becomes something else. For example, a piece of najis wood burns and turns into ash. The ash is now tāhir because istihāla has taken place. Or if a dog dies and then its body decomposes and changes to earth/dust. The earth will be tāhir due to istihāla.

If however the change is not into something completely different, it does not become tāhir. For example, if wheat becomes najis and it is used to bake a bread, the bread is still najis because the wheat is just an ingredient of the bread and not a complete transformation to a new thing.

5. Chemical Transformation (Inqilāb)

Inqilāb is very similar to Istihāla but the change is in the property of the thing and not the physical appearance necessarily. Sometimes a thing does not change physically (like from dog to earth or wood to ash) but its properties or chemical composition changes and it transforms to another thing. This can also make it tāhir if the chemical transformation is complete. For example, when wine is left open for a while, it changes to vinegar. The vinegar is tāhir.

6. Translocation (Intiqāl)

It means when something moves from a najis place to a non-najis place and becomes part of it, it also becomes tāhir. For example, human blood is najis. But if a mosquito bites a human and drinks some of its blood and the blood becomes a part of its body, then the blood is tāhir because the blood of a mosquito is tāhir in general.

This means if you kill a mosquito and some of its blood touches you or your clothes, it is tāhir. However if you know the mosquito just bit you or another human being and the interval was so short that the blood from the mosquito can still be called

human blood, then it is najis. Intiqāl occurs when it becomes a part of the mosquito's blood.

7. Islām

If a kāfir accepts Islām and recites the shahadatayn⁹, he or she becomes a Muslim and is also considered to be tāhir. However any clothes worn before becoming a Muslim are still najis.

8. Association (Tab'iya)

When a najis thing becomes tāhir, another associated with it also becomes tāhir. For example, when wine turns into vinegar its container becomes tāhir as well. Similarly the hands used to wash a najis object also become tāhir with the object during the washing. This is called Tab'iya.

9. Removal of Najāsah from the Body (Istibra)

The body of an animal whose meat is halāl and that is slaughtered according to Islāmic law is usually tāhir. But if the body of a halāl animal becomes najis due to eating najāsah all the time, it can be made clean again by feeding the animal clean food for a while until its body can be said to be purged of the najāsah. The removal of najāsah from the body is called Istibra or sometimes Zawāl al-'Ayn. The animal's body is then said to be tāhir again. And if it is a halāl animal, its meat will also be tāhir when it is slaughtered according to Islāmic law.

10. Absence of a Muslim (Ghaybat al-Muslim)

If the body or clothing of a Muslim become najis, and then he is not seen for some time (at least for the duration of one salāh), and then he is seen again with the same clothes, then we can conclude that he must have cleansed himself, and therefore we can assume that his body, clothes, etc. are now all tāhir without asking him.

Hadath vs. Khabath

Najāsah that are not najāsah al-'ayn (i.e. things that are called mutanajjisāt) are sometimes also divided into hadath and khabath.

A hadath najāsah is one that requires a specific niyyah (solemn intention) with wudu and/or ghusl to remove it and make it tāhir again. The ones that require ghusl are further grouped as Hadath al-Akbar (e.g. touching a dead body or janābah). And

⁹ Shahādatayn means 'two shahādas', which are: *ash-hadu an lā ilāha ilallāh* (I bear witness there is no god but Allāh) and *ash-hadu anna Muhammadur Rasulullāh* (I bear witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allāh). Anyone who declares this is considered a Muslim.

those that require wudu only are called Hadath al-Asghar (e.g. sleep, passing wind, using the washroom).

A khabath najāsah does not require any niyyah, wudu or ghusl to make tāhir again. This is usually a najāsah that is external to (outside) the body such as a najis utensil or najāsah that touches the outside of your body. You simply wash it away without requiring any wudu or ghusl.

The niyyah (usually with wudu or ghusl) is required for a hadath because it is a form spiritual uncleanliness that needs to be removed to restore spiritual cleanliness (tahārah).

When a person uses the washroom, they experience both types of najāsah, khabath and hadath. Khabath is the najāsah on the outside of their body (e.g. urine) that they must wash away with clean water three times (if it is qalil e.g. in a jug) or with running water. But the hadath najāsah is only removed with wudu, which will restore their spiritual purity and enable them to perform salāh again.

Lesson 6

Gender-Specific (for Boys)

Istibra

When studying mutahhirāt, we said Istibra was to remove najāsah from the body. Istibra is therefore also the method a Muslim man is required to clean himself after urinating. This is highly recommended because it allows a man to assume that any wetness found on his clothes or body later on is not najāsah. Otherwise he would have to assume it to be urine and he would have to change his clothes, etc.

The method of performing Istibra after urinating was taught in Book 7 (Fiqh Lesson 6). It is given here again briefly as a revision.

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.

Note: Even though it is common to see non-Muslim men standing at urinals in public washrooms and urinating, Muslims should sit down to urinate. It is makruh to stand and urinate and there is also a greater chance of urine sprinkling on one's clothes and making them najis. It is also not dignified and decent for a Muslim to stand and relieve himself.

When using a public washroom, make sure you wipe the toilet seat so that it is dry and clean before you sit on it. It is a good idea to keep a small bottle of water with you when out for a long time, in case you need to use a public washroom. Remember: Do not be ashamed to practice your faith, even in public – whether it is tahārah or even praying salāh in public. Only be ashamed of disappointing Allāh, as He is always watching you.

Signs of Bulugh

The age at which Islām considers a human being to be responsible and accountable for his/her actions before Allāh is called the age of bulugh. When a boy reaches the age of bulugh he is said to be bāligh and a girl is called bāligha. Being ‘accountable before Allāh’ is also sometimes called being a ‘mukallaf’.

A Muslim boy is considered to be bāligh when any one of these three signs appear in him:

1. The body begins to produce and discharge semen.
2. Growth of pubic hair on the abdomen. Pubic hair is described as coarse hair. Soft hair is not a sign of becoming bāligh.
3. The boy reaches the age of 15 according to the Islāmic (lunar) calendar.

As a boy starts maturing physically, he will also experience the growth of hair under the armpits, as well as mustache and facial hair (beard). If a boy does not see pubic hair and his body does not start giving out semen until the age of 15 (Islāmic year), he must assume he is bāligh on his 15th Islāmic birthday.

Once a boy is bāligh, all the matters of wājib and harām in Islām apply to him, as they do to all adult Muslims. For example, praying five times a day, fasting in the month of Ramadān, Khums and Zakāh if he has earnings, Hajj, matters related to Tahārah and Najāsah, and so forth. A bāligh boy should therefore make an intention of the marj’a he will refer to in any fiqh issue that he needs advice and guidance on i.e. he should make an intention for taqlid.

Personal Hygiene - Removal of Pubic Hair

It is makruh for a man or woman to leave pubic hair (the hair that grows in the armpits and abdomen) so long that it is unsightly or dirty. It is recommended to shave or at least trim pubic hair.

Semen as form of Najāsah

In previous madrasah years, you have learnt about tahārah and najāsah and you know that some forms of najāsāt can never be made tāhir and are called *najis al-‘ayn*, such as urine and blood. Semen is also a type of *najis al-‘ayn*.

When semen comes out from the body of a man, voluntarily or involuntarily, due to a halāl or harām act, the man is said to be a *junub* or in the state of *janābah*. Janābah is a state of being ritually impure. We say ‘ritually impure’ because such impurity cannot be removed only by cleaning or washing oneself or taking a regular bath. It can only be removed by performing a special bath (ghusl) with a wājib niyyah called *Ghusl al-Janābah*.

Ghusl al-Janābah

You have already learnt how to perform the mustahab ghusl for Fridays in Book 6 (Fiqh Lesson 7). A wājib ghusl is done in the exact same manner, the only difference being the niyyah. Whenever a bāligh boy or man becomes junub, he must do a ghusl with the niyyah of 'I am performing ghusl al-janābah, wājib qurbatan ilallāh' before he is considered to be pure again and before he can pray salāh or fast again.

Ghusl al-Janābah is mustahab in itself. But it becomes wājib when the time of salāh arrives or before the start of a wājib fast (e.g. in the month of Ramadān).

It is mustahab, that after a man becomes junub, he should urinate and perform istibra first before performing the ghusl of janābah. This will then allow the man to assume that any wetness that comes out after the ghusl is tāhir and neither urine nor semen.

If a person does not do istibra after urinating they cannot assume any wetness on their clothes to be tāhir. They will have to assume it is urine and change their clothes and wash up again. Similarly, if a person does ghusl without urinating and without istibra, they may have to do ghusl again if they experience any wetness on their clothes later on and are not sure if it is semen or not.

After the ghusl of janābah, there is no need to do wudu for salāh unless something happens that would normally break your wudu (like passing gas, falling asleep or urinating after the ghusl).

Lesson 6

Gender-Specific (for Girls)

Signs of Bulugh

The age at which Islām considers a human being to be responsible and accountable for his/her actions before Allāh is called the age of bulugh. When a boy reaches the age of bulugh he is said to be bāligh and a girl is called bāligha. Being ‘accountable before Allāh’ is also sometimes called being a ‘mukallaf’.

You have already learnt in Book 7 (Fiqh Lesson 6) that when a girl starts becoming bāligha, physical changes begin to appear in her body. The growth of pubic hair is a sign of bulugh. A girl is said to be bāligha in Islām when she either starts experiencing menstruation (*haid*) or she is 9 years old according to the Islāmic (lunar) calendar.

Once a girl is bāligha, all matters of shari’ah (relating to wājib and harām) apply to her such as salāh, sawm, hajj, zakāh, khums, hijāb, matters relating to tahārah and najāsah, and so on. A bāligha girl should therefore make an intention of the marj’a she will refer to in any fiqh issue that she needs advice and guidance on i.e. she should make an intention for taqlid.

Personal Hygiene - Removal of Pubic Hair

It is makruh for a man or woman to leave pubic hair (the hair that grows in the armpits and abdomen once one becomes bāligh) for so long until it is unsightly or dirty. It is recommended to shave or at least trim pubic hair.

Wājib Ghusl

You have also learnt in Book 7 that there are three types of wājib ghushs specific to Muslim women only:

1. Ghushl of *Haid*: Wājib after the end of the monthly period
2. Ghushl of *Istihādha*: Wājib after certain kinds of irregular bleeding
3. Ghushl of *Nifās*: Wājib after the bleeding of childbirth

After her period is over, a woman must perform *Ghusl of Haid* with the intention of ‘I am performing ghusl of *haid*, wājib qurbatan ilallāh’. For *Istihādha*, the ghusl is not done at the end but rather it is done on a need-to-do basis and you will learn when it needs to be done in the next lesson.

In this and the next lesson, you will learn more details about the specific types of *Haid* and *Istihādha* that women experience and the rules regarding ghusl for them.

Haid

Menstruating women have been grouped according to their different kinds of menstruation habits, in order to make it convenient for them to determine the Islāmic laws that apply to them.

First of all, all women who are of the age of experiencing periods (*haid*) are divided in two broad categories:

- those who have their period regularly every month
- those who do not bleed regularly

By 'regular bleeding' or 'regular period' we mean that in two consecutive months a woman follows the same pattern as far as the start date and duration of her menses is concerned.

Those who have a regular period are further divided into three categories:

1. Those whose period is regular both in start date and duration of the period.
2. Those whose period is regular in the start date but not in the duration.
3. Those whose period is regular in the duration but not the start date.

And those who do not have a regular period are also divided into three categories:

4. The beginner (*mubtadiyah*): the girl who has just started experiencing her period and is therefore not aware of any regular pattern.
5. The fluctuator (*mudtaribah*): the woman whose period varies from occasion to occasion and follows no regular pattern.
6. The forgetful (*nāsiyah*): the woman who has forgotten the dates or duration of her menses.

Besides the regular monthly period called *haid*, women will sometimes experience irregular bleeding called *istihādha*. During *istihādha*, a woman is still expected to pray salāh and to fast. It is only harām for her to pray and fast if it is during her *haid*. The challenge is that sometimes a woman is not sure if her bleeding is *haid* or *istihādha* and therefore she is not sure whether to pray and fast or not. Keeping in mind that *haid* is never less than 3 days and never more than 10 days in each monthly cycle, we will now review briefly the different rules for each of the six categories of women listed above:

1. **Rules for the woman who has a regular period, both in dates and duration**
 - a. Always assume it is *haid* even if on some occasions it begins two or three days prior to the usual date or is late by a couple of days.
 - b. If it is a few days before the regular period, precaution should be taken (by avoiding both what is harām during *haid* and what is harām in *istihādha*). If later she is convinced that it was not menses (*haid*) (if, for instance, the bleeding stops before three days – since *haid* is a minimum of 3 days), the woman should compensate for the missed prayers (as qadā).

- c. The period of *haid* cannot exceed ten days. If it exceeds ten days, the woman in this category should consider only those ten days which correspond to her regular period as the days of menses, the rest will be considered as *istihādha*.
- d. When a woman of this category experiences bleeding that stops after three days, and starts again after a few days, and once again continues for three days, she should consider the bleeding that falls during her regular period as *haid* and the other as *istihādha*. If both bleedings occur during her regular period and the duration of the two bleedings, including the intervening time when there was no bleeding, does not exceed ten days, all days are to be treated as her menstrual period (*haid*). But if it exceeds ten days, only the days which correspond to her regular period will be considered days of *haid*, while the rest will be considered as *istihādha*.

2. Rules for the woman who has a fixed start date for *Haid* but no fixed duration

- a. Such a woman can also assume it is *haid* even if sometimes, instead of starting at the regular date, it starts two or three days earlier or later than her due date.
- b. If the bleeding exceeds more than ten days, she should refer to the habit of her relatives and use that as a guideline to determine how many days (out of the first ten days) she had were *haid* and how many were *istihādha*. Of course the days after ten days are *istihādha*. But she should calculate the first day of her menses according to her regular date. Remember that *haid* cannot exceed ten days.
- c. One who does not know about the habit of her relatives should consider the first seven days after her due date as *haid* and the rest as irregular bleeding (*istihādha*).

3. Rules for the woman who has a fixed duration of *Haid* but no fixed start date

- a. As long as it is between three days and ten days and she has not already experienced *haid* in that month's cycle, she should assume her bleeding is *haid*.
- b. If such a woman sees blood for more than ten days, she should count the number of fixed days which corresponds to her regular period as *haid* (from the beginning of the bleeding) and the rest of the days as *istihādha*.

4. Rules for the Beginner (mubtadiyah)

- a. A girl who is experiencing her menstrual period for the first time and sees blood for more than ten days should refer to the habit of her

relatives in order to determine how many days she should consider as *haid* and the rest will be considered *istihādha*.

- b. If it lasts for less than 10 days, then all of it is *haid*.
 - c. If some of the bleeding has the signs of menses (for instance, the colour of the blood is red), and then after a few days she has bleeding which has the clear indication of *istihādha* (for instance, discharge of yellowish blood), she should consider the first as *haid* if it has continued for more than three days, and the latter as *istihādha*.
 - d. But if she has bleeding with the signs of *haid* that is followed by bleeding with the signs of *istihādha*, and once again bleeding with the signs of menses (*haid*), and the total of the bleeding that has the signs of menses exceeds ten days, only the first bleeding should be considered as menstrual (*haid*) and the rest as *istihādha*.
5. **Rules for the woman whose duration *and* dates are irregular (mudtaribah)**
- a. If such a woman experiences bleeding for more than ten days she should refer to the habit of her relatives and calculate her menstrual period in accordance with it; the rest is to be considered *istihādha*.
 - b. If she does not know about the habit of her relatives or they also do not have any, she should consider the first seven days after the start of bleeding as menses (*haid*), and the rest as *istihādha*.
 - c. If the regular period of her relatives is less than seven days, for instance five days, she should consider her definite *haid* period as five days, but should observe the rules for *haid* for two more days, as a matter of precaution.
 - d. If such a woman starts bleeding and thinks this is *haid*, she should not pray or fast and assume it is *haid*. But if it stops before three days, and she realizes it was *istihādha*, she must repay the prayers and fasts she missed. But initially, when she didn't know, she must assume it is *haid* and it is *harām* for her to pray or fast or do anything that is *harām* during *haid* (just in case it is *haid*).
6. **Rules for the woman who forgets about the duration or date of her period (nāsiyah)**
- a. If she experiences bleeding for more than ten days, she should consider that blood which has the signs of *haid* as menses and the rest as *istihādha*.
 - b. If she cannot tell the two apart from signs, as a matter of obligatory precaution (*ihtiyāt wājib*) she should consider the first seven days as her menstrual period (*haid*) and any extra days as *istihādha*.

Lesson 7

Gender-Specific (for Boys) – cont'd

Janābah and Salāh

A bāligh boy or man in the state of janābah is not allowed to pray any salāh that requires wudu until they perform the *ghusl of janābah*.

If the time before *qadā* for the salāh is very little, they should perform tayammum and pray and then perform the ghusl. If they delay doing the ghusl until there isn't enough time, then they have committed a sin and should ask Allāh for forgiveness along with doing tayammum, praying and then performing the ghusl.

Janābah and Sawm

Making oneself junub breaks one's fast unless one becomes junub unintentionally e.g. in sleep. Remaining in the state of janābah also breaks a fast and a person who is in the state of janābah must perform *ghusl of janābah* before the time of fajr when the fast starts.

If a man does anything intentional (halāl or harām) that results in ejaculation of semen from his body, whilst he is fasting, the fast becomes bātil. He will have to repay that fast as *qadā* and also pay a penalty (*kaffāra*) for it, which is to feed 60 poor people or to fast for 60 days after the month of Ramadān (of which 30 days must be continuous). This *qadā* and *kaffāra* is wājib for each fast broken on purpose.

However if it is involuntary e.g. a man who is asleep while fasting and wakes up in the state of janābah, then he should perform ghusl as soon as possible and his fast would still be valid.

If a man becomes junub in the night before a wājib fast, and does not perform the wājib *ghusl of janābah* before the adhān of fajr (i.e. the start of the fast), then his fast is bātil and he must pay its *qadā* and *kaffāra*.

If a person set the alarm with the intention of waking up and doing the ghusl before fajr time but then oversleeps, their fast is still valid. They should perform the ghusl and pray as soon as possible. However if they go to sleep knowing they will not wake up in time to do the ghusl, then their fast is bātil because they intentionally neglected doing the ghusl.

If a man deliberately delays the ghusl to the extent that there is no time left for it but it is not yet the time for adhān, they should do tayammum instead and their fast will be valid. Although, they would have committed a sin and should ask Allāh for

forgiveness and they should also perform ghusl before praying fajr salāh even if the time of adhān has occurred.

What is Harām in the State of Janābah

1. Touching the letters of the Qur'ān, the names of Allāh, and the names of the prophets and the fourteen ma'sumeen ('a).
2. Entering the sacred masjid of Makkah (Masjid al-Harām) and the sacred masjid of Rasulullāh (s) (Masjid al-Nabawi) at Madina, even if it is only to pass through them. As an *ih̥tiyāt mustahab*, one should not pause or stop within the area around an Imām's tomb either.
3. Staying at other masājid or taking anything in or out of the masjid is also harām. However, passing through masājid without stopping is allowed. A masjid is only the area designated as a 'masjid'. It is not harām to be in a hall where people pray but also have other functions (e.g. a Husainiya) when in the state of janābah. But it is good to do ghusl first out of respect for the place.
4. Reciting any of the four āyāt of Qur'ān for which sajdah is wājib is harām when one is in janābah. These are:
 - Surah as-Sajdah (32), āyah 15
 - Surah al-Fussillat (41), āyah 38
 - Surah an-Najm (53), āyah 62
 - Surah al-Iqra (96), āyah 19

What is Makruh in State of Janābah

1. Reading more than seven āyāt of the Qur'ān
2. Touching the cover or blank pages of the Qur'ān (touching the writing is harām)
3. Dyeing the beard or colouring the hands with henna
4. Rubbing oil on the body
5. Sleeping
6. Eating or drinking

If a person needs to eat, drink or sleep before doing ghusl al-janābah, it is recommended for them to do wudu first.

A Word on the Mubtilāt of Wudu

In Book 4, you had learnt of five things that break wudu. Anything that requires wājib ghusl also breaks wudu. So in total, there are seven actions that break wudu and these are:

1. Passing urine
2. Defecation
3. Passing wind
4. Sleep
5. Unconsciousness (fainting)
6. Taking intoxicant of any kind (alcohol, drugs, etc.)
7. All actions for which ghusl is wājib e.g. *janābah*, *Istihādha*, *mass al-mayyit*, etc.

Lesson 7

Gender-Specific (for Girls) – cont'd

Istihādha

Istihādha is the irregular bleeding (other than the regular monthly period called *haid*) that women sometimes experience. Any bleeding from the womb which is not of the monthly period (*haid*) or childbirth (*nifās*) is considered to be *istihādha*.

Istihādha are of three kinds:

1. Light bleeding (*qalila*)
2. Medium bleeding (*mutawassita*)
3. Heavy bleeding (*kathira*)

How to Differentiate *Haid* From *Istihādha*

Istihādha blood is often yellowish and cool, and comes out without straining and burning, unlike the blood of *haid* that is usually thick, warm and of black or dark red colour and comes out with slight straining and burning.

In order to qualify as *haid*, the duration of the bleeding must not be less than three days or more than ten days. If it is less than three days it will be considered *istihādha*. Likewise bleeding after ten days will not be *haid* but *istihādha*.

In *haid* there must be regular and continuous bleeding for the first three days.

If the bleeding is not continuous and, for example, a woman sees blood in the first three days then the bleeding stops for a few days and then starts again, but the total number of days from the start of the first bleeding to the end of the second, including the days when it had stopped does not exceed ten days, then the entire period will be considered a period of *haid*.

If a woman has bleeding for less than three days, then it stops for some time, starts again, and continues for three or more days, the first bleeding will not be considered *haid* (because it was less than three days) whilst the second bleeding will be considered *haid*.

