

TARIKH **(History)**

Lesson 1

Nabí Lút ('a) and Asháb al-Kahf

Nabi Lut ('a)

Nabi Lut ('a) was the cousin of Nabi Ibrāhim ('a). Their mothers were sisters and Nabi Lut's ('a) sister, Sārah, was Nabi Ibrāhim ('a)'s first wife. The two Prophets migrated together to Palestine, but later Nabi Lut ('a) settled in the district of Sodom in Jordan.

The people of Sodom were unsociable and treated strangers disgracefully. Anybody who passed through their area would be robbed of all his possessions. Their life was full of singing, merry-making and gambling. But by far the worst vice in their community was homosexuality, which was openly practised. The word sodomy (which has the same meaning as homosexuality or leading a gay lifestyle) in fact comes from the word 'Sodom' where these people lived because they were the first people to openly practice such a shameful act.

To guide these people, Allāh sent Nabi Lut ('a) to them. Nabi Lut ('a) did his utmost to teach the people about the evil of their ways. He preached to them the message of Allāh and begged them to give up their evil customs. However, after 30 years of preaching, only a handful of people had accepted his teachings while the rest remained engrossed in their sinful habits. The Qur'ān says:

﴿وَلَوْ طَا إِذْ قَالَ لِقَوْمِهِ أَتَأْتُونَ الْفَاحِشَةَ مَا سَبَقَكُمْ بِهَا مِنْ أَحَدٍ مِنَ الْعَالَمِينَ إِنَّكُمْ لَتَأْتُونَ الرِّجَالَ شَهْوَةً مِنْ دُونِ النِّسَاءِ بَلْ أَنْتُمْ قَوْمٌ مُّسْرِفُونَ وَمَا كَانَ جَوَابَ قَوْمِهِ إِلَّا أَنْ قَالُوا أَخْرِجُوهُمْ مِنْ قَرْيَتِكُمْ إِنَّهُمْ أَنْاسٌ يَتَطَهَّرُونَ﴾

And (We sent) Lut, when he said to his people, 'Why do you commit such indecent acts that have never been committed before by anyone in any of the worlds? You come to men in lust instead of women. Indeed you are a people who are guilty of excess (sin). And they had no answer except that they said, 'Turn him out of your town, he and his people seek to purify (themselves).'

- Surah al-A'rāf, 7:80-82

While Nabi Lut ('a) increased his efforts to try and guide the people, they wanted to banish him and his followers from the town. When he warned them to fear the punishment of Allāh for their indecent behaviour they laughed and said that they did not care.

Finally, the punishment of Allāh descended on them. Allāh sent down a group of His angels, including the archangel Jibrāil ('a) in human form. First they visited Nabi

Ibrāhim (‘a) and gave him the good news of a son – Nabi Ishāq (‘a) – and a grandson from Nabi Ishāq (‘a) – Nabi Ya’qub (‘a).

Thereafter the angels came to Sodom to the house of Nabi Lut (‘a) in the form of handsome youths. Nabi Lut (‘a) was very worried when he saw that he had guests who were handsome youths, because he knew very well what the habits of his people were. However, he could not turn them away and so he welcomed them to his house.

Jibrāil (‘a) asked Nabi Lut (‘a) to leave the town that same night with his family and the few virtuous believers but to leave his wife behind for she was evil. His immoral wife had informed the townspeople of their guests and they started coming towards the house of Nabi Lut (‘a).

As soon as Nabi Lut (‘a) and his followers were safely out of the town, the angels brought the punishment of Allāh on the town. Rocks began falling from the sky on the town and the whole place was turned upside down. This is mentioned in various places in the Qur’ān. For example:

﴿فَأَنْجَيْنَاهُ وَأَهْلَهُ إِلَّا امْرَأَتَهُ كَانَتْ مِنَ الْغَابِرِينَ وَأَمْطَرْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ مَطَرًا فَانظُرْ كَيْفَ

كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُجْرِمِينَ﴾

So We saved him (Lut) and his family, except his wife; she was one of those who remained behind. Then We poured down upon them a rain [of stones]. So look how was the end of the guilty!

- Surah al-A’rāf, 7:83-84

And also:

﴿فَأَخَذَتْهُمُ الصَّيْحَةُ مُشْرِقِينَ فَجَعَلْنَا عَلَيْهَا سَافِلَهَا وَأَمْطَرْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ حِجَارَةً مِنْ

سِجِّيلٍ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّلْمُتَوَسِّمِينَ﴾

So the (violent) Cry seized them at sunrise, and We made its (the town of Sodom’s) topmost part its bottommost, and rained on them stones of baked clay. There are indeed signs in that for those who are heedful.