Rules of Salāh During Haid and Istihādha

Unlike in *haid*, during *istihādha* women are not exempt from the daily salāh or wājib fasting (e.g. in the month of Ramadān). But they are certain rules for salāh and sawm during *istihādha*:

During light bleeding (*qalila*) the woman has to change her sanitary pad, wash away the uncleanness and do wudu for each *salāh* (i.e. even between *dhuhr* and '*asr* and between *maghrib* and '*ishā salāh* if they are being prayed consecutively).

During medium bleeding (*mutawassita*), the woman has to practise the same as during *qalila*, and in addition, has to do a *ghusl* once a day, in the morning before *fajr salāh*. If the *istihādha* starts after the *fajr salāh*, she will have to perform *ghusl* before the next *salāh*, but one *ghusl* is enough for all the prayers of that day. The *ghusl* can only be done *after* the time of the *salāh* has started – not before it. And the wudu (as per *qalila* rules) should be done *before* the *ghusl*. So for example, if it is the 2nd day of *istihādha mutawassita*, the woman should wait for the time of *fajr* to start, then do wudu, then *ghusl* and then pray *salāt al-fajr*.

During heavy bleeding (*kathira*), a woman has to follow the rules of *qalila* and also perform at least three *ghusls*. The first *ghusl* before the morning (*fajr*) *salāh*, the second *ghusl* for the noon (*dhuhr*) and afternoon ('*asr*) *salāh*, and the third *ghusl* for the evening (*maghrib*) and night ('*ishā*) *salāh*. This is provided she is praying the *dhuhr* and '*asr salāh* together, one after the other, and likewise with the *maghrib* and '*ishā salāh*. If she performs the *salāh* separately, she will need to do *ghusl* for each of them (i.e. five *ghusls*). The wudu should always be done before the *ghusl*.

Additional Notes:

1. *Salāh* should always be performed immediately and as soon as possible after the *ghusl* for *istihādha*, without any delay, unless a woman wishes to recite the *adhān* and *iqāmah*.
2. When a woman is not sure whether her *istihādha* is light (*qalila*), medium (*mutawassita*) or excessive (*kathira*) bleeding, she should use a fresh sanitary pad and wait a while and check. After determining which kind of bleeding she has she should act accordingly.
3. If after doing the above a woman is still unable to determine the kind of *istihādha* she has and remains in doubt, she should assume the lesser form of *istihādha*. For instance, if she does not know whether her bleeding is light or medium, she should act according to the rules of light bleeding. If she is in doubt whether the bleeding is of the medium or the excessive type, should act according to the rules of the medium type. If she discover later that she had acted wrongly she should make up for the *salāh* as *qadā*.
4. When the bleeding of a woman changes from one form to the other e.g. from light to medium or from heavy to light, she should follow the rules of the new form for the next *salāh*.

Unlike *istihādha*, during *haid*, a woman is exempt from the daily *salāh* and all those *salāh* that require wudu (e.g. *salāt al-āyāt*). In fact she is not allowed to pray the *salāh* and does not even have to pay them back later as *qadā*. She can, however, pray the *salāh* that do not require wudu, *tayammum* or *ghusl* (like *salāt al-mayyit*).

If a woman delays her *salāh* and then her period (*haid*) starts, she should compensate that particular *salāh* as *qadā* after her *haid* ends and she has done her *wājib* ghusl for *haid*. It is also recommended that before a woman does the ghusl of *haid* (when her period ends), she should first do wudu.

And if a woman's period stops before the end of a *salāh* time, should also perform wudu, do the *wājib* ghusl and then pray the *salāh* for which it is time. But if there is no sufficient time to perform ghusl before the time for the *salāh* comes to an end, then that *salāh* is not *wājib* for her.

If a woman does not pray because she thought she was menstruating, but realizes later on that it was not menses (*haid*), she should make up all the prayers with compensatory (*qadā*) prayers.

Rules of Sawm During Haid and Istihādha

Just like the rules for *Salāh*, during *haid* it is *harām* for a woman to fast but during *istihādha*, she must continue fasting (regardless of whether it is little, medium or heavy).

But unlike the case of *salāh*, a woman has to compensate for the *wājib* fasts that she misses during *haid*, by fasting later on as *qadā*.

If the *haid* or *nifās* (see below for rules of *nifās*) of a woman ends before the *adhān* of *fajr*, she must perform ghusl and fast. If there is not enough time to do ghusl, she must do *tayammum* before the *fajr adhān* and then perform the ghusl. If she does not do *tayammum* either and remains in the state of ritual impurity, then her fast is *bātil*.

If a woman becomes clean from *haid* after the *fajr adhān*, she cannot fast for that day. Similarly if she starts bleeding during the day (even a little before *maghrib* time), she cannot count that day's fast. Out of respect for the month of *Ramadān* though, she should not eat in public and in front of others who are fasting.

Using Your Best Judgement

If a woman starts bleeding and she assumes it is *haid* and so she stops praying and fasting and then it stops before three days and she realizes it was *istihādha*, she must compensate for the missed *salāh* as *qadā*.

Similarly, although it is *harām* for a woman to pray and fast during *haid*, if she is convinced her bleeding is irregular (*istihādha*) and she continues praying and fasting, and then it continues for more than three days and she realizes it is *haid*, she should simply stop praying and fasting immediately.

Nifās

The bleeding that women experience at the time of giving birth to a child or when a foetus is aborted is called nifās. The Rules of Nifās will be studied in Book 10.

What is Harām for a Woman During Haid

As a revision to what was taught in Book 7, during *haid*:

- Praying salāh of any kind that usually requires wudu, ghusl or tayammum is harām.
- Entering a masjid or haram of Rasulullāh (s) or any of the Imāms ('a) is also harām. She can enter the areas that are not designated as masjid within the building (such as the Husainiya).
- Touching the writings of the Qur'ān.
- Reciting any of the four āyāt of Qur'ān for which sajdah is wājib. These are:
 - Surah as-Sajdah (32), āyah 15.
 - Surah al-Fussillat (41), āyah 38.
 - Surah an-Najm (53), āyah 62, and
 - Surah al-Iqra (96), āyah 19.

Unlike in *haid*, in *istihādha* it is not harām to stay at masājid or to enter into the sacred masjid of Makkah (Masjid al-Harām) or the sacred masjid of Rasulullāh (s) (Masjid an-Nabawi) in Madina. Likewise, it is permitted to read the prostration āyāt (*āyāt as-sajdah*). But for touching the writing of the Qur'ān, those who have little bleeding should perform wudu and those with heavy bleeding should perform both ghusl and wudu.

A Word on Mubtilāt of Wudu

In Book 4, you had learnt of five things that break wudu. Anything that requires wājib ghusl also breaks wudu. So in total, there are seven actions that break wudu and these are:

1. Passing urine
2. Defecation
3. Passing wind
4. Sleep
5. Unconsciousness (fainting)
6. Taking intoxicant of any kind (alcohol, drugs, etc.)
7. All actions for which ghusl is wājib e.g. *janābah*, *haid*, *Istihādha*, *mass al-mayyit*, etc.

TARIKH (History)

Lesson 1

Luqmān ('a) the Wise

Luqmān al-Hakim (Luqmān the Wise) ('a) was the nephew of Nabi Ayyub ('a) and lived in the time of Nabi Dāwud ('a). Although some believe he may have been a prophet (nabi), he is not generally believed to be a prophet but rather a man who was blessed by Allāh with a lot of wisdom.

Hadrat Luqmān ('a) was an extremely pious man and used to mostly remain silent while he pondered about the nature of life. He loved worshipping Allāh and sometimes he would come to Nabi Dāwud ('a) to discuss matters.

Allāh loved Luqmān ('a) very much. He is mentioned by name in the Qur'ān and in fact an entire surah is named after him. Some of his words of wisdom that he gave as advice to his son is quoted in the Qur'ān. Allāh says about Luqmān ('a):

﴿وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا لُقْمَانَ الْحِكْمَةَ أَنْ اشْكُرْ لِلَّهِ وَمَنْ يَشْكُرْ فَإِنَّمَا يَشْكُرُ لِنَفْسِهِ وَمَنْ كَفَرَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَنِيٌّ حَمِيدٌ وَإِذْ قَالَ لُقْمَانُ لِابْنِهِ وَهُوَ يَعِظُهُ يَا بُنَيَّ لَا تُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ إِنَّ الشِّرْكَ لَظُلْمٌ عَظِيمٌ وَوَصَّيْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ بِوَالِدَيْهِ حَمَلَتْهُ أُمُّهُ وَهْنًا عَلَى وَهْنٍ... أَنْ اشْكُرْ لِي يَا بُنَيَّ إِنَّهَا إِنْ تَكُنْ مِثْقَالَ حَبَّةٍ مِنْ خَرْدَلٍ فَتَكُنْ فِي وَلَوَالِدَيْكَ إِلَيَّ الْمَصِيرُ... صَخْرَةً أَوْ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ أَوْ فِي الْأَرْضِ يَأْتِ بِهَا اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَطِيفٌ خَبِيرٌ. يَا بُنَيَّ أَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ وَأْمُرْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَانْهَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَأَصْبِرْ عَلَى مَا أَصَابَكَ إِنَّ ذَلِكَ مِنْ عَزْمِ الْأُمُورِ وَلَا تُصَعِّرْ خَدَّكَ لِلنَّاسِ وَلَا تَمْشِ فِي الْأَرْضِ مَرَحًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ كُلَّ مُخْتَالٍ فَخُورٍ وَاقْصِدْ فِي مَشْيِكَ وَاغْضُضْ مِنْ صَوْتِكَ إِنَّ أَنْكَرَ الْأَصْوَاتِ لَصَوْتُ الْحَمِيرِ﴾

Indeed We gave to Luqmān wisdom, saying, 'give thanks to Allāh; for whoever gives thanks, he only gives thanks for his own self (i.e. own good); and whoever is ungrateful, (it is his own loss); for indeed Allāh is All-sufficient, the most praised.'

When Luqmān said to his son, as he advised him: 'O my son! Do not make anyone as partners to Allāh. Associating anything with Allāh is indeed a great injustice.'

We have enjoined man concerning his parents: His mother carried him through weakness upon weakness... Give thanks to Me and to your parents. To Me is the return....

O my son! Even if it should be the weight of a mustard seed, and [even though] it should be in a rock, or in the heavens, or in the earth, Allāh will bring it out. Indeed Allāh is All-attentive, All-aware.

O my son! Maintain the prayer (salāh) and order what is right and forbid what is wrong, and be patient over whatever may visit you. That is indeed the steadiest of ways.

Do not turn your cheek in scorn from the people, and do not walk proudly on the earth. Indeed Allāh does not like any conceited boaster. Be modest and lower your voice. Indeed the most unpleasant of voices is (to bray like) the donkey's voice.'

- Surah Luqmān, 31:12-19

Hadrat Luqmān ('a) was a black man from Ethiopia. Some say he was a carpenter and others say he later became a judge in the court of the King Nabi Dāwud ('a). Some historians say that when you looked at Luqmān ('a) you would not know his lofty position with Allāh because he was not very good looking. Yet he was very eloquent when he spoke and was known for his wisdom and judgements.

The narration that he was not good looking may not be true but the lesson we are meant to learn is that Allāh does not care what a person looks like as much as he cares about a person's inner beauty and how pure his or her heart is. The other lesson is that we should not judge people by their looks. Some of the most evil people in the world may be physically very good looking and rich in their dress, home and cars. And some of the most pious and devoted believers in Allāh may be very ordinary looking and poor in their means of living.

Hadrat Luqmān ('a) is said to have lived for a very long time, some say 1,000 years, from the time of Nabi Dāwud ('a) to the time of Nabi Yunus ('a). His words of wisdom are found in many books and still serve as great lessons in *akhlāq* for human beings.

The following is a short story from the life of the wise Luqmān ('a) that we can all remember and benefit from.

The Pleasure of Allāh, Not the Pleasure of People

One day, Hadrat Luqmān ('a) decided to give his son a practical demonstration of why you can never please everyone in the world so you should only worry about pleasing Allāh.

He took his son and his donkey and set out. First he told his son to sit on the donkey and he walked besides him. When they got further down the road, they met a man who said, 'what a shameless son! He is riding the donkey and making his father walk!' Then the man said to the boy, 'you should get down and let your father ride!'

And so they changed places. Hadrat Luqmān ('a) now rode the donkey and the boy walked. Soon they came across another man. He looked at them with surprise and said to Luqmān, 'what an inconsiderate father you are! You are the adult and you are riding the donkey and making your poor little child walk! He is a child! He should be on the donkey, not you!'

And so both Luqmān ('a) and his son sat on the donkey and rode along together. Further down the trail, they met another man. He shook his head in disbelief and anger. Then he said, 'Ah! The poor animal! How can both of you ride the donkey together! You will hurt the poor donkey! Don't you know only one person should ride the donkey at a time!'

And so both Luqmān ('a) and his son got off the donkey and they both began walking besides the donkey. Then they met another man who laughed at them and said, 'how silly! You've got a donkey and no one is riding it! Why walk when you have a donkey?!'

And so Hadrat Luqmān ('a) turned to his son and explained to him what he had seen. No matter what they did, there was always someone who disagreed and thought they were wrong. In other words, no matter how hard you work, you cannot please everyone. Even if many praise you, there will always be one who will condemn you.

So to succeed in life and know what is right and what is wrong, Luqmān ('a) told his son to always think about what Allāh has ordered and forbidden and to live in this world trying to please Allāh and not people. A person who tries his or her best to please Allāh will always succeed. A person who tries to please people will never succeed.

Lesson 2

Muhājirun & Ansār and The Change of Qībla

The Declaration of Brotherhood

After his arrival in Madina, Rasulullāh (s) was faced with three new challenges that he had to address immediately:

- The differences that existed between the tribes and cultures of the Muslims.
- The influence of the Jews of Madina who lived within and outside the city and possessed enormous wealth but did not recognize Rasulullāh (s) as the Messenger of Allāh that they had been waiting for.
- The danger of attack from the Quraysh in Makkah and other idol worshippers from the rest of Arabia.

Rasulullāh (s) first tackled the issue concerning the Muslims. Firstly the people who had migrated with him from Makkah (the Muhājirun) and the local Muslims who lived in Madina (the Ansār) had been brought up in different environments and there was a great difference in their thinking and culture. And secondly, within the Ansār of Madina, the tribes of Aws and Khazraj had been sworn enemies of each other and had been fighting for over a hundred years.

Rasulullāh (s) first made sure there was peace between the tribes of Aws and Khazraj. He convinced them to now unite on their faith (i.e. on Islām) and to forget their old differences. Then Rasulullāh (s) turned his attention to the needs of the Muhājirun. These brave Muslims had left all their wealth and possessions in Makkah to come with Rasulullāh (s) to Madina. They had no wealth or property. On the command of Allāh, Rasulullāh (s) established a brotherhood between the Muhājirun and Ansār. He paired off each Muhājir with one of the Ansār and declared them brothers. The generous Ansār gave over one half of their wealth to their new brothers from Makkah so that they could live comfortably in Madina.

At the end of all the pairings, only Imām Ali ('a) was left. He asked Rasulullāh (s) who his brother would be. Rasulullāh (s) said to him, 'O Ali, you are my brother, in this world as well as the next!'

Pact with the Jews

The second issue was to engage the wealthy Jews of Madina in dialogue so as to ensure there is security for everyone. Madina was now an Islāmic State but the Jews

did not recognize Rasulullāh (s) as Allāh’s Messenger. Rasulullāh (s) therefore drafted an agreement (also called ‘a pact’) to establish peace between the Muslims and the Jews. This was a new thing for the Arabs. For the first time, they were introduced to the idea of a Constitution that outlined the principles of freedom, order and justice. Part of the agreement that Rasulullāh (s) signed with the Jews included the following:

- Both parties agree to live together peaceful as one nation. The Muslims and Jews are free to practise their own laws and religion.
- If anyone kills another person by mistake, they must pay the blood money as necessary.
- The authority of resolving differences shall always rest with Allāh and His Messenger.
- When the Muslims fight for the defence of Madina, the Jews must help defend the city and they agree not to plot against the Muslims or the Islāmic government in Madina.

Both Rasulullāh (s) and the Jewish leaders signed this agreement and agreed to live side-by-side without harming each other or allowing any outside forces to harm either party.

The only matter left now was the threat from the Quraysh of Makkah. We will look at this in the next lesson.

The Change of Qibla

When Allāh first ordered Rasulullāh (s) and all Muslims to offer the daily salāh, they prayed facing Bayt al-Muqaddas in Jerusalem. This was the practice in Makkah and continued in Madina until the 17th month after Hijrah.

In Madina, the Jews also said their prayers facing Bayt al-Muqaddas. They used to make fun of the Muslims by saying, “Muhammad claims to have a religion whose laws overrule all previous laws, yet he does not have his own qibla and offers his prayers facing the qibla of the Jews.”

When Rasulullāh (s) heard this, he used to come out at night and look at the heavens waiting for Allāh to reveal something about it. Then Allāh revealed to him:

﴿قَدْ نَرَى تَقَلُّبَ وَجْهِكَ فِي السَّمَاءِ فَلَنُوَلِّيَنَّكَ قِبْلَةً تَرْضَاهَا...﴾

Many a time We have seen you turn your face towards the heavens. We will make you turn towards a Qibla that will please you...

- Surah al-Baqarah, 2:144

One day, while Rasulullāh (s) and the Muslims were in the midst of salāh, the command came from Allāh to change the Qibla from Bayt al-Muqaddas to the Ka'bah in Makkah. After Rasulullāh (s) had already completed two rak'ahs of the dhuhr salāh, the angel Jibrāil ('a) came to him and held the hand of Rasulullāh (s) and turned him around completely towards the Ka'bah in Makkah.

As Rasulullāh (s) turned from facing Bayt al-Muqaddas in Jerusalem and faced the Ka'bah in Makkah, Imām Ali ('a) also turned with him. The other Muslims were confused by this action and only a few followed the example of Imām Ali ('a).

The masjid where this happened is known as 'Masjid Qiblatayn', which means 'The Mosque of Two Qiblas'. This masjid still exists in Madina today.

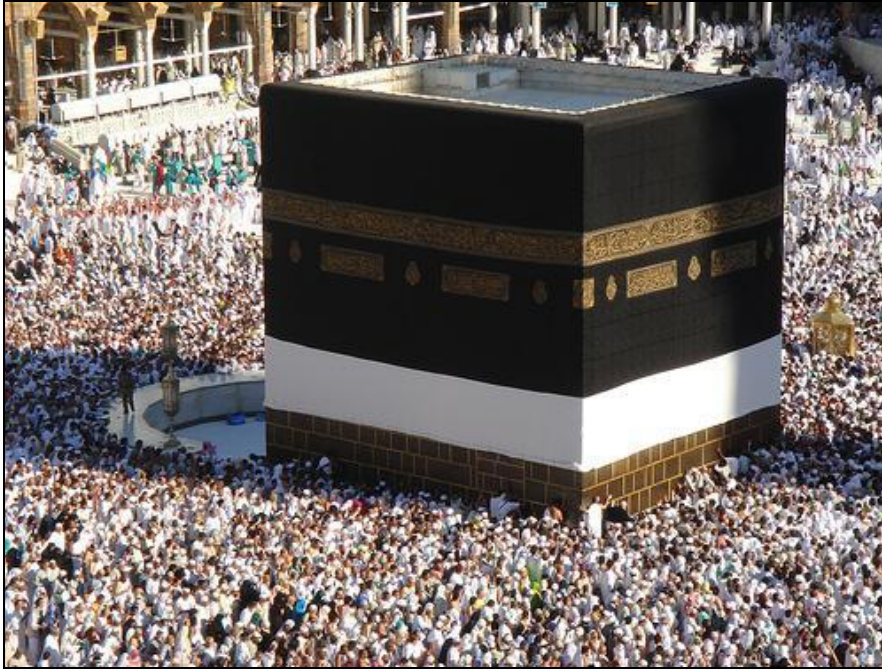


Masjid Qiblatayn in Madina

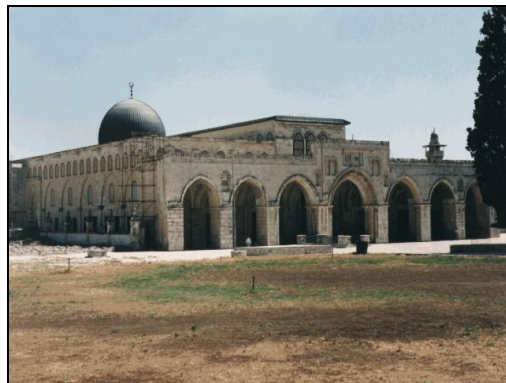
One of the miracles of Rasulullāh (s) was that even though he was praying in Madina and there was no compass to calculate the direction of Makkah, he was able to turn to the exact location of the Ka'bah without the use of any scientific instrument or computation and without any hesitation.

The old qibla (Bayt al-Muqaddas) was north of Madina and the new qibla (Ka'bah in Makkah) was south of Madina.

The Ka'bah remains the qibla for all Muslims even today and will remain so until the Day of Judgement.



The Ka'bah in Masjid al-Harām, Makkah



The picture above shows Masjid al-Aqsa in Bayt al-Muqaddas (Jerusalem). It was the first qibla in Islām and where Rasulullāh (s) stopped on his way to the heavens for mi'rāj. It is the 3rd holiest masjid in Islām after Masjid al-Harām in Makkah and Masjid an-Nabawi in Madina. A lot of people confuse Masjid al-Aqsa (above) with Masjid Qubbat as-Sakhra (below), the structure with the golden dome nearby.



Lesson 3

The Battle of Badr

Even after migrating to Madina, Rasulullāh (s) and the Muslims continued to be threatened and even attacked by their enemies.

Roughly speaking, Rasulullāh (s) launched 80 campaigns during the ten years in Madina, from his migration in 622 CE (1 AH) to his passing away in 632 CE (11 AH). Some of these campaigns were nothing more than exploration missions. All they did was to watch the movements of some clan or tribe. Some were missionary expeditions. Many others were minor skirmishes.