- Surah al-Hijr, 15:73-75

Every prophet and messenger of Allāh after that condemned and cursed those who practice sodomy. Islām has also cursed those who commit sodomy and in some hadith we were told that anyone who commits sodomy will be raised on the Day of Judgement with the people of Nabi Lut (‘a).

Ashāb al-Kahf (The People of the Cave)

In their attempts to prove that Rasulullāh (s) was not a real prophet, the Quraysh of Makkah sent three men to some Jewish scholars to ask them about any matter from the ancient scriptures of the Jews that they could ask Rasulullāh (s) about and test his knowledge. They wanted to test him with something difficult that they were sure he would never know unless he was a Jewish Rabbi. The Jewish scholars told the Quraysh to ask Rasulullāh (s) about the 'People of the Cave' (Ashāb al-Kahf) who are sleeping for many centuries and whose story was only known to a few learned people. The Qurayshi men returned to Makkah and posed their question to Rasulullāh (s) and Allāh revealed the whole story to him. A summary of the story of the People of the Cave was also revealed as verses of the Qur'ān. These verses are in Surah al-Kahf (chapter 18) of the Qur'ān.

In brief, a long time ago, many years after Nabi Isa ('a) was raised to the heavens and long before the birth of Rasulullāh (s), an evil king ruled over a city that was located where Turkey is today. This King forced everyone to worship idols and tortured anyone who followed Nabi Isa ('a) or refused to worship the idols.

Six or seven young men refused to worship idols and decided to defend their faith; they left their families, city, work and everything they possessed and fled from the city. On the way they met a shepherd and his dog who he joined them as well.

The shepherd led them all through a fertile valley and up a mountain until they entered a cave in the mountain. Meanwhile, the King came to know of these men and because they held high positions in his city, he followed them and wanted to punish them to set an example.

When these faithful men heard the King and his men approaching, they prayed to Allāh to rescue them and soon they were overcome with a deep sleep and the dog sat outside the cave. When the King and his men saw these men unconscious, they thought they were dead. So they shut the cave and went away. And because a cave is called 'Kahf' in Arabic, the Qur'ān refers to them as 'Ashāb al-Kahf' meaning 'the Companions (or People) of the Cave'.

Allāh says in the Qur'ān that everyone is guessing the number of these faithful men but only Allāh knows how many they really were:

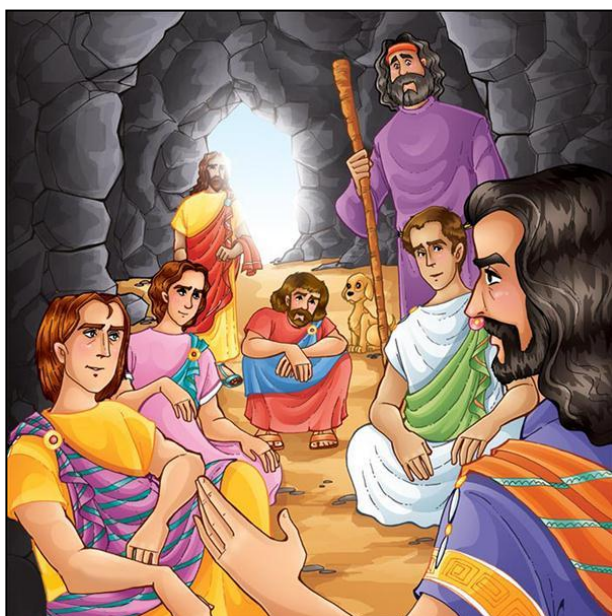
﴿سَيَقُولُونَ ثَلَاثَةٌ رَابِعُهُمْ كَلْبُهُمْ وَيَقُولُونَ خَمْسَةٌ سَادِسُهُمْ كَلْبُهُمْ رَجْمًا بِالْغَيْبِ
وَيَقُولُونَ سَبْعَةٌ وَثَامِنُهُمْ كَلْبُهُمْ قُلْ رَبِّي أَعْلَمُ بِعَدَّتِهِمْ مَا يَعْلَمُهُمْ إِلَّا قَلِيلٌ فَلَا تُمَارِ
فِيهِمْ إِلَّا مِرَاءً ظَاهِرًا وَلَا تَسْتَنَفِتْ فِيهِمْ مِنْهُمْ أَحَدًا﴾

They will say, 'They were three, the fourth of them was their dog', and (others) say, 'Five, the sixth of them was their dog', guessing about the unknown; and (others) say,

'Seven and the eighth of them was their dog.' Say (O Muhammad), 'My Lord knows best their number. None knows them except a few, so do not argue about them...'