But there were five major battles that are recorded in great detail in Islāmic history. These were:

- The Battle of Badr 2 AH
- The Battle of Uhud 3 AH
- The Battle of Ahzāb 5 AH
- The Battle of Khaybar 6 AH
- The Battle of Hunayn 8 AH

Besides these there were other important events such as the Treaty of Hdaybiya (6 AH), the Battle of Dhāt as-Salāsīl (8 AH), the Freeing of Makkah (8 AH), the Battle of Tāif (8 AH), the Battle of Mu'tah (8 AH), the Event of Mubāhala (9 AH), and the Expedition to Tabuk (9 AH).

A battle or expedition in which Rasulullāh (s) himself led the army of Islām is called a 'Ghazwa' (such as the five battles mentioned above) and an expedition in which Rasulullāh (s) did not participate himself but sent out from Madina under the command of any one of his companions is called a 'Sariyya'.

The Battle of Badr

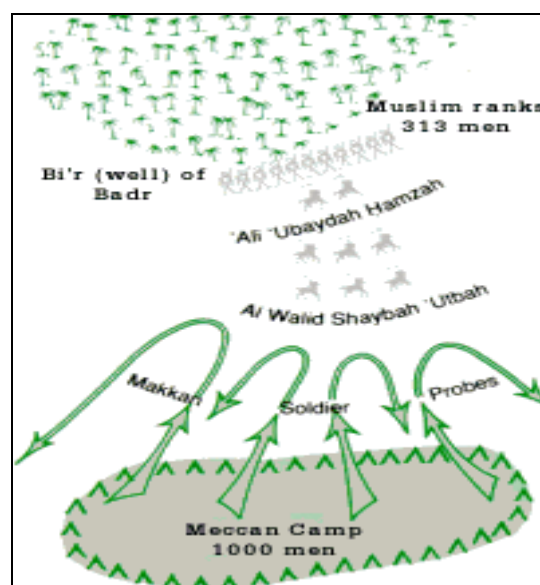
The migration of Rasulullāh (s) to Madina made the enemies in Makkah even more hostile, and they were constantly wondering how they could overthrow him, and put an end to Islām. They decided to prepare to attack Madina. A trade caravan was sent to Syria that year, under the leadership of Abu Sufyān (the grandfather of Yazid) and every Quraysh contributed his savings. Also, when the Muhājirun Muslims abandoned their homes to migrate to Madina, their homes and all their possessions that they had to leave behind were confiscated by the Quraysh leaders and they decided they would sell the possessions of the Muslims and use it to fight them! It was decided that all the profits made from that trade journey would not be given to the traders but would be spent on arms, horses and other items for war against the Muslims of Madina instead.

When Rasullāh (s) found out that Abu Sufyān was returning from Syria with a caravan full of weapons and money to be used against the Muslims, he decided to set out and intercept the caravan. In the meantime Abu Sufyān found out that the Muslims were heading towards him so he sent a messenger ahead to inform the Quraysh leaders. On receiving the message, a well-equipped army consisting of 1000 men, 700 camels and 100 horses left Makkah under the command of Abu Jahl.

Rasullāh (s) had left with 313 men of whom 80 were from the Muhājirun and 233 were Ansār. The Muslims were poorly equipped. Between all of them, they had only 2 horses and 70 camels. Some of the Muslims had a sword but no shield and others had a shield but no sword. Imām Ali (‘a) held the banner of the Muslim army as they headed towards the village of Badr. The Muslims were still expecting to meet Abu Sufyān’s caravan from Syria and to stop him. They were not aware of the Makkan army heading towards them. When they stopped to camp at the water wells of Badr, which was 80 miles from Madina and 200 miles from Makkah, they came to know of the approaching army. Both the Muhājirun and the Ansār expressed their loyalty to Rasullāh (s) and agreed to fight the polytheist Quraysh army if they had to.

Before the Makkan army led by Abu Jahl reached ‘Badr’, Abu Sufyān changed his route and he sent a message to Abu Jahl to say that the caravan was now safe and there was no need to fight. But Abu Jahl was so eager to fight that he refused to listen and decided not to turn back but to continue marching towards Madina.

The two forces met at Badr on Friday 17th Ramadān 2 AH (13th January 624 CE). According to Arab custom, a fight would have some individual combat before the general war began. Three of the infidel warriors, Utba (the father-in-law of Abu Sufyān), his brother Shayba and Al-Walid came out of their ranks and challenged the Muslims. Imām Ali (‘a), Hamza (the uncle of Rasullāh (s)) and Ubayda (a cousin of Rasullāh (s)) responded to the challenge.



Hamza killed Shayba while Imām Ali (‘a) killed Al-Walid. Ubayda was injured but Imām Ali (‘a) and Hamza came to his rescue and killed Utba. Three more infidels came out to fight and Imām Ali (‘a) and Hamza killed them too. A further three came out to fight but they too were killed. Now the Quraysh began to hesitate. An all out war broke out. The Muslims broke up the ranks of the Quraysh and soon their bravest champions fell. The Quraysh began fleeing and in their haste they threw away their armour and abandoned their animals with all their camp equipments.

To ensure the enemy is completely demoralized, Allāh also helped the Muslims with a special favour. He sent down angels in the form of warriors so that when the enemies saw the Muslims, they suddenly seemed so many in numbers that it filled them with terror. This is mentioned in the Qur’ān:

﴿قَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ آيَةٌ فِي فِئَتَيْنِ الْتَقَتَا فِئَةٌ تُقَاتِلُ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَأُخْرَى كَافِرَةٌ يَرَوْنَهُمْ مِثْلَهُمْ رَأْيَ الْعَيْنِ وَاللَّهُ يُؤَيِّدُ بِنَصَرِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَعِبْرَةً لِّأُولِي الْأَبْصَارِ﴾

There was certainly a sign for you in the two armies that met: one force fighting in the way of Allāh and the other faithless, who saw them visibly twice as many. Allāh strengthens with His help whomever He wishes. There is indeed a moral in that for those who have insight.

- Surah Al-Imrān, 3:13

﴿وَلَقَدْ نَصَرَكُمُ اللَّهُ بِبَدْرٍ وَأَنْتُمْ أَذِلَّةٌ فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ إِذْ تَقُولُ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَلَنْ يَكْفِيَكُمْ أَنْ يُمَدِّدَ كُمْ رَبُّكُمْ بِثَلَاثَةِ آلَافٍ مِنَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ مُنَزَّلِينَ بَلَىٰ إِنْ تَصَبَرُوا وَتَتَّقُوا وَيَأْتُوكُم مِّن فُورِهِمْ هَذَا يُمَدِّدْكُمْ رَبُّكُمْ بِخَمْسَةِ آلَافٍ مِنَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ مُسَوِّمِينَ﴾

Certainly Allāh helped you at Badr, when you were abased [in the enemy’s eyes]. So be wary of Allāh so that you may give thanks. When you (O Rasulullāh) were saying to the faithful, ‘Is it not enough for you that your Lord should help you with three thousand angels sent down?’ Yes, if you are steadfast and Godwary, □ and should they come at you suddenly, your Lord will help you with five thousand marked angels.

- Surah Al-Imrān, 3:123-125

By the end of the battle, 70 of the Quraysh were killed and 70 more were taken prisoners. Among the dead was Abu Jahl, the leader of the army and an archenemy of Rasulullāh (s). This was Imām Ali (‘a)’s first battle. He killed 36 of the 70 – more than half - of the attacking polytheists. The Muslims lost 14 men.

The 70 Makkans who were taken by the Muslims as prisoners were treated with exceptional kindness. The prisoners who were rich, paid ransom and were set free. The others were asked to teach ten children each to read and write and this teaching

was to pay as their ransom. Even though most Arabs were illiterate, this shows how much importance Rasūlullāh (s) gave to learning and knowledge even from the early days in Madina.

Some of the prisoners were so moved by the kindness of the Muslims that they became Muslims themselves. One of the prisoners said in later days, 'blessings be on the men of Madina. They made us ride on camels while they themselves walked, they gave us wheat and bread to eat when there was little of it while they only ate dates.'

In that same year, Allāh revealed that from the following year it would be wājib to fast in the month of Ramadān.

Consequences of the Battle of Badr

The Battle of Badr was very significant as the first military confrontation between the Muslims and their enemies.

Firstly the victory gave tremendous courage and faith to the ill-equipped poor Muslims that Allāh was on their side because nothing short of a miracle helped them that day.

Secondly, it not only demoralized the powerful Quraysh clan in Makkah and weakened them because a number of their leaders were killed, but it also sent shockwaves throughout Arabia forcing the neighbouring polytheist and Jewish tribes to realize that Islām was able to defend itself.

Thirdly, it demonstrated how faithful some of the early Muslims were. Some of them had to fight against their own fathers, brothers, sons and close relatives for the sake of the Truth.

A lesson for us to learn from the Battle of Badr even today is that numbers do not matter. Even physical strength and military supremacy does not matter. When it comes to defending Islām, only faith and trust in Allāh matters. If we show courage and obey the leader appointed over us, Allāh guarantees us victory. We shall see more of how this is always true, in the next lesson.

One unfortunate outcome of the battle of Badr was that Islām's victory lit up new and fiercer fires of hatred and hostility in the hearts of the Banu Umayya against Rasūlullāh (s), Imām Ali ('a) and the Ahl al-Bayt ('a).

To Muslims, Imām Ali ('a) was the symbol of the victory in all the battles of Islām but to the Banu Umayya, he was the symbol of the destruction of their polytheism and their privileges. Imām Ali ('a) not only killed many of them in battle but he also was the one who stood on the shoulders of Rasūlullāh (s) during the Freeing of Makkah (Fath Makkah) and pull down all their idols from the Ka'bah breaking them into

pieces. Therefore, for generations to come, their friends and their supporters never forgave Imām Ali (‘a) for the role he played before, during and after the battle of Badr.

After the Battle of Badr, Abu Sufyān from the Banu Umayya clan became the leader of Makkah. He continued to fight Rasulullāh (s) until the Freeing of Makkah when he accepted Islām only to save himself. His son Mu‘āwiya later was the archenemy of Imām Ali (‘a) and Imām Hasan (‘a). When Mu‘āwiya became the Caliph of the Muslims he ordered all the cities and towns to curse Imām Ali (‘a) from every pulpit and before every Friday Prayer (Salāt al-Jumu‘ah) and this continued for 70 years. Mu‘āwiya’s son Yazid also murdered Imām Husayn (‘a), the son of Imām Ali (‘a). One of the reasons was the hatred for Imām Ali (‘a), and when the head of Imām Husayn (‘a) was presented before Yazid in Sham (Damascus), he drank wine and sang poetry saying, ‘I wish my forefathers of Badr would have been here to see how I have avenged them. Then they would have said to me, “Well done, O Yazid!”’

The Marriage of Sayyida Fātima (‘a) to Imām Ali (‘a)

Because of the excellence of Sayyida Fātima (‘a), Rasulullāh (s) received numerous offers for her hand in marriage from wealthy families and chiefs of tribes. He refused them all, saying that he was waiting for the order of Allāh regarding the person to whom his daughter should be married.

The Muslims realised that the person who marries this great lady would not need to be rich and powerful, but would have to possess her qualities of truthfulness, piety and excellence. Therefore, some people suggested to Imām Ali (‘a) that he should go to Rasulullāh (s) and place a proposal from himself. Imām Ali (‘a) also wished this, and he approached Rasulullāh (s). Imām Ali (‘a) felt shy to make his request but when Rasulullāh (s) encouraged him to speak what was on his mind, he managed to tell him. In the meantime, Jibrāil (‘a) also said to Rasulullāh (s) that Allāh had married Sayyida Fātima (‘a) to Imām Ali (‘a) in paradise.

When Rasulullāh (s) heard the proposal from Imām Ali (‘a) he was so pleased that he smiled and said, ‘It is a welcome and happy proposal.’ However, he asked Imām Ali (‘a) to wait until he asked his daughter. When Rasulullāh (s) mentioned the proposal of Imām Ali (‘a) to Sayyida Fātima (‘a), she remained quiet due to her modesty but only smiled. Rasulullāh (s) understood her willingness and declared, ‘Her silence is her consent.’

In those days, Imām Ali (‘a) owned nothing except his sword and armour. He was advised by Rasulullāh (s) to sell the armour to meet the expense of marriage. With the money from the sale, he purchased some basic items for his new life that was about to begin. These items included: some perfume, a shirt and robe, some pillows and bedding, a curtain, a mat, two millstones for grinding flour, a water skin, a wooden bowl for milk, a container for water, some jars, two silver bracelets and a copper vessel.

Rasulullāh (s) himself performed the marriage ceremony. This was also in the month of Ramadān 2 AH, after the Battle of Badr. The wedding was very simple but beautiful and blessed. The Muhājirun and Ansār gathered for the wedding and Imām Ali (‘a) arranged for a feast (*walima*) in honour of his wife.

Rasulullāh (s) blessed both couples. The dearest of all human beings to him was his daughter Fātima (‘a) and he said, ‘had it not been for Ali, there would have been no match for Fātima.’

From this marriage Imām Ali (‘a) and Sayyida Fātima (‘a) were blessed with five children: Imām al-Hasan (‘a), Imām al-Husayn (‘a), Sayyida Zaynab (‘a), Sayyida Umm Kulthum (‘a), and Hadrat Muhsin (‘a) who died before he was born when Sayyida Fātima (‘a) was injured when her home was attacked and set on fire.

Class Activity:

The Teacher’s DVD contains a 10-minute video clip from the movie ‘The Message’ showing the Battle of Badr. In this video you will see:

- The Rules of Battle in Islām. Bilāl announces them in this movie.
- Bilāl killing his previous master Umayya who had tortured him a lot.
- Rasulullāh (s) orders the prisoners to be freed if they can teach any Muslim to read and write. This shows the importance of knowledge in Islām.

Lesson 4

The Battle of Uhud

The battle of Uhud was the second battle of Islām that was fought in Shawwāl 3 AH (625 CE). When the Quraysh lost the Battle of Badr and some of their prominent leaders were killed, they were furious and wanted to take revenge.

A well-equipped army consisting of 3000 soldiers under the command of Abu Sufyān was prepared. The army of Abu Sufyān marched towards Madina and fought the Muslims at the foot of Mount Uhud, just 3 miles outside Madina.



A panoramic view of Mount Uhud Madina in recent times

Rasulullāh (s) had left Madina with 1000 men but Abdullah b. Ubay, the leader of the hypocrites in Madina deserted the Muslims with 300 other hypocrites and halfway through the march, turned around and went back to Madina.

The Muslims now numbered only 700 of whom only 100 had armour and there were only two horses.

Rasulullāh (s) took his position below a mountain. He posted 50 archers under the command of Abdullah b. Jubayr to stand on guard at the top of the mountain and to make sure that no one could come around and attack the Muslims from behind where there was a pass between two small mountains. Rasulullāh (s) seemed to know what would happen because he strictly told these archers not to leave their post at the top of the mountain whether the Muslims were winning or losing.

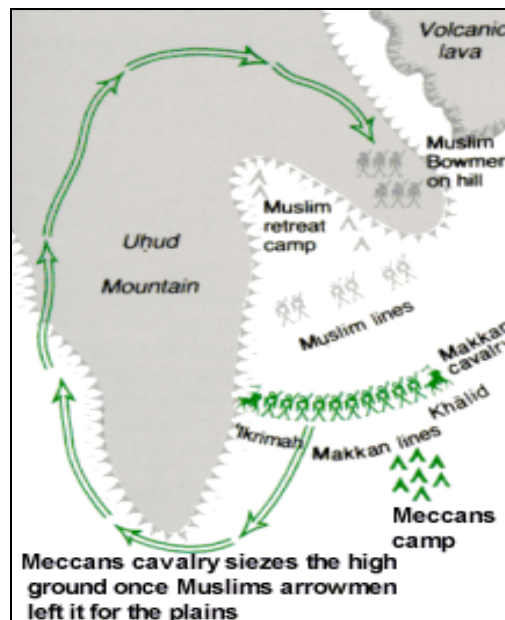
As the battle began, Talha the standard-bearer and a champion of the Makkan polytheists stepped forward and challenged the Muslims to single combat. Imām Ali (‘a) came forward and killed him. After him nine others took the standard and came forward but Imām Ali (‘a) killed them all. Abu Sufyān realized his army was now losing hope so a general combat began.

At first the Muslims were winning the war. Imām Ali (‘a) and Hamza, the uncle of Rasulullāh (s), created havoc among the enemy. Hind, the wife of Abu Sufyān, had also come to this battle to avenge her father and brother who were killed by Imām Ali (‘a) in Badr. She wanted to kill either Rasulullāh (s), Imām Ali (‘a) or Hamza. She brought with her a slave called Wahshi and promised him freedom if he kills one of them. Wahshi was very good with his aim with spears. He saw a chance to throw his spear at Hadrat Hamza and it pierced Hadrat Hamza’s abdomen and he fell down a martyr. Then Hind came to his body and cut out his liver and tried to chew it in

revenge but she was unable to do so. From then onwards she was known as 'the liver-chewer' and her son Mu'āwiya was known as 'the son of the liver-chewer'.

Despite the great loss of Hamza, the Muslim still charged at their enemies and created disorder amongst them. The Makkans began turning and running away.

At this point the Muslim archers on the mountain thought the war was over. They saw some of the Muslims collecting the war booty from the battlefield so they began running down to take their share. Their commander Abdullah bin Jubayr kept reminding them of what Rasulullāh (s) had ordered but they wouldn't listen. As they ran down, a group of the Makkan army was hiding behind the mountain pass under the command of Khālid b. Walid. They saw the mountain was now unguarded and they came charging through the mountain pass and attacked the Muslims from behind. Abdullah bin Jubayr was killed on the mountain and the Muslims now had to turn to fight behind them. In the meantime, those Makkans who were running away turned to fight again and so the Muslims were sandwiched between two groups.



Someone threw a rock at Rasulullāh (s) and two of his teeth broke and began bleeding. He was also hurt on his forehead and face and began bleeding. Then someone shouted, 'Muhammad is dead!' and most of the Muslims began running away up the hills and mountains to save their lives.

Prominent Muslims like Abu Bakr and Umar (who later appointed each other as the 1st and 2nd Caliph of the Muslims) ran away as well. Uthmān bin Affān (who later became the 3rd Caliph) ran so far away that he only returned to Madina after 3 days! Rasulullāh (s) began calling the Muslims and telling them to come back but most of them became demoralized and were running up the hills without even looking back. Only a handful of Muslims like Imām Ali (‘a) and Abu Dujāna stood in front of Rasulullāh (s) and continued defending him.

At one point, Imām Ali (‘a)’s sword broke and the angel Jibrāil (‘a) brought a sword to Rasulullāh (s) who gave it to Imām Ali (‘a). This sword was called *Dhul Fiqār* and remained with Imām Ali (‘a) until the end. As he fought bravely, Jibrāil (‘a) was heard shouting in the heavens, ‘*lā fata illa Ali, la sayf illa Dhul Fiqār*’ (‘There is no hero like Ali and no sword like Dhul Fiqār!’).

Later as some Muslims regained courage and returned to help, they took Rasulullāh (s) to higher grounds and the Makkan polytheists were too exhausted to follow them or to attack Madina. They too had suffered losses. Instead they mutilated the bodies of the Muslim martyrs in the battlefield by chopping off their noses and ears. Hadrat Hamza (‘a) was one of those whose bodies were severely mutilated and Rasulullāh (s) wept for him bitterly. Hadrat Hamza (‘a) was called *Sayyid ash-Shuhada* (the master of all martyrs) and he was known by this title until much later after the Battle of Karbala when this title was passed on to Imām Husayn (‘a).

In all the confusion, 70 Muslims were martyred. Abu Sufyān shouted to the Muslims and said, ‘this is in revenge for Badr!’ and then they retreated and went back to Makkah.



Jabal Rummāt (Archers Mt.)

Above is a modern-day picture showing vendors selling goods and pilgrims on Jabal Rummāt (Archers Mountain) at Uhud (Madina). This is where Rasulullāh (s) had posted 50 archers to protect the Muslim army from being attacked from the rear but the archers disobeyed and left their positions when they thought the battle was over and out of greed for war booty. A group of the enemies then attacked from a pass behind this mountain and the Muslims suffered considerable loss.

Rasulullāh (s) collected all the Muslim martyrs and prayed over the body of each one of them and buried them at Uhud. In the meantime, a group of women from Madina came to the battlefield including Sayyida Fātima az-Zahra (‘a). Imām Ali (‘a) brought some water and Sayyida Fātima (‘a) began washing the blood from her father,

Rasulullāh (s)'s face and dressing his wounds. The other women as well began helping and dressing the wounds of the other injured Muslims.

In the Battle of Uhud, 70 Muslims were martyred and 70 wounded. Imām Ali (‘a) was also heavily wounded. The Makkans lost 22 men, 12 of them at the hands of Imām Ali (‘a).

The Results of the Battle of Uhud

The battle of Uhud created serious difficulties for the Muslims. It greatly demoralized them. Secondly it encouraged the Jews and other nomadic tribes living near Madina to make raids on Madina. And thirdly it boosted the morale of the Quraysh in Makkah and they began planning another bigger attack in Madina (that we shall study in the next lesson).

While the Battle of Uhud was the peak moment of faithlessness (*kufr*) against Islām and they would never harm the Muslims like this ever again, it was also an opportunity for the Muslims to learn the consequences of disobeying the Messenger of Allāh (s). If the archers had not abandoned the mountain, they would have won this battle as well and they were in fact already winning it until they left their positions out of greed for the world and to collect booty.

Later on when they returned to Madina and they hypocrites were making fun of them, some of the Muslims wondered why Allāh did not help them by sending angels like He did in the Battle of Badr.

Allāh revealed āyāt of the Qur’ān to Rasulullāh (s) to tell the Muslims that if they had kept their promise to obey Rasulullāh (s) then he would certainly have helped them but they suffered because of their own greed and disobedience:

﴿وَلَقَدْ صَدَقَكُمُ اللَّهُ وَعْدَهُ إِذْ تَحُسُّونَهُمْ بِإِذْنِهِ حَتَّى إِذَا فَشِلْتُمْ وَتَنَزَعْتُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ وَعَصَيْتُمْ مِمَّنْ بَعْدَ مَا أَرَاكُمْ مَا تُحِبُّونَ مِنْكُمْ مَنْ يُرِيدُ الدُّنْيَا وَمِنْكُمْ مَنْ يُرِيدُ الْآخِرَةَ... إِذْ تُصْعِدُونَ وَلَا تَلْوُونَ عَلَى أَحَدٍ وَالرَّسُولُ يَدْعُوكُمْ فِي أُخْرَاكُمْ...﴾

Allāh certainly fulfilled His promise to you when you were killing them with His permission (i.e. you were winning the battle), until you lost courage, disputed about the matter, and disobeyed after He showed you what you loved (i.e. the war booty). Some of you desire this world, and some of you desire the Hereafter.... When you were fleeing without paying any attention to anyone, while the Messenger was calling you from your rear...

- Surah Al-Imrān, 3:152-153

Allāh also scolded the Muslims for running away just because they thought Rasullāh (s) had been killed. As Muslims who believe in Allāh and the message of Islām they should have continued fighting even if Rasullāh (s) had been killed:

﴿وَمَا مُحَمَّدٌ إِلَّا رَسُولٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ الرُّسُلُ أَفَإِنْ مَاتَ أَوْ قُتِلَ انْقَلَبْتُمْ عَلَىٰ أَعْقَابِكُمْ وَمَنْ يَنْقَلِبْ عَلَىٰ عَقْبَيْهِ فَلَنْ يَضُرَّ اللَّهَ شَيْئًا وَسَيَجْزِي اللَّهُ الشَّاكِرِينَ﴾

Muhammad is but a messenger; [other] messengers have passed before him. If he dies or is killed, will you turn back on your heels? Anyone who turns back on his heels (and flees) will not harm Allāh in the least, and soon Allāh will reward the grateful.

- Surah Al-I Imrān, 3:144

But thereafter Allāh gave courage to the Muslims and reminded them that life and death are in His hands only and that this event served as a trial for them and if they are patient they will still have the upper hand.

﴿وَلَا تَهِنُوا وَلَا تَحْزِنُوا وَأَنْتُمْ الْأَعْلَوْنَ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ إِنْ يَمَسُّكُمْ قَرْحٌ فَقَدْ مَسَّ الْقَوْمَ قَرْحٌ مِثْلُهُ وَتِلْكَ الْأَيَّامُ نُدَاوِلُهَا بَيْنَ النَّاسِ وَلِيَعْلَمَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَيَتَّخِذَ مِنْكُمْ شُهَدَاءَ ... أَمْ حَسِبْتُمْ أَنْ تَدْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ وَلَمَّا يَعْلَمِ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا مِنْكُمْ وَيَعْلَمَ الصَّابِرِينَ ... وَمَا كَانَ لِنَفْسٍ أَنْ تَمُوتَ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ كِتَابًا مُؤَجَّلًا وَمَنْ يُرِدْ ثَوَابَ الدُّنْيَا نُؤْتِهِ مِنْهَا وَمَنْ يُرِدْ ثَوَابَ الْآخِرَةِ نُؤْتِهِ مِنْهَا وَسَنَجْزِي الشَّاكِرِينَ﴾

Do not weaken or grieve: you shall have the upper hand, should you be faithful. If a wound afflicts you, a similar wound has already afflicted those people (at Badr); and We make such days rotate among mankind, so that Allāh may verify those who have faith, and that He may take martyrs from among you...

Do you suppose that you would enter paradise, while Allāh has not yet confirmed those of you who have waged jihād and not confirmed the patient?... No soul may die except by Allāh's permission, at an appointed time. Whoever desires the reward of this world, We will give him of it; and whoever desires the reward of the Hereafter, We will give him of it; and soon We will reward the grateful.

- Surah Al-I Imrān, 3:139-143, 145

The defeat of the Muslims was a test for them and through this suffering and experience they emerged more eager and determined to defend their faith and the cause of Islām.

Lesson 5

The Battle of Ahzāb & The Battle of Khaybar

After the defeat of the Muslims in the Battle of Uhud, many tribes became bold and started thinking that they could attack the Muslims without any consequences. Rasulullāh (s) for example, had sent a number of missionaries to neighbouring tribes and towns in Arabia and in some cases it was the tribes who had invited these Muslim missionaries and requested Rasulullāh (s) to send them to teach Islām but as soon as they got there, they were surrounded and mercilessly murdered.

The Battle of Ahzāb

Just as the non-Jews in Madina were made up of the tribes of Aws and Khazraj, the Jews in Madina consisted of three main tribes: the Banu Qaynuqa, the Banu Nadhir and the Banu Quraydha. The Banu Qaynuqa had been expelled from Madina after the Battle of Badr in 2 AH because of repeatedly causing trouble for the Muslims; and after the Battle of Uhud, the Banu Nadhir were expelled from Madina for openly plotting against the Muslims and even attempting to assassinate Rasulullāh (s).

As they left, the Banu Nadhir demolished their own homes so that the Muslims could not occupy them and some went towards Syria while others went to the Jewish forts of Khaybar. The Banu Quraydha Jews however were allowed to remain behind because they still honoured the treaty of peaceful co-existence with the Muslims.

Once they were settled in Khaybar, the Banu Nadhir contacted the Quraysh of Makkah to plot against Islām and 20 leaders from the Jews and 50 from Quraysh signed an agreement in the Ka'bah that so long as they lived, they would fight Rasulullāh (s). Thereafter, the Jews and the polytheists contacted their allies (*ahzāb*) from neighbouring tribes and soon they formed a powerful army of 10,000 warriors who marched to Madina under the command of Abu Sufyān.

When the news of these preparations reached Madina, Rasulullāh (s) consulted his companions. Salmān al-Fārisi advised that in Persia they used to dig a deep and wide trench to keep away enemies and they could dig such a ditch on the unprotected side of Madina. Rasulullāh (s) approved this plan and soon the Muslims were divided into parties of 10, and each party allocated 10 yards to dig.

Rasulullāh (s) himself participated in this task. The ditch or moat (*khandaq*) was completed in time, just three days before the forces of the enemy reached Madina. The Muslims could gather only 3000 men to oppose this huge army of 10,000 that camped on the opposite side of the trench facing Madina. The Battle of Ahzāb took place in Shawwāl 5 AH (February 627 AH).

A coalition or a group of clans or allies is called 'Ahzāb' in Arabic and a trench is called 'Khandaq'. And because the enemies were made up of an alliance of Jews, polytheists and their allies, this battle would come to be known as the Battle of Ahzāb or the Battle of Khandaq and in the Qur'ān, Surah 33 is named after it (Surah al-Ahzāb).

When the enemies saw the trench, they were taken by surprise. They never expected to see this and it was a new thing for the Arabs. Day and night they tried to bridge it and cross over but each time the Muslim archers prevented them.

In the meantime, the leaders of the Banu Nadhir secretly contacted the Banu Quraydha Jews still living inside Madina and convinced them to break their treaty with Rasulullāh (s) and to attack the Muslims from the inside. And as they began terrorizing the Muslim women and children, Rasulullāh (s) had to send 500 men from the Muslim army of 3000 back into the city to protect its residents.

Finally, a few of the Quraysh warriors – including their champion Amr bin Abd Wadd – succeeded in crossing the trench in an area that was not too wide. Amr was very much feared in the Arab world. He was a giant and considered equal to 1000 warriors in battle. He began challenging the Muslims and mocking them, saying, 'what are you afraid of, if you kill me you will go to paradise and if I kill you, you still believe you will go to paradise.' None of the Muslims had the courage to stand up and face him except Imām Ali ('a). Rasulullāh (s) tied a special turban on the head of Imām Ali ('a) and prayed for him and as Imām Ali ('a) left to face Amr bin Abd Wadd, Rasulullāh (s), said, 'now all of faith (*imān*) is going forward to fight all of faithlessness (*kufr*)'. In a sense, the future of Islām depended on the outcome of this battle.

Imām Ali ('a) first offered Amr to surrender and accept Islām but Amr refused. Then he offered Amr to turn back and go away but Amr also refused. And so a one-on-one combat began. So much dust flew in the air that no one could see what was happening.

The first time Imām Ali ('a) threw Amr to the ground and was going to kill him, Amr spat on Imām Ali ('a). And so Imām Ali ('a) left him alone and allowed him to stand and fight again. Later on, when Imām Ali ('a) was asked why he left Amr go the first time, he said, 'I did not want to kill him for my own anger. I wanted to kill him only for Allāh's sake.' This showed that even in battle and in danger, Imām Ali ('a) never forgot why he was doing what he was doing and he never did anything for his own pleasure or anger.

The next time around, as the dust flew, everyone heard Imām Ali ('a) shouting, 'Allāhu Akbar!' and as Amr fell to the ground dead and the Muslims cheered, the enemies panicked and even the few who had crossed over with Amr fled back.

The siege on Madina continued for more than 24 days with both sides tiring out. Rasulullāh (s) then went to a hilltop where the Masjid al-Fath (Mosque of Victory) stands today in Madina. There he prayed to Allāh for help. Soon, a fierce storm raged outside Madina. It uprooted the tents of the enemy, causing their belongings to fly in the air while striking fear in their hearts. The Makkans and Jews began fleeing and the

leader Abu Sufyān was so scared that he even tried getting on his camel and fleeing before untying the rope to which the camel was tied!

By the next day, not a single enemy could be seen on the field. Rasulullāh (s) then, on the command of Allāh, expelled the Banu Quraydha from Madina for their treachery and betrayal at such a critical time. The battle of Ahzāb/Khandaq ended in Dhul Qa'ada 5 AH. The Muslims lost only five men in this battle.

This was a huge defeat for the polytheists of Makkah and never again did they dare attack Madina. As the Muslims regained their power and strength in Arabia, all the tribes around Madina signed peace treaties with Rasulullāh (s).

There were various factors that brought Muslims victory in this battle. But the two main reasons were Imām Ali ('a) killing the champion Amr bin Abd Wadd and the prayers of Rasulullāh (s) that resulted in the storm that destroyed the courage and set up of the allies army.

Allāh has mentioned this battle in the Qur'ān in āyāt such as this:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اذْكُرُوا نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ جَاءَتْكُمْ جُنُودٌ فَأَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ رِيحًا
وَجُنُودًا لَمْ تَرَوْهَا وَكَانَ اللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرًا﴾

O you who believe! Remember the blessing of Allāh on you when the forces (of the enemy) came to you. We sent upon them a strong wind and an army (of angels) that you did not see. And Allāh sees all that you do.

- Surah al-Ahzāb, 33:9

In the same year (5 AH), Hajj was made mandatory for all those Muslims who were financially well off and in good physical health.

The Battle of Khaybar

To the north of Madina was situated a fertile land known as the Valley of Khaybar. Some 20,000 Jews skilled in farming and warfare lived in that area. They had built seven strong forts in Khaybar to protect themselves from any attack.

When the Jewish tribes of Banu Qaynuqā and Banu Nadhir were expelled from Madina because of their plots against Islām, some of them settled at Khaybar. Here, they continued in their old ways, encouraging and helping the Arab tribes to harm the State of Islām.

Even after the Jews had lost against the Muslims in the Battle of Ahzāb, they remained a source of danger for the Muslims. Moreover, Rasulullāh (s) had sent letters to various leaders of neighbouring countries, and he was worried that those leaders who had

rejected the message of Islām might pair up with the Jews of Khaybar to threaten the Muslims.

Since he had just signed a peace treaty with the other Arab tribes, Rasulullāh (s) knew that he would have no trouble from them and he could thus concentrate on the danger to Islām from Khaybar. He therefore ordered the Muslims to get ready to fight the growing threat from the Jews of Khaybar.

The Muslim army consisted of 1600 men, of whom 200 were mounted soldiers. The army marched out with Imām Ali (‘a) holding the standard.

The seven forts of Khaybar were equipped with giant catapults to push back an enemy attack. But the Muslims were able to go around most of these forts and surprise the Jewish forces. Soon the Muslims had taken all the forts except for the last and main fort of Khaybar. Here is where all the heroes of the Jewish army were stationed.

The siege on Khaybar lasted for many days until a point where even the Muslim force had run out of food. At this difficult time, a shepherd who used to look after the sheep of the Jews came to Rasulullāh (s) and after some discussions he was convinced of the truth of Islām and became a Muslim. The shepherd then asked Rasulullāh (s) what he should do with all the sheep belonging to the Jews he had in his care. And in the presence of hundreds of hungry Muslim soldiers, Rasulullāh (s) told the shepherd to go and give them back to the Jews because in Islām you cannot break a trust and a promise even it is made to an enemy. The Jews had given him their sheep to look after on trust. It was *harām* to violate that trust.

And so the shepherd did as he was ordered and then participated in the battle and was martyred. By his action Rasulullāh (s) showed clearly that he was not in Khaybar to conquer land and wealth, but his aim was to remove the threat to Islām from the Jews. In spite of the needs of his men, he would not permit the unlawful use of the enemy's property and instead prayed to Allāh to grant the Muslims victory.

Many companions and Muslim elders tried to lead the Muslim army to capture the fort of Khaybar - including Abu Bakr and Umar - but they all failed and were forced to retreat. Umar even demoralized the Muslims by praising the courage of the chief of the Jews, a fearful warrior by the name of Marhab. This action of Umar displeased Rasulullāh (s) very much.

Finally, Rasulullāh (s) announced: *‘Tomorrow I shall give the standard to a person who loves Allāh and Rasulullāh and who is loved by Allāh and Rasulullāh, and Allāh will give us victory at his hands. He is a brave man who never turns his back to the enemy and never runs away from the battlefield.’*

All the Muslim soldiers slept restlessly that night and prayed that they would be chosen and given the honour to be that person. The next morning they all gathered around Rasulullāh (s) to see who would be chosen. Rasulullāh (s) asked, ‘Where is Ali?’ and he

was told that Imām Ali (‘a) had a severe eye infection and was unable to even see properly.

Rasulullāh (s) ordered Imām Ali (‘a) to be brought before him and rubbed his eyes and prayed for his recovery. The eyes of Imām Ali (‘a) were instantly cured and he never had trouble with them again.

Rasulullāh (s) then ordered Imām Ali (‘a) to advance against the enemy. He told him to ask the chiefs of the forts to accept Islām. If they refused he was to ask them to surrender and live freely under Muslim protection and pay tax to the Muslim State. If this offer was also refused, then he should fight.

Imām Ali (‘a) approached the forts wearing a strong coat of armour and carrying his sword, Dhul Fiqār. The Jews sent out one of their best warriors, Hārith the brother of Marhab, to fight the Muslims. The soldiers of Islām were struck with fear when they saw the powerful Hārith advance toward them. However, Imām Ali (‘a) faced him and after a brief fight, Hārith lay dead on the ground.

The death of his brother enraged Marhab. He came out of the fort in a rage, fully armed. Imām Ali (‘a) and Marhab engaged in battle as soldiers on both sides looked on with awe.

Suddenly Marhab plunged his three-pronged spear towards Imām Ali (‘a), who avoided it and struck a powerful blow to the head of Marhab. A silence fell as the Jews watched in disbelief their champion falling dead. As he shouted ‘Allāhu Akbar!’ in victory, Imām Ali (‘a) was attacked by other experienced Jewish warriors but they were no match for him and soon they too lay dead.

Imām Ali (‘a) then approached the closed fort and ripped its gate out with one hand and threw it to the side. Later on 40 (or according to some 70) Muslim soldiers tried lifting the gate and they could barely move it. It was by the strength from Allāh that Imām Ali (‘a) was able to uproot and fling such a heavy gate.

The Muslims had now taken over Khaybar. In total, Muslims lost 20 men in this battle while the Jews lost 93 men. Rasulullāh (s) had made the Jews realise it was useless to plot against the Muslims. After the victory he gave them all their land back and they agreed to pay an annual tax to the Muslims in exchange for protection from the Islāmic State.

On the day of the victory at Khaybar, the Muslims who had migrated from Makkah to Abyssinia in the early years of Islām before Hijrah, finally came to Madina led by Ja’far bin Abu Tālib (the brother of Imām Ali (‘a)). Rasulullāh (s) was overjoyed at the return of Ja’far with the Muslims from Abyssinia just as he rejoiced and thanked Allāh for the victory at Khaybar.

The Battle of Khaybar took place in Muharram 7 AH.

Fadak

180 kms north of Madina lay a fertile territory called Fadak that was also owned by the Jews. After the victory of the Muslims at Khaybar, the Jews offered to surrender Fadak to Rasulullāh (s) without any struggle or combat.

Allāh revealed to Rasulullāh (s) that whatever was handed to him without the use of the Muslim soldiers or their weapons or horses and with no war, was the property of Rasulullāh (s) himself and he was to distribute as he saw fit. Fadak fell under this law as well. And in the case of Fadak, Allāh also revealed:

﴿وَأْتِ ذَا الْقُرْبَىٰ حَقَّهُ...﴾

And give the relatives their [due] right...

- Surah al-Isrā, 17:26

And so Rasulullāh (s) gave the fertile land of Fadak and its revenues to his daughter Sayyida Fātima az-Zahra (‘a). Rasulullāh (s) did this for several reasons. Firstly, Allāh had commanded him to give the near ones their due and there was no one more nearer and deserving than Sayyida Fātima (‘a). Secondly, all the Muslims were indebted to Sayyida Khadija (‘a), the mother of Sayyida Fātima (‘a), who had sacrificed her entire wealth for the sake of the early Muslims. Her money had been used to spread Islām, free those Muslims who were slaves and support them in their times of trouble as in the three years of social boycott that they had faced in Makkah. Now Rasulullāh (s) could return her favours by gifting her daughter the rich land of Fadak. He also knew that after him, Imām Ali (‘a) could use Fadak as a source of income to strengthen his position as the successor of Rasulullāh (s) and the Caliph of the Muslims. And finally, it was *harām* for the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) to take alms (*sadaqa*) from others and Rasulullāh (s) wanted to leave something for his daughter and grandchildren so that they could live with dignity after his passing away.

However, after Rasulullāh (s) passed away, Abu Bakr and Umar, who had usurped the right of Imām Ali (‘a) to the Caliphate, also took Fadak away from Sayyida Fatima (‘a).

Until her last moments Sayyida Fātima (‘a) continued to demand that Fadak was her right. Not because of wanting the world but because of standing for what is right and to disclose the injustices done to her and her husband. Fadak was denied to Sayyida Fātima (‘a) because it was seen to strengthen Imām Ali (‘a) and the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) against the new Caliphs.

The proof that Fadak was always Sayyida Fātima (‘a) is that for many decades to come thereafter, whenever a Caliph who respected the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) came to power, Fadak was given back to the descendants of Sayyida Fātima (‘a) and the next Caliph would usurp it again if he hated the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a).

Abu Bakr argued with Sayyida Fātima (‘a) that he took Fadak from her because he had heard Rasulullāh (s) say, ‘we the prophets do not inherit and do not leave any

inheritance.' But Sayyida Fātima ('a) proved Abu Bakr wrong from the Qur'ān and even provided proof that Fadak was given to her in the lifetime of Rasulullāh (s) and was not inheritance. At one point Abu Bakr did write a document confirming that Fadak belonged to Sayyida Fātima ('a) but Umar snatched the document and tore it to pieces.

Lesson 6

Imām ‘Alí b. Abí Tálíb (‘a)

Imām Ali (‘a) is our first Imām. He was born on 13th Rajab 600 CE (which is about 30 years after Aam al-Feel and about 23 years before hijrah). He is the only person to have ever been born inside the Ka’bah. His father is Hadrat Abu Tālib (‘a) the son of Hadrat Abdul Muttalib (‘a). Hadrat Abu Tālib (‘a) was the uncle of Rasulullāh (s). Rasulullāh (s)’s father Hadrat Abdullah (‘a) and Hadrat Abu Tālib (‘a) were brothers. Imām Ali (‘a) therefore belonged to the same tribe of Banu Hāshim as Rasulullāh (s). Imām Ali (‘a)’s mother is Sayyida Fātima bint Asad (‘a).

Imām Ali (‘a) is the cousin of Rasulullāh (s) and also his son-in-law. Rasulullāh (s) raised Imām Ali (‘a) from the time he was born, like his own son and Allāh asked Rasulullāh (s) to appoint Imām Ali (‘a) as his successor and the leader of all the Muslims after him. Rasulullāh (s) declared Imām Ali (‘a) as his successor in his very first public announcement that was called Da’wah Dhul Ashira and also in his very last public announcement at Ghadir Khum in 10 AH, where Rasulullāh (s) told over 100,000 Muslims after his final Hajj:

مَنْ كُنْتُ مَوْلَاهُ فَهَذَا عَلِيٌّ مَوْلَاهُ

Man kuntu mawlāhu fa hādha ‘Aliyyun mawlāhu

‘Whoever considers me as his master, then this Ali is his master too.’

And it was only after Rasulullāh (s) declared this that Allāh revealed:

...الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتَمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي وَرَضِيتُ لَكُمُ الْإِسْلَامَ

دِينًا...﴿﴾

Today I have perfected your religion for you, and I have completed My blessing upon you, and I have approved Islām as your religion.

- Surah al-Māidah, 5:3

In the book Nahj al-Balāgha, Imām Ali (‘a) is quoted as narrating how Rasulullāh (s) looked after him from the time he was a child. He says, ‘Rasulullāh (s) brought me up in his own arms and fed me his own morsel. I followed him wherever he went like a baby camel following its mother. Each day a new part of his character would become known to me and I would accept and follow it as a command.’