- Surah al-Kahf, 18:22

Allāh caused these men to sleep for about 300 years before they woke up again. When they woke up, they thought they had slept for a day only or even less. But they were starving. They still thought the evil King was ruling. So they decided they would go back to the city secretly and purchase some food. They prayed to Allāh to open the entrance for them and as it opened and they stepped out, they were amazed to see how the landscape had changed.



They decided to send one man with the money and when he got to the town he was even more surprised to see how it looked beyond recognition. The houses looked different and the people were dressed in strange clothes. It was as if he was dreaming or living in another world. Finally he saw a baker and gave him the money and asked for bread. The baker was equally surprised to see a man who was so oddly dressed and speaking such an ancient language. Most of all, the coins he gave him looked like some ancient treasure. The baker finally managed to

communicate with the man and took him to the new King.

When the King and his men managed to tell this man from the cave that the King of his time died a long time ago and that he had been asleep for 300 years or more, both he and the King and all the city people were shocked. The people of the city had heard of such an incident taking place a long time ago but they never expected to see anyone alive.

Soon the King and the whole city were pouring out of their homes to go to the cave. When they got near it, the man from the cave asked them to wait outside while he goes in and explains the matter to his friends.

When he entered the cave and told the others what had happened, they were worried that it might be a trick. They were also very disappointed to know that even though the new King was not evil and the people no longer worshipped idols, but now they worshipped the cross and believed Nabi Isa ('a) was the son of God. These men were strong believers in the original message of Nabi Isa ('a) that there is no god by Allāh and He has no partners and none but Allāh should be worshipped.

So they prayed to Allāh to put them back to sleep as before and once gain Allāh put them in a deep sleep. When the King and his men finally entered the cave, they found the men and their dog in deep sleep as if they were dead. So they sealed the cave once more and built a place of worship near it. Some people believe that this mountain is somewhere in Syria (which is south of Turkey).

Many scholars believe that these men will remain sleeping until the return of Imām al-Mahdi ('atfs) who will show people where the cave is and wake them up. These men will then follow Imām al-Mahdi ('atfs).

Allāh says about the Ashāb al-Kahf that if you were to see them today, you would be very frightened:

﴿وَتَحْسِبُهُمْ أَيَقَاطًا وَهُمْ رُقُودٌ وَنُقَلِّبُهُمْ ذَاتَ الْيَمِينِ وَذَاتَ الشَّمَالِ وَكَلْبُهُمْ بَاسِطٌ ذِرَاعَيْهِ بِالْوَصِيدِ لَوِ اطَّلَعْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ لَوَلَّيْتَ مِنْهُمْ فِرَارًا وَكَلِمَاتٍ مِنْهُمْ رُعبًا﴾

You will suppose them to be awake, although they are asleep. We turn them to the right and to the left, and their dog [lies] stretching its forelegs at the entrance. If you come upon them, you will surely turn to flee from them, and you will surely be filled with a terror of them.

- Surah al-Kahf, 18:18

Lesson 2

Treaty of Hdaybiyya, Pledge of Rídwán & ‘Aam al-Wufúd

The Treaty of Hdaybiyya & the Pledge of Ridwān

In the year 5 AH Rasullāh (s) received a command from Allāh to declare the annual pilgrimage to Makkah (Hajj) as an obligatory act in Islām. In the following year Rasullāh (s) saw in a dream that he was actually performing the Hajj along with his companions and he therefore decided to perform Hajj that very year.

Rasullāh (s) announced to the Muslims that he intended to leave for pilgrimage to Makkah in the month of Dhul Qa’adah of 6 AH. The Muhajirin who had migrated from Makkah to Madina with Rasullāh (s) were delighted at this opportunity to return to their beloved hometown. The Ansār, who were the original residents of Madina, were also keen to undertake this blessed journey. In all, about 1400 Muslims prepared to accompany Rasullāh (s) to Makkah.

Rasullāh (s) left Madina on schedule and sent an advance party to check the route ahead and to warn him of any threat from the Quraysh. He ordered the Muslims not to carry any arms other than swords. Along the journey, Rasullāh (s) and his companions (ashāb) put on their *ihram* (pilgrim’s clothes) and chose 70 camels for sacrifice during the Hajj.