In another place, Imām Ali (‘a) is reported to have said, ‘Rasulullāh (s) opened a 1000 doors of knowledge for me and from each door I opened another 1000 doors (i.e. branches) of knowledge.’

Rasulullāh (s) gave Imām Ali (‘a) the title ‘Amir al-Mu‘minin’ (The Commander of the Faithful) even though others used this title for themselves later on. Imām Ali (‘a) is also the father and ancestor of all the other Imāms after him.

In the year 40 AH, the 19th morning of the month of Ramadān, when Imām Ali (‘a) was praying in the Masjid of Kufa, the Kharijite Abd ar-Rahmān b. Muljam struck him on the head with a poisoned sword. Three days later, Imām Ali (‘a) was martyred and passed away from the effects of the wound. He was 63 years old.

Imām al-Hasan (‘a) and Imām al-Husayn (‘a), the two sons of Imām Ali (‘a) conducted his funeral and burial. Because of his numerous enemies, he was buried outside Kufa in the middle of the night and in secrecy. That place is now called Najaf al-Ashraf (in Iraq) and a beautiful shrine stands over his grave.

Imām Ali (‘a) was a very noble person with innumerable qualities. He was extremely generous, kind, brave and knowledgeable. His qualities are so many and so great that some people began believing he is God! Imām Ali (‘a) was the first person to believe in Rasulullāh (s) from the men and he never ever worshipped idols even before Rasulullāh (s) preached Islām. He never lost any battle that he commanded and he never fled from any battlefield.

Rasulullāh (s) said to the Muslims, ‘The best judge amongst you is Ali’ and also ‘the most knowledgeable amongst you is Ali’. Rasulullāh (s) once said, ‘Ali is with the truth and the truth is with Ali.’ Then he prayed, ‘O Allāh, turn the truth wherever Ali turns!’

Rasulullāh (s) also said, ‘O Ali, you are my brother in this world and the next.’ And he said, ‘No one knows Allāh (truly) except Ali and I. No one knows Ali except Allāh and I and no one knows me except Allāh and Ali.’

One of the most famous sayings of Rasulullāh (s) is ‘I am the City of Knowledge and Ali is its Gate.’ By this Rasulullāh (s) meant that whenever you want to enter a place, you enter through its door or gate. So to reach the knowledge of Rasulullāh (s) and Islām, we must go through Imām Ali (‘a) and not through others.

Imām Ali (‘a) himself has said, ‘Even if I cut off the nose of a believer (*mu‘min*) so that he should hate me, he will never hate me. And even if I give the whole world in gold to a hypocrite (*munāfiq*) to love me, he will never love me. This is because Rasulullāh (s) promised me, “O Ali, a believer will never hate you and a hypocrite will never love you”.’ This shows that just as believing in one God makes a person a monotheist (*muwahhid*) and bearing witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allāh makes a monotheist a Muslim, similarly, loving Imām Ali (‘a) and following him is a necessity of religion. It safeguards a Muslim from hypocrisy (*nifāq*) and makes him or her a true faithful (*mu‘min*).

This is also why Imām Ali (‘a) said that if someone forces you to curse him and your life is in danger, you can do it to save your life. But if someone tries to force you to

disassociate from him never agree to do so. The reason is that associating ourselves with Imām Ali (‘a) is not just a nice-to-have. It is a must-have. It is a necessity to complete a person’s faith. The most eminent companions of Rasulullāh (s) like Salmān al-Fārisi (al-Muhammadi) used to say that whenever a stranger came to them and they wanted to know if he was a *mu’min* or a *munāfiq*, they would start praising Imām Ali (‘a), and based on the stranger’s reaction, they would know his reality.

When Imām Ali (‘a) was asked to be the Caliph, he was very just and kind to his people. He never favoured anyone and he lived like the poorest of them. He wore patched clothes and ate very simple food and slept very little. He was always busy in the remembrance of Allāh and in praying. He would never let money accumulate in the government treasury and would rush to distribute it to the poor and needy.

Imām Ali (‘a) would always judge others fairly and treat the poor with kindness. In fact he was very, very similar to Rasulullāh (s) in his character, which is perhaps why Allāh has referred to him as the soul (*nafs*) of Rasulullāh in the āyah (verse) of Mubāhala (Surah Al-Imrān, 3:61). There are very many āyāt of Qur’ān that were revealed in praise of Imām Ali (‘a).

Despite being declared as the successor of Rasulullāh (s) time and again, after the passing away of Rasulullāh (s) the caliphate and rule of Muslims was denied to Imām Ali (‘a). For 25 years, he kept quiet only to stop the Muslim community from breaking up.

We will study the life of Imām Ali (‘a) after Rasulullāh (s) (i.e. from 11 AH to 40 AH) in detail in Book 11 inshā Allāh.

The rest of the material in this lesson is for the student to read on his or her own. The teacher may review/quote some of it in class.

The Wise Judgements of Imām Ali b. Abi Tālib (‘a)

The Real Mother

During the time of the Caliph ‘Umar, two women disputed over a child. Each one claimed the child was hers but without any proof or witness. The Caliph ‘Umar had no idea how to resolve this so he asked Amir al-Mu’minin (‘a) to help solve the case. Imām Ali (‘a) first warned the women not to lie but they both persisted the child was theirs. So Imām Ali (‘a) then said, ‘bring me a saw.’

‘And what are you going to do?’ the two women asked. ‘I will cut the baby into two equal halves and each one of you can have a half,’ he suggested.

One of the women remained silent but the other began crying and saying, ‘O God, O God, Abu al-Hasan, if there is no way out but this then let her have the baby.’

'Allāhu Akbar!' replied Imām Ali ('a), 'this proves the baby is yours and not hers. If it were her son she would not have remained silent and would have shown pity on the baby and become anxious.'

The other woman admitted she was lying and the baby was not hers. Thus the case was solved.

Dividing 8 Loaves Among 3 Guests

Two men travelled on a journey. Then they sat to eat together. One of them took out five loaves of bread and the other one three. A man passed them and greeted them. They invited him to join them. So he ate with them and when he was leaving, he put down eight dirhams and said, 'this is compensation for your food that I have eaten.'

Then he left. The two men began disputing. The one with three loaves said, 'we should divide the money equally.' The one with five loaves said, 'I should get 5 dirhams and you 3 dirhams.'

They finally came to Amir al-Muminin ('a) and told him their story. Imām Ali ('a) told them, 'This is a case where meanness and rivalry is not good. It would be better if you reconcile and come to a peaceful agreement.'

But the man with 3 loaves refused. He said, 'I will not be satisfied unless a judgement is passed.'

'Since you won't be satisfied unless a judgement is passed,' replied Imām Ali ('a), 'then legally you are entitled to only 1 dirham and your friend gets 7 dirhams.'

'May Allāh be praised!' exclaimed the man, 'how can this matter come to be like that?!'

'It is as I have told you,' said Imām Ali ('a). Then he asked him, 'Didn't you have three loaves?'

'Yes,' he replied.

'And your friend had five loaves?'

'Yes.'

'Then,' continued Imām Ali ('a), 'if you divide 8 loaves into 3 pieces each, you would get 24 pieces in total. Now if we assume you all ate equally then each of you ate 8 pieces. ($8 \times 3 = 24$). And we must assume each of you ate your own loaves first. So you contributed 9 pieces (3 loaves x 3 pieces each) and ate 8 pieces yourself. You only gave 1 piece to the guest. Your friend contributed 15 pieces (5 loaves x 3 pieces

each) and ate 8 himself. The guest ate the remaining 7 of his pieces. So he gets 7 dirhams and you get only 1.'

The two men left reflecting on the wisdom of the judgement of their case!

Miracles of Imām Ali b. Abi Tālib ('a)

The miracles of Amir al-Mu'minin ('a) are too numerous to list. He was born inside the Ka'bah and he spoke as a newborn child just like Nabi Isa ('a) spoke in the cradle. His intellect was so perfect that he was the first to accept the message of Rasulullāh (s) when he was still a young boy. Rasulullāh (s) trusted him on numerous occasions like on the night of Hijrah. In fact Rasulullāh (s) did not enter Madina until Imām Ali ('a) first joined him outside Madina. Thereafter on every occasion, he appointed him in his place. For example, when the opening āyāt of Surah a-Tawbah were revealed and Rasulullāh (s) had to go and recite them to the Makkans, he first sent Abu Bakr and then Allāh commanded him to call Abu Bakr back and go himself or send someone like himself. So Rasulullāh (s) sent Imām Ali ('a). When Rasulullāh (s) had to go on an expedition to Tabuk but the hypocrites were very active in trying to destabilize Madina, he left Imām Ali ('a) in charge of Madina and said to him, 'You are to me like (Nabi) Hārūn was to (Nabi) Musa, except that there is no prophet after me.' Imām Ali ('a) also washed the body of Rasulullāh (s) when he passed away and arranged for his funeral and burial. All these show he was the rightful successor to Rasulullāh (s) (besides the numerous occasions when Rasulullāh (s) also declared this.).

Amongst his miracles is that Imām Ali ('a) never lost a single battle all his life, whether in single combat or otherwise. He was the commander-in-chief of Rasulullāh (s)'s army. No enemy, however strong or mighty they were, could escape his blow. From the number he killed at Badr to the manner he defended Rasulullāh (s) at Uhud. From the giant Amr bin Abd Wadd at the Battle of Khandaq (Ahzāb) to the giant Marhab at the Battle of Khaybar, there was no match for Imām Ali ('a). When his sword broke at the Battle of Uhud, a new one was sent down for him from the heavens called the Dhul Fiqār and the angel Jibrāil ('a) was heard declaring in the heavens, 'Lā fatā illa 'Ali. La sayf illa Dhul Fiqār' (There is no hero like Ali and no sword like Dhul Fiqār). And even after 25 years of silence, when Imām Ali ('a) was in his fifties, his military prowess in the battles of Jamal, Siffin and Nahrawan (during his Khilāfah) had not diminished.

Among his other miracles is that despite the numerous efforts by his enemies to extinguish his name and to defame him, he still is loved and praised by millions. The Umayyad Caliph Mu'āwiyah for example, ensured that Imām Ali ('a) was cursed from all the pulpits and masājid in the Muslim world for 70 years but despite that there are still people who believe Imām Ali ('a) is the incarnation of God! Of course both extremes are wrong and Imām Ali ('a) himself said, 'Two people will be destroyed because of me: one who hates me and one who loves me with exaggeration.'

The other miracle of Imām Ali (‘a) is his prophecies about the future and his knowledge and ability to answer any question. He used to say from the pulpit, ‘Ask me, ask me, before you lose me. For I know the secrets of the heavens even better than the ways of the earth!’

The Miracle of the Gate of Khaybar

In the Battle of Khaybar against the Jews, after Abu Bakr, Umar and Uthmān had all failed to bring the Muslims victory and had returned defeated, Imām Ali (‘a) was sent by Rasulullāh (s). He rushed forward while the soldiers were telling him to slow down. He came to the fortress of Khaybar and pulled out its gate and threw it to the ground. According to Rasulullāh’s companion Jābir bin Abd Allāh, later on seventy men tried to lift the gate and they could barely move it.

The Miracle of *Radd ash-Shams* (Bringing Back the Sun)

This miracle has been reported by Umm Salama the wife of Rasulullāh (s), Jābir bin Abd Allāh al-Ansāri, Asma bint Umays, Abu Sa’id al-Khudri (a famous companion of Rasulullāh (s)) and other companions.

One day when Rasulullāh (s) was receiving inspirations and revelations from the angel Jibrāil (‘a), he was resting his head on Imām Ali (‘a) with his eyes closed and so Imām Ali (‘a) could not move. Then the time of Asr salāh passed and it was getting to sunset so Imām Ali (‘a), not wanting to disturb Rasulullāh (s), prayed whilst sitting.

When Rasulullāh (s) woke up he asked Imām Ali (‘a), ‘Did you miss the Asr salāh?’ And Imām Ali (‘a) said, ‘I did not want to interrupt the revelation coming to you so I prayed while sitting.’

Rasulullāh (s) said to him, ‘Ask Allāh to bring the sun back so we can pray properly while standing. Allāh will answer you because of your obedience to Allāh and His Messenger.’

And so Amir al-Mu’minin (‘a) prayed to Allāh and surely enough, the sun came back and it became bright again like the afternoon. Rasulullāh (s) and Amir al-Mu’minin (‘a) then prayed Salāt al-Asr at its proper time and the sun then set again.

Those who reported this said, ‘We heard it at its setting, screeching like the screeching of a saw in wood.’

The Power of His Prayer

It is reported that a man called Ghayzār was suspected of spying for Mu’āwiya and sending information to him about Imām Ali (‘a)’s government. But he denied it.

Imām Ali (‘a) questioned him and said, ‘Do you swear by Allāh that you have not done so?’

‘Yes,’ Ghayzār replied, and then he hurried to take an oath and swear in the name of Allāh.

‘If you are lying,’ said Amir al-Mu‘minin (‘a), ‘then Allāh will blind you.’

Before the next Friday had come, the man went blind and was brought out being led by someone.

Another Example of the Power of His Prayer

When Imām Ali (‘a) became the Caliph, he reminded people of his right and that he had been the rightful successor of Rasulullāh (s) from the first day. He recited for them the words of Rasulullāh (s) ‘Whoever’s master I am, this Ali is his master’ (*man kuntu mawlāhu fa hādha ‘Aliyyun mawlāhu*).

Twelve men testified that this hadith was true and they had heard Rasulullāh (s) say this. But Anas bin Mālik – a famous scholar – did not testify.

‘Anas,’ Imām Ali (‘a) said to him.

‘At your service,’ he replied.

‘Why do you not testify when you heard what they heard?’ asked Imām Ali (‘a).

‘Amir al-Mu‘minin,’ he replied, ‘I have grown old and I have forgotten.’

‘O Allāh,’ Imām Ali (‘a) prayed, ‘If he is a liar, strike him with leprosy.’

A man called Talha bin ‘Umayra reported, ‘I testify before Allāh, I saw a whiteness (of leprosy) between his (Anas’s) eyes.’

And many other miracles are reported in the books of hadith.

Some Sayings of Imām Ali (‘a)

His Words About His Real Shi’ah

Amir al-Mu‘minin (‘a) was very proud of his real Shi’ah. They are very few in the world at any point in time. But he loved them very much.

Sa’sa’ah b. Suhan al-‘Abdi reports that one day Imām Ali (‘a) led the Fajr Salāh in the Masjid of Kufa. Then he remained sitting facing the qibla without turning right or left

until the sun rose. Then he, peace be on him, said, 'I knew upright men during the time of Rasulullāh (s) who used to spend the night alternating between sajdah and ruku' (meaning praying all night). In the morning they would have disheveled hair, dust on themselves (out of humility) and between their eyes there would be (a lump) like the knee of a goat (because of excessive sujud). When they remembered death they would quiver like trees quiver in the wind. Then their eyes would shed tears until their clothes became wet.'

And on one full-moon night, Imām Ali ('a) was walking alone towards the cemetery (outside the city) when a group of men followed him. He stopped and said to them, 'who are you?'

'Amir al-Mu'minin, we are your Shi'ah,' they replied proudly.

He gazed at the faces for a bit and then said, 'Why don't I see the mark of the Shi'ah on you?'

'What is the mark of the Shi'ah, O Amir al-Mu'minin?' they asked.

'Yellow faces through staying awake at night,' he replied, 'bleary eyes through weeping (out of the fear and love of Allāh), hunched backs through standing (in salāh), hollow stomachs through fasting, dry lips through prayer, and there is the dust of those who show humility on them.'

Lesson 7

Sayyida Fātima (‘a)

Sayyida Fātima az-Zahra (‘a) is the only daughter of Rasulullāh (s). Her mother is Sayyida Khadija Umm al-Mu‘minin (‘a), the first wife of Rasulullāh (s).

The husband of Sayyida Fātima (‘a) is Amir al-Mu‘minin Imām Ali b. Abi Tālib (‘a) and their two sons Imām Hasan (‘a) and Imām Husayn (‘a) are the 2nd and 3rd Imāms of Islām after Imām Ali (‘a). All the other nine Imāms are from the descendants of Imām Husayn (‘a).

Sayyida Fātima (‘a) also had two daughters from Imām Ali (‘a): Sayyida Zaynab (‘a) and Sayyida Umm Kulthum (‘a) and her fifth child – Hadrat Muhsin (‘a) – was named by Rasulullāh (s) before birth but he died in the womb of his mother when the house of Sayyida Fātima (‘a) was attacked after Rasulullāh (s)’s passing away and she was injured.

Sayyida Fātima (‘a) was born in Makkah on 20th Jamādi al-Ukhra 5 years after Bi’tah (the start of Rasulullāh (s)’s mission) when Rasulullāh (s) was 45 years old. Sayyida Fātima (‘a) passed away in Madina on Tuesday 3rd Jamādi al-Ukhra 11 AH at the tender age of 18. This was only 3 months after her beloved father Rasulullāh (s) passed away. Her husband Imām Ali (‘a) conducted her funeral rites and buried her in Madina, secretly and in the middle of the night. This is because she was unhappy with some people who had hurt her after her father Rasulullāh (s) had passed away and she did not want them to attend her funeral.

In her piety, worship and nobility Sayyida Fātima (‘a) followed her father Rasulullāh (s)’s footsteps. Many āyāt of Qur’ān were revealed to praise her.

Sayyida Fatima (‘a) inherited the wisdom, courage, determination, generosity, self-sacrifice and nobility of her father, Rasulullāh (s). Imām Husayn (‘a) once said, ‘I often saw my mother absorbed in salāh’, and her children always noticed that she prayed for the neighbours and others before she prayed for herself and her family.

Sayyida Fatima (‘a)’s generosity to the poor and her compassion for them was well known and numerous incidents are recorded in history to show that no one ever came asking at her door and was returned empty-handed. Even if she had little, she would give away her share of food and stay hungry.

Sayyida Fātima (‘a) was also known for leading a very simple life just like her husband Imām Ali (‘a). Sayyida Fātima (‘a) did not care for expensive clothes and jewellery. Instead she gave great importance to worshipping Allāh, hard work, helping others, modesty, being chaste and acquiring knowledge. She was also very dedicated to the upbringing of her children. The courage that was later displayed by all her sons and daughters were inspired and taught by her.

Rasulullāh (s) used to be called Sayyida Fātima (‘a), ‘the Leader of the Women of the World’ (*Sayyidat Nisā al-‘Alamin*). And he used to love and respect her so much that whenever Sayyida Fātima (‘a) entered Rasulullāh (s)’s room, he would stand up to welcome her and he would seat her in his place and would even kiss her hands. After the passing away of her mother Sayyida Khadija (‘a), Sayyida Fātima (‘a) used to look after her father. Whenever he came home after preaching, wounded and covered in blood, she would tend to his wounds and bandage them. And for this reason, Rasulullāh (s) used to call her, ‘Um Abiha’, which means “the ‘mother’ of her father”.

Often Rasulullāh (s) would be heard saying, ‘Allāh is pleased with one who pleases Fātima and Allāh is displeased with one who displeases Fātima.’

Rasulullāh (s) also said, ‘Four women are the best among all in paradise: Asiya bint Muzāhim (the wife of Fir’aun), Maryam bint ‘Imrān (the mother of Nabi Isa (‘a)), Khadija bint Khuwaylid (the wife of Rasulullāh (s)) and Fātima bint Muhammad (s) (his own daughter).’

Someone asked ‘Aisha, one of the wives of Rasulullāh (s), after he had passed away, ‘who was the most beloved to Rasulullāh (s)?’ and she replied, ‘Fātima’. And he then asked, ‘who did he love most from the men?’ and she replied, ‘the husband of Fātima’. (i.e. Imām Ali b. Abi Tālib (‘a)).

Rasulullāh (s) declared, ‘Indeed Allāh ordered me to marry Fātima to Ali’ and he also said, ‘if it was not for Ali, there would have been no match to marry Fātima’.

Rasulullāh (s) said, ‘Every child traces his or her ancestry through his or her father’s family. Except for the children of Fātima. I am their ancestor and source.’ This means the children of Imām Ali (‘a) and Sayyida Fātima (‘a) should be considered, first and foremost, as the descendants of Rasulullāh (s).

Rasulullāh (s) had profound love for his daughter and it wasn’t just because she was his daughter only but because of her virtues and how special she was in the eyes of Allāh. Allāh always praised her in the Qur’ān and never criticized her even once (like some of the wives of Rasulullāh (s) were criticized in the Qur’ān).

Surah al-Insān, Ayah al-Mubāhala and Ayah at-Tathir

Surah al-Insān is the 76th surah of the Qur’ān. It is also called Surah Hal Atā and Surah ad-Dahr. It praises the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a): Sayyida Fātima (‘a), her husband Imām Ali (‘a) and her two sons Imām Hasan (‘a) and Imām Husayn (‘a) as well as their maid Fidda (r.a.) and how they fasted for three days but still gave the little food they had to the needy, the poor and the orphan.

When a group of high-ranking Christians came from Najrān to see Rasulullāh (s) in Madina and after many days of debates refused to accept any arguments, Allāh revealed that Rasulullāh (s) should meet with them under the open sky and pray to

Allāh to curse the liars. Rasulullāh (s) took his daughter Sayyida Fātima (‘a), Imām Ali (‘a) and his two grandsons as his family. When the Christian priests and bishops saw the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) they refused to pray for Allāh to curse the liars because they realized that these were very special people who if they prayed to Allāh to move mountains, He would. This was known as the Event of Mubāhala and Allāh mentions it in the Qur’ān in Surah Aal-i Imrān, 3:61.

In Surah al-Ahzāb (33) āyah 33 Allāh mentions how pure and safe the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) are from all sins and evils. This is known as the Verse of Purification (Āyah at-Tathir).

This āyah was revealed when Rasulullāh (s) collected the four members of the Ahl al-Bayt around him and wrapped them with one blanket and prayed to Allāh to bless them. This is known as the Hadith al-Kisā (the Event of the Blanket). That is why the Ahl al-Bayt (a) members who lived during the time of Rasulullāh (s) are sometimes called Ahl al-Kisā.

The Hadith al-Kisā shows that Sayyida Fātima (‘a) is the centre of the whole Ahl al-Bayt because only her descendants her Imāms and Allāh also tells Jibrāil (‘a) that the five who have gathered are *‘Fātima, her father, her husband, and her sons’*.

AKHLAQ

(Ethics)

Lesson 1

Happy & Sad Occasions

A happy occasion may be specific to an individual or it may be general to the whole Muslim community. For example, it may be the birth of a child or someone's marriage and it may also be occasions such as the days of 'Id.

Similarly a sad occasion may be individual, such as the demise of a person and his or her funeral, or it may also be a general community occasion such as the months of Muharram and Safar when we mourn the tragedies that befell Rasullāh (s)'s family.

We generally know how we should behave at happy and sad occasions (like for example, congratulating people on happy occasions and not laughing or being insensitive to people's sadness or suffering). In this lesson we shall review more specific etiquette of what Islām recommends on some of these events.

Happy Occasions – 'Ids

'Id is an Arabic word which means an event that recurs (happens again and again) and in Islām it is used to refer to festivals that occur every year.

The word 'Id is also used in the Qur'ān when Nabi Isa ('a) prayed to Allāh on behalf of his disciples (*hawāriyun*) and said:

﴿قَالَ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّنَا أَنْزِلْ عَلَيْنَا مَائِدَةً مِنَ السَّمَاءِ تَكُونُ لَنَا عِيدًا لِأَوَّلِنَا
وَأَآخِرِنَا وَآيَةً مِنْكَ وَارزُقْنَا وَأَنْتَ خَيْرُ الرَّازِقِينَ﴾

Isa son of Maryam said, 'O Allāh! Our Lord! Send down to us a table from the sky, to be a festival for us, for the first ones and the last ones among us and as a sign from You, and provide for us; for You are the best of providers.'

- Surah al-Māidah, 5:114

Muslims have many occasions to mark as festivals and five of the most common ones are:

- 'Id al-Jumu'ah
- 'Id al-Fitr
- 'Id al-Hajj
- 'Id al-Ghadeer
- 'Id al-Mubāhala

‘Id al-Jumu’ah

Thursday nights and Friday days are the most religious occasions of the week for Muslims. Fridays are therefore days of *‘id* for Muslims. Some of the etiquette for Thursday nights and Friday days include:

- Recite Surah Ya Sin (chapter 36 of the Qur’ān) on Thursday night.
- Recite Dua Kumayl on Thursday night.
- Remember Imām Husayn (‘a) and his suffering on Thursday e.g. by reciting Ziyārat Wārith.
- Visit the Cemetery and remember our marhumeen on Thursday.
- Perform Ghusl of Jumu’ah on Friday.
- Trim fingernails and toenails on Friday.
- Give some money as alms (*sadaqa*) on Friday.
- Pray Salāt al-Jumu’ah instead of Salāt adh-Dhuhr on Friday.
- Visit/Call relatives on Friday and bring home some gifts for our family even if it is some fruits.

‘Id al-Fitr

‘Id al-Fitr is marked on the 1st of Shawwāl every year. It marks the end of the sacred fasting month of Ramadān.

Some of the etiquette of ‘Id al-Fitr include:

- Performing a mustahab ghusl for the day of ‘Id.
- Wearing clean and if possible new clothes before going to the Masjid.
- Going to the Masjid to pray Salāt al-‘Id.
- Greeting fellow Muslims with ‘Id Mubārak’.
- Applying perfume before going out and meeting others.
- Having a special meal with loved ones and family.
- Giving some alms (*sadaqa*) to the poor.
- Asking Allāh for forgiveness and praying to Allāh to accept our fasts and to bless us with another Ramadān the following year.

It is *harām* to fast on the day of ‘Id al-Fitr. The rules for Salāt al-‘Id will be taught in Book 9 (under Fiqh).

‘Id al-Hajj

‘Id al-Hajj is marked on the 10th day of Dhul Hijjah every year. It marks the end of the annual Hajj pilgrimage. It is also known as ‘Id al-Ad-ha or ‘Id al-Qurbān which means *‘Id of Sacrifice* because an animal is usually sacrificed as part of the Hajj acts of worship. This is done in remembrance of the sacrifice of Nabi Ibrahim (‘a) of his son Nabi Ismā’il (‘a).

The etiquette of 'Id al-Hajj is very similar to those of 'Id al-Fitr and additionally:

- On the day of 'Id al-Hajj it is recommended to sacrifice an animal (such as a goat or sheep) even if we haven't gone for Hajj and to eat some of the meat and distribute some of it to relatives, friends and the poor.
- On the day of 'Id al-Fitr it is recommended to eat something before going for Salāt al-'Id. However on the day of 'Id al-Hajj, it is recommended to pray Salāt al-'Id first and then to have something to eat.

It is also *harām* to fast on the day of 'Id al-Hajj. The rules for Hajj will be taught in Book 10 (under Fiqh).

'Id al-Ghadeer

'Id al-Ghadeer is celebrated on the 18th of Dhul Hijjah. After Rasulullāh (s) went for Hajj for the last time, he stopped at a place called Ghadeer Khum (outside Makkah). At Ghadeer Khum Rasulullāh (s) gave a lengthy sermon known as the Final Sermon of Rasulullāh (s) and the climax of the sermon was his declaration that he was going to leave the world soon and that Imām Ali bin Abi Tālib was chosen by Allāh to be his successor.

Allāh had first revealed to Rasulullāh (s):

﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا الرَّسُولُ بَلِّغْ مَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ وَإِنْ لَمْ تَفْعَلْ فَمَا بَلَّغْتَ رِسَالَتَهُ وَاللَّهُ يَعْصِمُكَ مِنَ النَّاسِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴾

O Messenger! Communicate that which has been sent down to you from your Lord, and if you do not, you will not have communicated His message, and Allāh shall protect you from the people. Indeed Allāh does not guide the faithless lot.

- Surah al-Māidah, 5:67

When Rasulullāh (s) was finishing his sermon, he asked the Muslims with him, who numbered 100,000 or even more: 'O People! Do I not have a greater right over you than even what you have over your own selves?' And all the people replied with one voice, 'Yes indeed! O Messenger of Allāh!' Then Rasulullāh (s) lifted Imām Ali ('a)'s arm and showed Imām Ali ('a) to the crowd of people and declared:

مَنْ كُنْتُ مَوْلَاهُ فَهَذَا عَلِيٌّ مَوْلَاهُ

Whoever regards me as his master then this Ali is (now) his master!

Then Rasulullāh (s) raised his hands towards the heavens and prayed three times:

اللَّهُمَّ وَالِ مَنْ وَالَاهُ، وَعَادِ مَنْ عَادَاهُ، وَأَنْصِرْ مَنْ نَصَرَهُ، وَأَخْذُلْ مَنْ خَذَلَهُ، وَأَدِرْ
الْحَقَّ مَعَهُ حَيْثُ دَارُ

O Allāh! Love one who loves him (Ali) and be an enemy to one who is an enemy to him (Ali). Help and support one who helps him and disgrace and defeat one who tries to defeat him (Ali). And turn the truth with him wherever he (Ali) turns.

Thereafter, Allāh revealed to Rasullāh (s):

﴿...الْيَوْمَ يَيْسَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ دِينِكُمْ فَلَا تَخْشَوْهُمْ وَاخْشَوْنِي الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ
لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتَمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي وَرَضِيتُ لَكُمُ الْإِسْلَامَ دِينًا...﴾

Today the faithless have despaired of your religion. So do not fear them, but fear Me. Today I have perfected your religion for you, and I have completed My blessing upon you, and I have approved Islām as your religion....

- Surah al-Māidah, 5:3

Thereafter Rasullāh (s) sat Imām Ali (‘a) in a tent and all the Muslims came in one by one to congratulate Imām Ali (‘a) for being appointed as their master. All Muslim historians have reported the incident of Ghadeer widely and it is a day of great joy for the faithful (*mu’mineen*). Imām Ali (‘a) is known as *Amir al-Mu’minin* which means ‘the Commander of the Faithful’.

On the day of ‘Id al-Ghadeer there is no special salāt like the Salāt al-‘Id for ‘Id al-Fitr and ‘Id al-Hajj. However it’s etiquette includes:

- Fasting on the Day of ‘Id al-Ghadeer as a thanksgiving to Allāh.
- Performing a mustahab ghusl for the day.
- Greeting fellow Shi’ah Muslims by saying ‘All praise is to Allāh Who made us and you amongst those who hold on to the guardianship of Amir al-Mu’minin (‘a)’ (*al-hamdulillāhi ladhi ja’alana wa iyyakum min al-mutamasikeena bi wilāyati Amir al-Mu’minin*).
- Reciting the du’as and ziyārāt recommended for the Day of ‘Id al-Ghadeer.

‘Id al-Mubāhala

We have already briefly studied about the event of Mubāhala under Tārikh Lesson 7 and we shall study it again in detail in Book 9.

The event of Mubāhala took place on the 24th of Dhul Hijjah. Every year on the 24th of Dhul Hijjah, we celebrate how Allāh gave victory to Rasullāh (s) and his Household (Ahl al-Bayt) over the Christians of Najrān.

The etiquette of 'Id al-Mubāhala is similar to that of 'Id al-Ghadeer. We should fast on this day as a thanksgiving to Allāh and also perform a mustahab ghusl for the 'Id.

Two other very special occasions in Islām are the 15th night of Sha'bān known as *Laylat al-Barā'ah* and the 23rd night of Ramadān known as *Laylat al-Qadr*.

Laylat al-Qadr

Laylat al-Qadr or 'The Night of Power' is the most important night in the Muslim calendar. It falls in the month of Ramadān and it occurs on one of the odd nights between the 19th and 29th of Ramadān. It is a night that the Qur'ān calls 'better than a thousand months' and therefore we are encouraged to stay up all night in worship. Because we can never be certain which of the odd nights it falls on, we are also encouraged to worship Allāh and stay up on all the odd nights from the 19th night until the end of the sacred month i.e. 19th night, 21st night, 23rd night and so on.

On the night of Qadr, it is recommended to:

- Perform ghusl after sunset.
- Pray some specific salāt, duas and 'amāls that are given in the books of duas.

And of course the next day we also fast because it is in the month of Ramadān.

Rasulullāh (s) used to cut himself off from his family in the last 10 days of Ramadān and devote himself completely to the worship of Allāh. Isolating ourselves in the masjid for 3-10 days in fasting and worship is called *I'tikāf*. It is like a spiritual retreat and is recommended in the month of Ramadān especially in the last 10 days.

Laylat al-Barā'ah

Laylat al-Barā'ah is the 15th night of the month of Sha'bān. This is a very special night and is considered to be the second best night of the year after Laylat al-Qadr. There are special duas and 'amāls to be recited on this night and it is also highly recommended to stay up in worship on this night and then to fast the next day (the day of 15th Sha'bān). One of the reasons why the night of 15th Sha'bān is so special is because the Imām of our time, Imām al-Mahdi (may Allāh hasten his reappearance) was born on this night.

On this night it is recommended to:

- Perform ghusl after sunset.
- Recite Du'a Kumayl.
- Recite Surah Ya Sin three times for (a) Long life (b) Safety against misfortunes, and (c) Protection against sudden death

There are many other 'amāls, duas and tasbihs that are recommended for this night and these are to encourage us to stay up all night in worship.

Sad Occasions – Muharram & Safar

The saddest months of the Islāmic year are the first two months of Muharram and Safar. Several Imāms passed away in these two months and Muslims are supposed to treat these months as sacred and not to engage in festivities or even to hold joyous events like weddings, engagements, celebrating birthdays, and so on.

Muharram is particularly sad because of the tragedy of Karbala and the martyrdom of Imām Husayn (‘a) and his 72 companions on the Day of Ashura (10th Muharram) in the year 61 AH. This tragedy took place when Imām Husayn (‘a) refused to pay allegiance to the Yazid, the tyrant Muslim caliph. And thereafter the womenfolk of Rasulullāh (s)’s household were taken as prisoners to Damascus.

Safar is particularly sad because the wafāt (passing away) of Rasulullāh (s) took place on the 28th of Safar.

Our etiquette in these two months should be:

- Expressing sadness and not showing joy and laughter especially when attending majālis at the masjid.
- Participating in the ‘aza (mourning) events including the majlis and matam.
- Holding majālis in the name of Imām Husayn (‘a) in our homes.
- Not celebrating our birthdays if they fall within the months of Muharram and Safar.
- Not getting engaged or married and not attending the engagement or wedding ceremonies of others.
- Not making new purchases if we can avoid it especially if it is luxuries that are meant to bring us joy and entertainment.
- Avoiding ‘fun’ things like going on a vacation, to theme parks and rides, etc.
- Wearing black clothes on the Day of Ashura, the wafāts and when attending majālis during these two months.
- Helping to propagate the message of Imām Husayn (‘a) to others who may not be aware of his sacrifices for humanity.

We express sadness in general out of respect for these great personalities whom Allāh sent to mankind as His signs. And Allāh says in the Qur’ān:

﴿ذَلِكَ وَمَنْ يُعْظِمْ شَعَائِرَ اللَّهِ فَإِنَّهَا مِنْ تَقْوَى الْقُلُوبِ﴾

And one who shows respect for the signs of Allāh—indeed that arises from the Godconsciousness of hearts.

- Surah al-Hajj, 22:32

Lesson 2

Moderation & Balance

What makes Islām the most ‘natural’ religion in the world and the most perfect way of life is the way it upholds everything in balance and promotes moderation.

Some religions teach marriage is bad and we should live like hermits and monks. Others teach that the physical human desires are evil and we should starve ourselves and wear rags and patched clothes or go around naked or in one sheet of cloth in one colour. Some religions teach money is evil and the rich will never enter paradise. Islām is opposed to all this.

Islām teaches ‘everything in moderation’. Too much food is bad, too little food is bad. Too much meat is bad, no meat at all is bad. Hoarding wealth is bad. Giving all your wealth away is also silly and wasteful. Not getting married is bad but leading an immoral life and committing adultery is also evil. Don’t wear too expensive clothes but don’t wear torn and dirty clothes either. Instead eat, drink, marry, and enjoy the blessings of Allāh in life but always in moderation and in consideration of others.

The following āyāt of the Qur’ān are just two examples of how important moderation is in Islām.

﴿وَكُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا وَلَا تُسْرِفُوا إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُسْرِفِينَ﴾

...and eat and drink and do not be wasteful; He (Allāh) does not love the extravagant.
- Surah al-Ar’āf 7:31

﴿وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا أَنْفَقُوا لَمْ يُسْرِفُوا وَلَمْ يَقْتُرُوا وَكَانَ بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ قَوَامًا﴾

(The servants of Allāh are) those who when spending, are neither wasteful nor miserly, and moderation lies between these [two extremes].

- Surah al-Furqān, 25:67

Eating & Drinking

As we have seen in one of the āyāt above, Islām allows us to eat and drink what is halāl and to enjoy and be thankful for Allāh’s blessings. But food can sometimes become an addiction and an obsession. And when we eat too much, not only is it bad for our health but we become overweight, lazy and don’t feel like worshipping Allāh or doing anything useful for others. Excessive food (especially ‘junk’ food) also causes outbursts of desires and juvenile behaviour in people. Our bodies naturally react to whatever is allowed into them.

And because people usually have a problem with eating too much rather than too little, Islām encourages fasting as a means of controlling the problem of food addiction.

The following are ahādith on the merits of eating and drinking less. Remember by eating less we mean eating in moderation and not starving ourselves. We mean not to overeat all the time and always get up from the table feeling 'too full'.

Your teacher will only discuss some of these ahādith and you can read the rest on your own or do a class assignment and write an essay on some of the ahādith and what you understand of them.

Ahādith on Eating and Drinking

1. Rasulullāh (s), 'One who eats less, his or her accounting (on the Day of Judgement) will be less.'
2. Rasulullāh (s), 'One who eats less, his or her stomach will be healthy and his or her heart will become clean. And one who eats too much, his or her stomach will be sick and his or her heart will become hard.'
3. Rasulullāh (s), 'One whose tasbih¹⁰ and tamhid is much but his or her food and drink and sleep is less, the angels long for him or her (i.e. for his or her company).'
4. Rasulullāh (s), 'Do not kill your hearts with too much food and drink because the heart dies just like a plant when it is watered too much.'
5. Rasulullāh (s), 'One who always overfills his or her stomach will not enter the kingdom of the heavens (i.e. Jannah).'
6. Rasulullāh (s), 'Blessed are those who are patient and do not overeat (in this world). They are the ones who will eat to their fill on the Day of judgement.'
7. When Rasulullāh (s) went for Mi'rāj, he asked Allāh many questions, one of which was, 'O Allāh, what are the signs of Your most special servants?' And Allāh replied, 'They are like prisoners in the world because they imprison their tongues from excessive talking and their stomachs from excessive food.'
8. Rasulullāh (s), 'The light of wisdom is in hunger. And overeating distances you from Allāh... Do not overeat for it will extinguish the light of knowing (Allāh) from your hearts.'
9. Rasulullāh (s), 'Eat only when you are hungry and you desire food. And stop while you still have a desire for food.' I.e. do not eat out of habit or being bored and do not keep eating until you are too full and disgusted with food and cannot eat anymore.

¹⁰ Tasbih generally means to glorify and praise Allāh but literally tasbih is to say 'subhān Allāh' and tamhid is to say 'al-hamdu lillāh' and takbir is to say 'Allāhu Akbar' and tahlil is to say 'lā ilāha ilal lāh'. And together they are known as Tasbihāt al-Arba'a ('The four Tasbihs').

10. Imām Ali ('a), 'One who eats less, his illnesses will be less.'
11. Imām Ali ('a), 'One who eats less, his thinking will become clear.'
12. Imām Ali ('a), 'When Allāh intends good for a person, He makes him or her concerned about less speech, less food and less sleep.'
13. Imām Ali ('a), 'Eating less is part of chastity. And excessive eating is part of wastefulness (isrāf).'
14. Imām Ali ('a), 'Hunger and sickness do not go together.'
15. Imām Ali ('a), 'The best support and encouragement for sinning is over-eating.'
16. Imām al-Bāqir ('a), 'A person is furthest from Allāh when his or her stomach is overfilled.'
17. Imām as-Sādiq ('a), 'Nothing harms the heart of a *mu'min* (faithful) like excessive food because it results in two things: a hard heart and an outburst of desires.'

It is mustahab to do wudu before eating and to say 'Bismillah' and then also to remember Allāh a lot during eating and not to talk too much with others. It is not good to look at the plate of others to see what they are eating, how much they are eating, etc. Imām Ali ('a) has said, 'If a person says 'Bismillah' before eating anything, it will never harm him.'

You should never blow into your food even if it's hot. Instead wait for it to cool. Never drink water that has been heated with direct sunlight. Also if you take a piece of meat out of your mouth, don't put it back in your mouth.

Never overfill your plate and always drink water in 3 sips (not large gulps). Chew your food properly, eating it in small morsels, as this is better for digestion.

Utensils

Imām as-Sādiq ('a) has forbidden us from eating or drinking from any utensil made of gold or silver. And Imām al-Kādhim ('a) has said, 'The utensils of gold and silver are the temporary enjoyment of those who do not have conviction (in Allāh and the Day of Judgement).'

Sleeping

﴿وَجَعَلْنَا نَوْمَكُمْ سُبَاتًا﴾

and We made your sleep for rest

- Surah an-Naba, 78:9

Sleep is a great blessing of Allāh when it is enjoyed in moderation. It refreshes the mind and the body. But excessive sleep does the opposite. It makes us dull and lazy. We should therefore try to sleep and wake up early and not sleep too much especially during the day.

Imām Ja'far as-Sādiq ('a) said, 'Sleep is a rest and comfort for the body. Speech is comfort for the soul and silence is rest for the mind.'

And Rasulullāh (s) cautioned us, 'Beware of excessive sleep. One who sleeps too much will be poor on the Day of Judgement.'

Our seventh Imām, Imām Musa al-Kādhim ('a) has said, 'Allāh does not like a person who is always sleeping and idle.'

The etiquette (*ādāb*) of sleep is that a person should wear clean clothes and sleep on a clean bed. They should do wudu beforehand. Imām Ja'far as-Sādiq ('a) has said, 'A person who sleeps after wudu, his bed becomes like a masjid and he gets the thawāb of worship all night while he sleeps.' And Rasulullāh (s) said, 'If a person does wudu and then dies in his or her sleep, they are like a martyr (*shahid*) with Allāh.'

Imām Ja'far as-Sādiq ('a) has told us to always do some self-accounting when we go to bed. Instead of thinking of fantasies and past events, we should ask ourselves, 'what did I eat today? What did I earn today? Did I commit any sins for which I have not asked Allāh to forgive me?' And we should remember death and that one day we will die and be raised again on the Day of Judgement for accounting.

We should then recite Qur'ān and duas before falling asleep. Rasulullāh (s) said, 'One who recites (Surah) *Qul huwa Allāhu Ahad* when he goes to bed, Allāh forgives him the sins of 50 years.' And Imām Ali ('a) said the angels protect such a person. It is also recommended to recite Surah *Alhākum at-Takāthur*.

It is recommended to sleep on our right side facing the Qibla. Imām Ali ('a) said, 'Never sleep on your stomach and on your face for this is how shaytān sleeps. And if you see anyone sleeping on his face, then wake him up and do not leave him like that.'

Because sleep is a form of temporary death, when Rasulullāh (s) used to sleep, he used to recite:

اللَّهُمَّ بِاسْمِكَ أَحْيَىٰ وَأَمُوتُ

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

And when he (s) would wake up, he would recite:

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي أَحْيَانَا بَعْدَ مَا أَمَاتَنَا وَإِلَيْهِ النُّشُورُ

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

Talking

Human beings are social creatures and they love to interact with each other. This is often done by communicating with speech. But when enjoying ourselves talking, we must be careful not say meaningless things or to lie, backbite, slander, gossip, flatter and indulge in other such harām habits.

Do you remember **The Mouth Test** you learnt about in Book 3 (Akhlāq Lesson 6) and Book 6 (Akhlāq Lesson 7)?

Rasulullāh (s) said, 'Do not speak too much without remembering Allāh. Because excessive speech without Allāh's remembrance hardens the heart and the person furthest from Allāh is the one whose heart is hard.'

Imām Ali ('a) said, 'I am surprised at a man who says things that do not benefit him in this world and for which he gets no *thawāb* in the hereafter.'

And Imām as-Sādiq ('a) has said, 'A learned person (*'ālim*) never talks useless talk.'

In summary then, it is ok to talk, chat, laugh, etc. as long as it is not harām and is in moderation. When a person talks excessively, they will end up speaking things that are useless and sinful and it reduces their respect in the eyes of others.

Islāmic Culture & Values

Culture is a way of living. It embraces the ways people live together, the food they eat, how they dress, talk, interact and the general manner in which they behave. Islām, as a universal religion, accommodates the practices from all cultures, as long as they are within the Shari'ah (Islāmic Law).

At present we live in a world surrounded by the 'Western culture'. All cultures have some good in them, and the western culture is no exception. We, the children of the West, have to find how we can be good Muslims in the western environment i.e. how we can adapt to the world we live in without sacrificing any of our Islāmic principles. This can be done by again keeping in mind Islām's call for moderation. Otherwise there is a lot in western culture that is either against Islāmic culture or becomes so when practised without moderation.

It would be hard to list and discuss everything in the western culture from wearing low-hanging baggy pants, to tattoos, piercings, and shocking hair colours and hair styles. And from eating 'fast food' to following the latest craze, speaking in a particular manner, swearing, and how we treat our parents. What we can summarize however is that we should not follow blindly what we see on TV or in our friends at school. Being 'taken in' by western culture means we lose our balance between Islām and the culture we live in and we then lose our identity as Muslims. Never, for example, change your name because people at school or work think it's cool. You

must insist on keeping your Islāmic identity including your name and how it is spelt and pronounced.

Always remember: we are Muslims FIRST and then Canadian or American or Indian or Arab or any other race, culture, citizen or ethnicity. And when you see anyone excessive in his or her practice, dress, behaviour, food or culture, know that it is against Islām no matter how good it may seem. This is because Islām teaches moderation in all things and values.

Lesson 3

Generosity vs. Miserliness

We saw in the previous lesson how Islām teaches us not to be miserly or wasteful even in how we spend. This means how we spend our money, our time, our youth, and so on. Miserliness is called ‘*bukhl*’ in Arabic and a miser is called ‘*bakheel*’ (female: *bakheela*). The opposite of being a miser is to be generous. This is called ‘*sakhāwah*’ and a person who is generous is called ‘*sakhi*’ (female: *sakhiya*). And the other extreme of being too generous to a point of being wasteful is called ‘*isrāf*’ and a wasteful person is called a ‘*musrif*’ (female: *musrifa*).

We now look at miserliness and generosity in more detail:

Miserliness (Bukhl)

Allāh warns us in the Qur’ān that misers will be punished on the Day of Judgement and that if we do not spend in the way of Allāh, then it is only we who will suffer the consequences. Allāh will easily replace us with others who will not be stingy:

﴿الَّذِينَ يَبْخُلُونَ وَيَأْمُرُونَ النَّاسَ بِالْبُخْلِ وَيَكْتُمُونَ مَا آتَاهُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ وَأَعْتَدْنَا لِلْكَافِرِينَ عَذَابًا مُهِينًا﴾

Those who are stingy and bid [other] people to be stingy, and conceal whatever Allāh has given them out of His grace; and We have prepared for the faithless a humiliating punishment.

- Surah an-Nisa, 4:37

﴿هَا أَنْتُمْ هَؤُلَاءِ تُدْعَوْنَ لِتُنْفِقُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَمِنْكُمْ مَنْ يَبْخُلُ وَمَنْ يَبْخُلْ فَإِنَّمَا يَبْخُلُ عَنْ نَفْسِهِ وَاللَّهُ الْغَنِيُّ وَأَنْتُمُ الْفُقَرَاءُ وَإِن تَوَلَّوْا يَسْتَبْدِلْ قَوْمًا غَيْرَكُمْ ثُمَّ لَا يَكُونُوا أَمْثَالَكُمْ﴾

Ah! There you are, being invited to spend in the way of Allāh; yet among you there are those who are stingy; and whoever is stingy is stingy only to himself. Allāh is the All-sufficient, and you are all-needy, and if you turn away He will replace you with another people, and they will not be like you.

- Surah Muhammad, 47:38

Rasulullāh (s) said, ‘A miser is far from Allāh and far from people but near to the Fire (of Hell).’

And Imām Ali (‘a) said, ‘A miser is only a safe keeper for his heirs.’ He also said, ‘Looking at a miser makes the heart hard.’

In a thought-provoking hadith, the Imām of our time, Imām al-Mahdi (‘atfs), said, ‘I am ashamed before my Lord that when I see a brother-in-faith, I should ask Allāh to give him Jannah but yet to be a miser when it comes to giving the same brother some dirhams or dinars (money). Then on the Day of Judgement, Allāh would say to me, ‘(you asked Me to give him Jannah but you weren’t willing to give anything you had and it therefore means) if Jannah had been yours (you would not have given it to anyone and) you would have been a miser, a miser and a miser!!!’

Question: What do you understand of this hadith from Imām al-Mahdi (‘atfs) and can you explain it to the teacher in your own words?

A miser is not just miserly with this money. He or she is also miserly with his time. He or she never volunteers unless he or she is going to get something out of it like school credits or pocket money or recognition. He or she is also miserly with sharing happiness with others. That is why one hadith says, the most miserly is the person who cannot even say salām to others. And another hadith from Rasullullāh (s) says, ‘The most miserly of all people is the one who hears my name but is too miserly to even recite salawāt!’

Generosity (Sakhāwah)

To give others generously is also called *infāq* in Arabic. *Infāq* or *sakhāwah* comes from *tawakkul* (complete trust and reliance in Allāh), while miserliness shows a lack of *tawakkul*. This is because a person who trusts that Allāh will look after his or her needs has no reason to hoard or fear poverty. But a person whose faith and trust in Allāh is weak always lives with fear of loss and poverty and holds on to everything without sharing or even using them for himself or herself.

Allāh tells us in the Qur’ān:

﴿الشَّيْطَانُ يَعِدُكُمُ الْفَقْرَ وَيَأْمُرُكُمْ بِالْفَحْشَاءِ وَاللَّهُ يَعِدُكُمْ مَغْفِرَةً مِنْهُ وَفَضْلًا وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ﴾

Shaytān frightens you of poverty and prompts you to [commit] indecent acts. But Allāh promises you His forgiveness and grace, and Allāh is all-bounteous, all-knowing.
- Surah al-Baqarah, 2:268

The first step to being generous is therefore to realize that everything in the heavens and the earth belongs to Allāh alone.

﴿وَلِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَكَفَى بِاللَّهِ وَكِيلًا﴾

To Allāh belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth, and Allāh suffices as trustee.

- Surah an-Nisā, 4:132

Hence the possession or use of anything by human beings is only temporary. Allāh gives us things temporarily and when we die we have to give it all away to others and ultimately everything and everyone returns to Allāh. In other words, Allāh is the only Real Owner of anything. When we are generous we are not really giving 'our' wealth or possessions. We are simply sharing what was given to us by Allāh and in a sense we are giving it back to Him as we show trust in Allāh Whose treasures are unlimited. And when we are miserly, we behave like a person who believes he or she is the real owner of what he or she possesses as if he or she will always be able to keep what they have even after death.

If we wish to keep our wealth or possessions with us after death, the only way to do this is to give it back to Allāh by giving it to others in His Name and for His pleasure:

﴿...وَمَا تُنْفِقُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَلَأَنْفُسِكُمْ وَمَا تُنْفِقُونَ إِلَّا ابْتِغَاءَ وَجْهِ اللَّهِ وَمَا تُنْفِقُوا مِنْ

خَيْرٍ يُؤْفَإِ 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

In order to ensure that our generosity is sincerely for Allāh and it is not to show off or impress others, we should give in charity both openly and secretly. Openly to encourage others to give and to set an example; and secretly so that Allāh may multiply what we have given in utmost sincerity such that no one else besides Him knows about it. We know giving others or doing good deeds in secret is better because Allāh says:

﴿إِنْ تُبْدُوا الصَّدَقَاتِ فَنِعْمًا هِيَ وَإِنْ تُخْفُوهَا وَتُؤْتُوهَا الْفُقَرَاءَ فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ وَيُكَفِّرُ

عَنْكُمْ مِنْ سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ﴾

If you disclose your charities, that is well, but if you hide them and give them to the poor, that is better for you, and it will make up for some of your misdeeds, and Allāh is well aware of what you do.

- Surah al-Baqarah, 2:271

And Allāh commanded Rasulullāh (s) to tell the Muslims:

﴿قُلْ لِعِبَادِي الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا يُقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَيُنْفِقُوا مِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ سِرًّا وَعَلَانِيَةً مِنْ قَبْلِ
أَنْ يَأْتِيَ يَوْمٌ لَا بَيْعُ فِيهِ وَلَا خِلَالٌ﴾

Tell My servants who have faith to maintain the prayer and to spend out of what We have provided them with, secretly and openly, before there comes a day on which there will be neither any bargaining nor friendship.

- Surah Ibrāhim, 14:31

And if we do that, then Allāh assures us that we will never experience any fear or grief:

﴿... وَمَا تُنْفِقُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ بِهِ عَلِيمٌ . الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ بِاللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ
سِرًّا وَعَلَانِيَةً فَلَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ﴾

...And whatever wealth you may spend, Allāh indeed knows it. Those who give their wealth by night and day, secretly and openly, they shall have their reward near their Lord, and they will have no fear, nor will they grieve.

- Surah al-Baqarah, 2:273-274

Hoarding and being miserly is bad because it prevents others from getting help and it shows a lack of trust in Allāh. It prevents humans from learning to benefit each other and it interferes with the process of how Allāh gives to some of His creatures through others. The worst form of hoarding and stinginess is to hoard what people need the most, such as knowledge, wealth and necessities of life like food and water.

Lesson 4

Music, Gambling & Recreation

Sports and Recreation

Leisure and recreation is necessary for relaxation after hard work; without it a person runs the risk of breaking down under stress and strain. Islām recognizes the needs of human nature, and is not a religion of renunciation in which one must always be engaged in serious work or in worship.

From hadith we learn that it is permitted and even encouraged, for Muslims to have fun, to laugh and joke, or to play games. Rasulullāh (s) said: ‘There is a time for this and a time for that.’ Rasulullāh (s) himself and Amir al-Mu’minin (‘a) sometimes joked lightly and such anecdotes are recorded in the books of history and traditions (*ahādith*).

However, it is undesirable to joke about sacred matters or to ridicule other people. The Qur’ān says:

﴿وَذَرِ الَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا دِينَهُمْ لَعِبًا وَلَهْوًا وَغَرَّتْهُمُ الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا...﴾

Leave alone those who take their religion for play and diversion and whom the life of this world has deceived...

- Surah al-An’ām, 6:70

And also:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا يَسْخَرُ قَوْمٌ مِنْ قَوْمٍ عَسَىٰ أَنْ يَكُونُوا خَيْرًا مِنْهُمْ وَلَا نِسَاءٌ مِنْ نِسَاءٍ عَسَىٰ أَنْ يَكُنَّ خَيْرًا مِنْهُنَّ وَلَا تَلْمِزُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَلَا تَنَابَزُوا بِالْأَلْقَابِ بِئْسَ الْأَسْمُ الْفُسُوقُ بَعْدَ الْإِيمَانِ وَمَنْ لَمْ يَتُبْ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ﴾

O you who have faith! Let not any people make fun of another people: it may be that they are better than they are; nor let women [make fun] of women: it may be that they are better than they are. And do not defame one another, nor insult one another by [calling] nicknames. How evil are profane names after faith! And whoever does not repent—such are the wrongdoers.

- Surah al-Hujurāt, 49:11

Those sports that relieve the tension of serious work and help one to keep fit are encouraged in Islām. Martial arts are especially recommended; archery and hunting are also mentioned in hadith, because they are recreation and also help for self-defence. Other sports that build up the physique are also permitted. But sports are

only a means and not an end. A person should not be overly preoccupied with them. A Muslim should never forget that there are serious aims in life.

Sports that involve injury or in which fatal accidents are likely to occur, such as boxing, are also not permitted. It is disapproved to set animals against each other or involve them in violence just for sports (e.g. chicken fights, bull fighting).

Betting & Gambling

Betting or gambling of any sort is forbidden. Those games that usually involve gambling such as backgammon, chess or playing cards are also forbidden.

Imām Ja'far as-Sādiq ('a) taught that is harām to play chess or even to sell chessboards or keep them in the house and that we should not even watch others playing chess.

People who gamble at casinos usually get addicted to it and over a period of time lose large amounts of money.

It is for this reason that even objects that are used in gambling like playing cards and gambling dice should not be played with (even if money is not involved).

Gambling and betting of any sort is harām even if the reward is not money. Rasullāh (s) said, 'Any kind of competition is considered gambling if the loser has to pay something - even if it is just a cashew-nut...'

Imām Ali ar-Rida ('a) narrated that when the head of Imām Husayn ('a) was taken before the tyrant Yazid, he (Yazid) was drinking alcohol and playing chess. Therefore we should avoid even looking at others playing chess and/or drinking wine and whenever we hear of these vices we should remember how hurt Imām Ali Zayn al-Abidin ('a) was when he was taken as a prisoner and he had to see his father's head near alcohol and chess.

Purchasing lottery tickets is also harām even if it is in the name of charity. It does not change it from being gambling. It is like paying for a music concert to raise money for a humanitarian cause. The means is harām and it does not justify the end result.

Music

Watching films as a recreation is permitted, but if they contain such matter that promote sinful acts and incite lust, or if they contain singing and dancing, they should be avoided. Moreover, time should not be wasted on movies, and particular care should be taken that children do not watch too much television or spend too much of their time watching films.

Similarly Muslims should not play computer games with too much music or sinful images and violence that involves crime, stealing, murder, etc. It is ok to play games that teach us strategy provided it does not encourage violence and hate.

Playing instruments of music or keeping musical instruments in the house is harām. Some mujtahids allow 'classical' music that are not the kind played at parties and places of sin (night clubs, bars, etc.). But for the most part, music should be avoided and instruments like drums, guitars, flute, pianos, etc. are harām to learn, play or keep at home regardless of whether they are traditional, electronic or on the computer.

Mujtahids also agree that manufacturing, installing, selling or buying musical instruments are also harām professions.

Imām Ja'far as-Sādiq ('a) reported from Rasulullāh (s) who said, 'I forbid you from dancing and even playing flutes and drums...' In another hadith, Rasulullāh (s) said, 'Allāh has sent me as a mercy to the worlds, to guide people. And He ordered me to eradicate the playing of flute and other instruments of music, all games of vice, idol (worship) and all practices of the days of ignorance.'

Imām Ja'far as-Sādiq ('a) said, 'Playing the violin promotes the growth of hypocrisy in the heart like water helps the growth of vegetation.' He also said that if drums and cymbals are played in a house for forty days, Allāh will impose a shaytān (devil) in the house who will make its inhabitants shameless and immodest with no care of what they say or what is said about them.

A man came to Imām Ja'far as-Sādiq ('a) and said to him, 'when I go to the washroom, I can hear music from my neighbour's house.' The Imām told him to try and avoid listening to it as much as possible. The man then argued and said, 'But I don't go to his house to listen. I only hear it from the washroom.' And Imām as-Sādiq ('a) replied him, 'Have you not read the āyah of the Qur'ān that says:

﴿... إِنَّ السَّمْعَ وَالْبَصَرَ وَالْفُؤَادَ كُلُّ أُولَئِكَ كَانَ عَنْهُ مَسْئُولًا﴾

...Indeed the hearing, the eyesight, and the heart—all of these are accountable.

- Surah al-'Isrā, 17:36

When the man realized his mistake, he repented right away and promised never to listen to music again. And the Imām said to him, 'Get up and go perform ghusl. Then offer (2 rak'ah) salāh and ask for forgiveness from Allāh.... Certainly Allāh only dislikes the evil things. Leave the evil things to the evil people because there are different people suitable for different things.'

Amir al-Mu'minin Imām 'Ali ('a) has said, 'Angels do not enter a house that has alcohol, drums, tambourines or a flute. Even the prayers of the people of this house are not accepted.'

One of the signs of the end of times (*ākhir az-zamān*) before the coming of Imām al-Mahdi (‘atfs) is that people will make music halāl and it will become so common that it will even spread to the holiest cities in Islām i.e. Makkah and Madina.

We must therefore seek refuge with Allāh from music and ensure we do not become part of this spread of corruption and sin.

Lesson 5

Respect for Qur'án, Rasululláh (s), Ahl al-Bayt (a) & Other Signs of Allāh

Showing disrespect to anything sacred is harām. The sacred matters are what are also called the 'signs' of Allāh, such as the Qur'án, the Ka'bah, masājid, the names, personalities and graves of Prophets and Imāms as well as their pious members of family and companions.

Respect for the Qur'án

When Rasulullāh (s) was leaving this world, he advised the Muslims saying, 'I am leaving amongst you two important things: The Book of Allāh and my family, the Ahl al-Bayt. If you hold on to these two, you will never be misled. And these two will never separate until they return to me on the Day of Judgement.'¹¹

And according to Imām Ja'far as-Sādiq ('a) Allāh (s.w.t.) will say to the Qur'án on the Day of Judgement, 'I swear by My Honour and Majesty, today I will honour the one who honoured you and disgrace the one who has disgraced you.'

The greatest disrespect we show the Qur'án is when we ignore it and no longer read it, ponder on it or make it an important part of our lives.

Rasulullāh (s) will complain to Allāh on the Day of Judgement about those Muslims who neglected the Qur'án in this world:

﴿وَقَالَ الرَّسُولُ يَا رَبِّ إِنَّ قَوْمِي اتَّخَذُوا هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ مَهْجُورًا﴾

And the Messenger will say, 'O my Lord! Indeed my people took this Qur'án as a forsaken thing.'

- Surah al-Furqān, 25:30

It is important to remember:

1. It is harām to even disrespect or make najis the cover of the Qur'án, apart from its pages and writing.
2. It is harām to write Qur'án āyāt with ink that is najis.

¹¹ This is famously known as *Hadith ath-Thaqalayn* (the Hadith of Two Important Things).

3. It is harām to hand over the Qur’ān to non-Muslims if they are going to disrespect it. Some scholars believe it is harām even if they won’t disrespect it because they will touch the writings but it is ok to give them a translation of the Qur’ān. However, even for translations, we should give copies to those who ask for it and are genuinely interested. We shouldn’t shove it in people’s hands who may then disrespect or throw it.
4. If any sacred object like the Qur’ān, pages containing names of ma’sumeen or some soil of Karbala (turbah or tasbih) etc. accidentally fall in a najis place like the toilet, it is wājib to remove it and make it tāhir even if removing it incurs lots of expenses. Until the time it is not removed it is harām to use that toilet.
5. When a sacred object like the Qur’ān becomes najis, it is not just wājib on the person who owns it or the person who made it najis to make it tāhir again. Rather it is *wājib Kifāi* i.e. wājib on all Muslims who are aware of it. And until someone undertakes to make it tāhir, all are answerable and held responsible.
6. It is harām to touch the writings of the Qur’ān without wudu, whether with the fingers, lips or any part of the body.
7. It is harām to buy or sell the Qur’ān. So when we have to pay for it or take money for it, our intention should be to pay or receive the money to cover the cost of the paper, shipping, the cover or binding and not the Qur’ān itself. The buyer should pay the seller with the intention of giving a *hadiya* (gift) and not ‘purchasing the Qur’ān.’

A person who is conscious of Allāh and respects the greatness and majesty of his or her Creator will naturally treat the words of Allāh with utmost respect. For example, they will never dare touch the Qur’ān without wudu or when their hand or body is najis. They will never turn their backs to the Qur’ān or stretch their legs towards it. They will not place anything on top of Qur’ān. They will always sit facing the Qibla while reciting the Qur’ān and will recite it with a pleasant tone, slowly and whilst reflecting upon the meaning of its āyāt. Allāh tells us in the Qur’ān:

﴿وَإِذَا قُرِئَ الْقُرْآنُ فَاسْتَمِعُوا لَهُ وَأَنْصِتُوا لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ﴾

And when the Qur’ān is recited, then listen to it and remain silent, that mercy may be shown to you.

- Surah al-Ar’āf, 7: 204

Some ways in which we respect the Qur’ān include:

1. Always do wudu before touching or carrying the Qur’ān. Touching the writings without wudu is harām.
2. Always hold the Qur’ān with both hands or with your right hand.
3. Never place other books or objects on the Qur’ān.
4. Never place the Qur’ān on the floor.

5. Cover your head when reciting the Qur'ān.
6. Keep the Qur'ān away from being touched by any najāsah.
7. Make sure you are not carrying the Qur'ān or anything with āyāt of Qur'ān on it to the washroom (e.g. necklace, ring, amulet, book).
8. Kiss the Qur'ān when you first pick it up and when you last put it down.
9. Do not leave the Qur'ān lying about open.
10. Face Qibla when reciting the Qur'ān. Do not stretch your legs towards the Qur'ān or even when you are reciting it. Do not lie on your back and recite the Qur'ān. Sit up respectfully when reciting it (unless you have a medical condition and are bedridden).
11. Most Important: Do not neglect the Qur'ān and/or allow dust to gather on it. Read it every day even if it is only one āyah.

Suggested Class Activity: Watch parts of the HBO documentary “Koran by Heart” (on Teacher’s DVD) to encourage memorization of the Qur'ān.

Respect for the Ka’bah

The Ka’bah stands on the most sacred spot on the earth and is the most sacred structure on the earth. Nabi Ibrāhim (‘a) and his son Nabi Ismā’il (‘a) built it and according to some scholars it was there since the time of Nabi Adam (‘a) but Nabi Ibrāhim (‘a) restored it again after its walls had crumbled down.

Imām Ja’far as-Sādiq (‘a) has said, ‘Nothing is more honourable in the eyes of Allāh than these three: The Qur’ān, which is His wisdom and Light, His House (the Ka’bah) which He has appointed as the Qibla for mankind, and the Progeny of his Prophet (the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a)).’

Disrespecting the Ka’bah is a very serious crime in Islām. Some of the levels of disrespect to Ka’bah include:

1. Taking any najāsah into Masjid al-Harām that could make the masjid or the Ka’bah najis.
2. Committing sins whilst inside Masjid al-Harām and in front of the Ka’bah, such as theft, backbiting, looking at ghayr mahram sinfully, and so on.
3. Killing an animal, bird or any creature of Allāh in the area around the Ka’bah and Masjid al-Harām. This is forbidden (*harām*).
4. Destroying trees or vegetation around the area.
5. Entering Makkah without ihrām. This is not allowed except for the people who live and work there. Anyone entering Makkah must make the niyyah of Umra and wear the ihrām before entering Makkah and then perform Umra

before they can take off the ihrām. To enter Makkah any time of the year without ihrām is a great sin.

6. Relieving oneself (i.e. using the toilet) facing the Ka'bah or with one's back towards it. This is *harām* regardless of where in the world and how far from the Ka'bah a person is.

The Qur'ān describes the Ka'bah as a sanctuary of safety and that 'whoever enters it will be safe.' (Surah Al-i Imrān, 3:97). This means even if a criminal runs into Masjid al-Harām to seek refuge, he cannot be harmed. He must be isolated until, due to hunger, thirst or other needs, he is forced to come out himself. Then he can be arrested and charged.

Whenever you visit Masjid al-Harām in Makkah, try and kiss the Black Stone (*al-Hajar al-Aswad*) that is in the corner of the Ka'bah near its door. And when you are leaving Makkah, perform a *Tawāf al-Widā* (Farewell Tawāf) and ask Allāh to bless you with another chance to come back to visit His House and the most sacred place on earth.

Lesson 6

Respect for the Sacred (cont'd)

Respect for Masājid

﴿وَأَنَّ الْمَسَاجِدَ لِلَّهِ...﴾

And that the mosques are Allāh's...

- Surah al-Jinn, 72:18

Since all masājid are the houses of Allāh, to disrespect a masjid is an insult towards Allāh, the Blessed and the Most High.

The Qur'ān condemns people who break masājid or stop others from coming in to worship Allāh:

﴿وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ مَنَعَ مَسَاجِدَ اللَّهِ أَنْ يُذْكَرَ فِيهَا اسْمُهُ وَسَعَى فِي خَرَابِهَا...﴾

And who is more unjust than he who prevents (men) from the masājid of Allāh, that His name should be remembered in them and strives to ruin them?

- Surah al-Baqarah 2:114

1. Making a masjid najis is harām. It is also harām to take any najis al-'ayn (dog, pig, alcohol, urine, etc.) inside a masjid.
2. It is wājib to immediately make a masjid tāhir when it becomes najis and it is *wājib kifāi* on all Muslims. The expense to make it tāhir is also wājib on everyone even if it is a costly matter. If a person cannot bear the cost alone, it is wājib on him to ask help from others.
3. Staying in the masjid when a person is in the state of *janābah* or *haid* is harām.
4. It is mustahab to light a lamp in the masjid or to pay for its lighting and cleaning.
5. A masjid should be kept as clean as possible.
6. If you are passing through a masjid e.g. from one door and leaving from another, it is makruh to pass by without praying at least a 2 rak'ah mustahab salāh in respect of the Masjid. This is called *Salāt Tahiyat al-Masjid*.
7. It is makruh to raise your voice in the masjid, except for the adhān or making an announcement such as for lost property to find the owner.
8. It is makruh to talk about worldly matters in the masjid, to joke around or chat unnecessarily on the phone.

9. It is makruh to go to the masjid after eating onions, garlic or anything with a strong or sharp smell until you remove that from your breathe.
10. It is makruh to take young children and the mentally handicapped to the masjid if they may make noise or disturb the worshippers.
11. When in a masjid, recite Qur'ān, tasbih, istighfār, duas and salawāt as frequently as possible.
12. Be aware that angels are also present in masājid.
13. When entering, go in with your right foot first, saying Bismillah and ask Allāh to enter you into His forgiveness and mercy. When exiting, leave with your left foot first and ask Allāh not to exit you from His forgiveness and mercy.

The Different Status of Masājid

The most sacred and honourable masjid is Masjid al-Harām that houses the Ka'bah. A salāh inside this masjid equals 100,000 (one hundred thousand) prayers in ordinary masājid. The next in status is Masjid an-Nabi (Rasulullāh (s)'s masjid in Madina). A salāh performed in it equals 10,000 (ten thousand) prayers in ordinary ones. Next in line are the Masjid of Kufa (in Irāq) and Masjid al-Aqsa (in Jerusalem). A single salāh offered in these masājid carry the reward of one thousand prayers in other masājid. After this, are the Jami' Masājid (where Friday prayers are held) of the city that carry a hundred times more reward than prayers in other places. After Jāmi' Masājid are the main masājid of an area that deserve greater respect because a single prayer in it equals twenty-five prayers. And lastly are the small masājid that are common in Muslim countries in the markets, alleyways, residential areas, etc., where prayers earn the worshipper twelve rewards in comparison to one reward for other prayers (such as at home).

Of course praying in congregation also has various degrees of thawāb depending on how many people are present. This was already taught in Book 7 under the Fiqh lesson on Salāt al-Jamā'ah.

Respect for the Haram of the Ma'sumin ('a)

Respect for the shrines of the Ma'sumin ('a) is wājib and a necessity of faith and their disrespect is a great sin. In fact it is considered a sin to the extent of *kufr* (disbelief) and *shirk* (polytheism).

The rules for such sacred places are similar to those of masājid. If any najāsah enters them, it must be cleaned immediately. It is not permitted for people who are not in tahārah to enter them, and so on.

Salāh at the Graves of Ma'sumin ('a)

It is harām to prostrate (do sajdah) on the grave of Rasulullāh (s) or any Imām ('a) or even facing it, during any wājib or mustahab salāh (unless of course you are facing qibla and it happens to be in the same direction).

However you can keep your right cheek on the grave or kiss it in respect or in seeking Allāh's blessings and thanking Allāh for the opportunity to visit His special servant and trustee (*wali*).

While praying salāh near the grave of Rasulullāh (s) or an Imām ('a), even as we face qibla, we must be careful not to stand ahead of them or to have our backs towards them. It is also better not to stand on the right or left (parallel) to them but to try and pray somewhere behind them.

The books of du'ās and ziyārāt like Mafātih al-Jinān have details of the etiquette (*ādāb*) of visiting Rasulullāh (s) and the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) and how to ask permission of Rasulullāh (s), the angels around the sacred place, and the personality you are visiting, before entering. As well, when leaving, there are etiquettes on how to bid farewell such as reciting Ziyārat al-Widā (the Farewell Salutation).

Respect for the Turbah of Karbala

The soil that is in the vicinity of the grave of Imām Husayn ('a) in Karbala is sacred. Allāh has blessed it with special qualities unmatched by any other material on the earth. It can cure illnesses and is a source of blessing (*barakah*) and Divine mercy.

It is therefore the most recommended earth to use for sujud when worshipping Allāh. The benefits of the turbah of Karbala (also called *Turbah Husayniyya*) manifest most to those who show utmost respect for it.

The Turbah Husayniyya must never be disrespected such as by throwing the turbah or tasbeeh made from it into a bin carelessly. If you step on it accidentally, pick it up and kiss it unless someone in salāh is using it and you will distract him or her from salāh. If it becomes najis, it is wājib to make it tāhir.

When a Muslim dies, as part of the shrouding (*takfin*) process, camphor is rubbed on the seven parts of the body that touch the ground in sajdah. This is called hunūt. It is mustahab to mix a little bit of *Turbah Husayniyya* with the camphor that is rubbed on the forehead and palms. Out of respect for the turbah, it should not be rubbed on the knees and toes, for which only camphor should be used.

There are very many incidents in the books of history about people who were cured from incurable diseases by drinking water with a pinch of the blessed turbah of Karbala. As well, there are many incidents of people being cursed and punished for disrespecting the turbah of Imām Husayn ('a).

In a sense, all the signs of Allāh are like the Qur'ān. They offer a healing and a mercy to those who have faith and they add punishment to those who disregard and disrespect them. Allāh tells us this about the Qur'ān:

﴿وَنُنزِّلُ مِنَ الْقُرْآنِ مَا هُوَ شِفَاءٌ وَرَحْمَةٌ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَلَا يَزِيدُ الظَّالِمِينَ إِلَّا خَسَارًا﴾

We send down in the Qur'ān that which is a cure and mercy for the faithful; and it increases the wrongdoers only in loss.

- Surah al-'Isrā', 17:82

In other words the signs of Allāh can help us or harm us, depending on how we treat or mistreat them.

Lesson 7

Silat ar-Rahm & Qata' ar-Rahm

﴿...وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ وَالْأَرْحَامَ...﴾

...and be careful of (your duty to) Allāh, by Whom you demand one of another (your rights), and (to) the ties of relationship...

- Surah an-Nisā, 4:1

The word 'rahm' in Arabic refers to one's blood relatives. *Silat ar-Rahm* means to maintain cordial relations with one's blood relatives and it is a wājib duty on all Muslims, even if their blood relatives do not reciprocate (i.e. even if they do not keep relations with you in return). *Qata' ar-Rahm* on the other hand means to cut relations and ties with one's blood relatives. This is one of the greatest sins in Islām.

The Qur'ān curses people who 'cut what Allāh has ordered to join' meaning relationships of blood (such as in Surah al-Baqarah, 2:27; Surah ar-Ra'd, 13:25; and Surah Muhammad, 47:22-23).

That is why Imām Ja'far as-Sādiq ('a) said, 'Beware of cutting off relations (with your blood relatives) because I have found them cursed thrice in the Qur'ān.'

A man once approached Rasulullāh (s) and asked, 'What is the worst deed in the eyes of Allāh?' And Rasulullāh (s) replied, 'To associate partners to Allāh.' Then the man asked, 'After this, what is the worst sin?' And Rasulullāh (s) said, 'To cut ties with relatives.' 'And after that?' asked the man again. And Rasulullāh (s) said, 'To tell others to do evil and to forbid them from doing good.'

Those Included in Rahm

The *Shari'ah* of Islām has not provided any fixed definition of who falls under these two terms (*Silat ar-Rahm* and *Qata' ar-Rahm*). In this case the meaning as judged by common sense must be accepted. We must consider all the relatives from our father's side and mother's side, irrespective of whether they are close or distant, as having a right on us. In the same way the children of the daughters and their descendant also come in this category as the Qur'ān says:

A man named Urwah asked Imām Ja'far as-Sādiq ('a) the meaning of this āyah of Qur'ān:

﴿وَالَّذِينَ يَصِلُونَ مَا أَمَرَ اللَّهُ بِهِ أَنْ يُوصَلَ...﴾

And those who join together (i.e. *Silat ar-Rahm*) what Allāh has commanded to be joined...

- Surah ar-Rā'd 13:21

And the Imām ('a) replied, 'You have been commanded to practice *Silat ar-Rahm* towards all your relatives. Whether they are mahram or non-mahram, whether they are distant relatives or closely related, whether they are immediate relatives or separated by several generations.'

It is generally observed that people tend to behave graciously towards their wealthy relatives and avoid the poor ones. Islām does not differentiate or discriminate between the rich and the poor relatives. What is important is the closeness of relationship. The more closely a person is related to you, the more important and necessary it is to fulfill his or her rights.

What is Silat ar-Rahm

Imām Ja'far as-Sādiq ('a) once said, 'Show *silat ar-rahm* towards your relatives and the near ones even if it is just by offering a glass of water to them.'

What we also understand from many ahādith is that the highest stage of *silat ar-rahm* is to consider our relatives as our own selves. That is, we should wish for our relations whatever we wish for ourselves. Part of *silat ar-rahm* is also to help our relatives when they face difficulties. This may be giving them a loan, helping them find jobs, advising them in matters of religion, and so on.

The simplest kind of *silat ar-rahm* maybe calling them to say salām or even conveying our salām to them through someone. The least act of *silat ar-rahm* is to pray for our relatives.

Any act of *silat ar-rahm* that if we fail to do will be viewed as *qata' ar-rahm* is wājib on us to do. For example, if due to poverty a person is unable to get medical aid or is unable to pay off his debt and he approaches a rich relative for help, it becomes wājib on the rich relative to help him. Even if the rich person is not approached directly but comes to know of the predicament of his poor relative, it is wājib on him to help his less fortunate relative. The wealthy relative who fails to carry out these obligations will be guilty of *qata' ar-rahm*.

It is however not wājib for a person to help his poor relative if he himself is not in a position to do so and fears that he himself may become destitute. Also, *silat ar-rahm* is not wājib if it involves an act that is *harām*. For example it is not wājib to visit a relative if they don't observe hijāb or drink alcohol or play music in their homes.

Sometimes we may be in doubt whether our behaviour is considered as *silat ar-rahm* or *qata' ar-rahm*. In such cases we should go by what people generally view that behaviour to be. For example, if we live in a society where not saying salām or calling someone is seen as breaking ties with them then doing this with our relatives would constitute *qata' ar-rahm*, and so on.

The Benefits of Silat ar-Rahm

Silat ar-Rahm has worldly advantages as well as benefits in the hereafter.

According to Imām Ja'far as-Sādiq ('a) silat ar-rahm perfects our character. Through repeated and continuous kindness towards our relatives, our morals are refined and kindness and consideration for others become a part of our nature. And in this manner our soul is also purified.

Imām Ja'far as-Sādiq ('a) also said, 'Kindness to relatives makes the accounting (*hisāb*) (of the Hereafter) easy.' And in numerous reports from the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) we learn that silat ar-rahm increases a person's life, delays his or her death and increases his or her sustenance (*rizq*) and the number of his or her descendants.

Imām Ja'far as-Sādiq ('a) once told a companion called Maysar, 'O' Maysar, the time of your death has arrived many times but Allāh has postponed (your death) due to your kindness to the relatives and good behaviour towards them.'

Rasulullāh (s) encouraged silat ar-rahm even if one has to travel long distances and he said to Imām Ali ('a), 'O 'Ali! Even if you have to travel for two years to do good to your parents, do it; even if you have to travel for one year to perform silat ar-rahm to your kinsfolk, do so. Even if you have to journey a mile to see a sick person, do it. Even if you have to walk two miles to attend a funeral, do it. Even if you have to travel four miles to meet a believing brother, do it.'

Some hadith mention that for every step a person takes to visit his relatives, he gets forty thousand rewards, forty thousand of his sins are forgiven and his status is raised by forty thousand levels.

Silat a-Rahm Wājib Even With Those Who Don't Keep Ties

A man complained to Imām Ja'far as-Sādiq ('a) about his relatives. The Imām ('a) said to him, 'Swallow your anger and behave nicely with your relatives.' The man said again, 'But my relatives give me all sorts of trouble and there is hardly any cruelty they have not committed upon me.' The Imām ('a) told him, 'Do you also want to cut off relations with them? If you also become like them, then Allāh will never have mercy for you.'

This makes it very clear that we must not sever relations even with those relatives who are unkind to us and who want to cut off relations with us. In other words we must practice silat ar-rahm even with those who practice qata' ar-rahm with us.

When Imām Ja'far as-Sādiq ('a) was about to leave this world, he made a will for some money to be given to one of his cousins. One of his servants said to him, 'Master! You are leaving money for someone who once attacked you with a sword?' And the Imām ('a) replied, 'don't you think I want to be included among those

concerning whom the Qur'ān says: *'And those who join together what Allāh has commanded to be joined...'* (Surah ar-Rā'd, 13:21)?'

Some ahādith tell us that when Allāh created Paradise, He purified it and made it very fragrant. Its fragrance is felt at a distance of two thousand years (of travel). But one who disobeys his parents or breaks ties with family and relatives will be so far away from Paradise, that he or she will not even experience its fragrance.

Rasulullāh (s) as well has said, 'Do not break ties with your relatives even if they break them with you.'

Silat ar-Rahm Wājib Even with Non-Muslim Relatives

The traditions of the Ma'sumin ('a) leave no doubt whatsoever that the fulfilling of the rights of one's relatives is wājib. Whether the relatives are Shi'ah or Sunni, pious and religious or sinful and transgressors or whether they are Muslims or non-Muslims. It is wājib to maintain ties with them to the degree possible within the limits of shari'ah.

A man asked Imām Ja'far as-Sādiq ('a), 'my relatives are not Muslims. Do they have any rights upon me?'

'Why not?' replied Imām as-Sādiq ('a), 'the rights of relatives do not become invalid for any reason. However if the relatives are Muslims then their rights are twice as much. One for their being relatives and second because of their being Muslim.'

The rights mentioned by the Imām are what we have discussed earlier such as keeping in contact and helping our relatives when they need it. The laws of Islām may of course deny some rights like for example, non-Muslims cannot inherit from Muslims but that is a rule in shari'ah and should not be confused with 'breaking ties' with family.

Relatives with Whom Qata' ar-Rahm is Allowed

If silat ar-rahm towards a non-Muslim relative strengthens his or her conviction towards his own religious views or if silat ar-rahm towards a sinful Muslim relative provides him with opportunity and encouragement in his unlawful ways, then this kind of silat ar-rahm is forbidden. In fact, if qata' ar-rahm causes a disbeliever relative to reconsider his disbelief, then qata' ar-rahm becomes wājib on us. Similarly, qata' ar-rahm is wājib if it discourages a Muslim relative from his or her sinful ways.

There is also another situation where qata' ar-rahm is wājib. That is when the relative has clear hatred towards Islām. Allāh (s.w.t.) tells us in the Qur'ān:

﴿لَا تَجِدُ قَوْمًا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ يُوَادُّونَ مَنْ حَادَّ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَلَوْ كَانُوا آبَاءَهُمْ أَوْ أَبْنَاءَهُمْ أَوْ إِخْوَانَهُمْ أَوْ عَشِيرَتَهُمْ...﴾

You shall not find people who believe in Allāh and the Last Day befriending those who are opposed to Allāh and His Messenger, even though they are their (own) fathers, or their sons or their brothers or their kinsfolk...

- Surah al-Mujādilah, 58:22

This āyah clearly indicates that one must abstain from silat ar-rahm towards even the closest of relatives if they are inimical towards Allāh (s.w.t.) or Rasullullāh (s) or Islām or any of the signs of Allāh such as the Qur’ān, the Ahl al-Bayt, and so on.

Consequences of Qata’ ar-Rahm in this World & Hereafter

Rasullullāh (s) has said, ‘One who severs relationships will not enter Jannah.’

And in one of his sermons Imām Ali (‘a) said, ‘I seek refuge from the sin that cause the hastening of death.’ When he was asked what this sin was, he replied, ‘the breaking of ties with family (*qata’ ar-rahm*).’

In other words, one who breaks ties with family reduces his lifespan. And in the hereafter awaits him even more severe punishment.

Concerning the Night of Qadr that falls in the month of Ramadān and is considered to be the greatest night of the year ‘better than a thousand nights’ (Surah al-Qadr, 97:3) Rasullullāh (s) said that Allāh forgives all sins on this night for anyone who asks except for those who do not repent from drinking alcohol, disobeying parents, harbouring enmity towards believers and breaking ties with relatives.

Imām Muhammad al-Bāqir (‘a) related from Rasullullāh (s) who said that the *Sirāt* (the bridge passing over Hell that everyone has to cross on the Day of Judgement) would have on each side (of it) *Silat ar-Rahm* and ‘*Amānah*’ (keeping a trust). One who maintains ties with relatives and maintains trusts shall be able to cross the *Sirāt* easily to reach Paradise. No good deed will benefit those who have broken ties with relatives or committed breach of trust. They will slip from the *Sirāt* and drop into Hellfire.

In a hadith from Imām Ja’far as-Sādiq (‘a) sometimes a person has only three years of life remaining but because of performing an act of kindness to his or her relatives, Allāh increases his or her life by thirty years. And in the same way, a person may have thirty years of life remaining but due to his breaking off the ties of relationship, his lifespan is reduced to three years.

A Word on Our Islāmic ‘Family’

Even though this is not strictly related to the terms silat ar-rahm and qata’ ar-rahm, it is useful to remember that the Qur’ān describes the faithful as being brothers:

﴿إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِخْوَةٌ﴾

The faithful are indeed brothers...

- Surah al-Hujurāt, 49:10

There is also a hadith from Rasulullāh (s) that says, ‘I and (Imām) Ali are the fathers of this nation (*ummah*).’

So we must not forget that outside our immediate family and blood relatives, we also have a spiritual family that consists of spiritual fathers and a large Islāmic nation (*ummah*) that we are all part of with no boundaries of language, ethnicity, race or culture.

Project:

Read Surah al-Hujurāt (chapter 49 of the Qur’ān) and list (in bullet points or number format) as many instructions from Allāh about what to do and what not to do to our fellow Muslim (brother or sister). The title of this list should be ‘The Rights of a Fellow Muslim’. For each commandment, quote the āyah number as well. For example:

- Do not insult or call anyone by nicknames (verse 11).

Remember: Some āyāt will have more than one right of a fellow Muslim so you can break it up into several bullet points or numbers. If you wish to add your comments or thoughts for some of the rights, you can also add them as paragraphs under the appropriate bullet or number.