Meanwhile, the Quraysh learnt of the advance of the Muslims towards Makkah and despatched 200 soldiers to stop them. When Rasullāh (s) received word that an ambush awaited them, he asked their guide to take them on a route that would bypass the enemies. Finally, after travelling through rough country until they arrived at a place called Hdaybiyya, 10 miles from Makkah.

Here, Rasullāh (s) ordered the Muslims to stop and pitch their tents. He then sent a message to the Quraysh that he wished to enter Makkah to perform the pilgrimage. He also informed them that he had come in peace and wished to settle matters by discussions. Rasullāh (s) sent Uthmān b. Affān as his messenger because he was an Umayyad and the nephew of Abu Sufyān, the chief of the Makkans.

Because he was related to Abu Sufyān, Uthmān was warmly received in Makkah. The Quraysh told him that he was free to do the Hajj himself, but they would not allow the rest of the Muslims to enter the city. Uthmān was delayed in returning to the Muslim camp from Makkah.

When Uthmān did not return, the Muslims feared that he had been killed. Rasullāh (s) said that there was a possibility of battle breaking out, so he took a new pledge

from the Muslims that they would support him even in the face of death. This famous renewal of oath was taken under a tree, and is known as the **Pledge of Ridwān** (Bay'at al-Ridwān). The event is mentioned in the Qur'ān as well:

﴿لَقَدْ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذْ يُبَايِعُونَكَ تَحْتَ الشَّجَرَةِ فَعَلِمَ مَا فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ فَأَنْزَلَ السَّكِينَةَ عَلَيْهِمْ وَأَثَابَهُمْ فَتْحًا قَرِيبًا﴾

Allāh was certainly pleased with the faithful when they swore allegiance to you under the tree. He knew what was in their hearts, so He sent down composure on them, and rewarded them with a victory near at hand.

- Surah al-Fath, 48:18

Soon afterward, Uthmān returned from Makkah, safe and unharmed. With him was a man called Suhayl who was sent by the Quraysh with instructions to settle the dispute peacefully. As a result of the discussions between Suhayl and Rasulullāh (s), a peace treaty was signed between the Muslims and the Quraysh. The conditions of the treaty were:

1. The Muslims should return to Madina that year without performing Hajj.
2. They could return the next year for 'Umra but their stay would not exceed 3 days.
3. The Muslims should not bring any arms with them except sheathed swords.
4. There would be no war between the Quraysh and the Muslims for 10 years.
5. Any Makkan who tries to migrate to Madina without permission of his tribe would be deported back to Makkah even if he is a Muslim but any Muslim in Madina who wishes to return to Makkah even without permission of Rasulullāh (s) would not be stopped from returning.
6. Any tribe of Arabia would be free to join any of the parties to the treaty and the allies of either side would also be bound by this treaty.

This came to be known as the **Treaty of Hdaybiyya**. At the face value of the treaty, it seemed like it was to the advantage of the Makkans and the disadvantage of the Muslims. Some individuals in the Muslim camp like Umar b. al-Khattāb even objected to this and argued that it was wrong for Rasulullāh (s) to agree to such a treaty that was against the interests of the Muslims. However, in the long term it proved to be the best thing that ever happened to the Muslims. The peace agreement allowed the Muslims to now focus on propagation Islām and introducing the message of the Qur'ān to the rest of the world.

In fact, Allāh never congratulated the Muslims for all the battles they won. But when this treaty was signed, Allāh called it a 'Clear Victory' and revealed Surah al-Fath (48) that begins with the verse:

﴿إِنَّا فَتَحْنَا لَكَ فَتْحًا مُبِينًا﴾

Indeed We have opened for you a clear victory.

- Surah al-Fath, 48:1

This proves that Islām is a religion of peace and in Allāh’s view, victory is when there is peace, not war.

After staying for some days at Hdaybiyya, the Muslims returned to Madina. The peace that now prevailed in Arabia was so useful that in two 2 years after this treaty, more people accepted Islām than in the whole 19 years since the beginning of Rasulullāh (s)’s mission.

‘Aam al-Wufud (The Year of Deputations) & Invitations To Rulers

In the peace that followed the signing of the Treaty of Hdaybiyya, Rasulullāh (s) saw a great opportunity to invite others to Islām. In the year 7 AH he wrote letters to several neighbouring states inviting their rulers and people towards Islām.

At the time, there were four powerful states around Arabia. These were Persia (Iran), Byzantine (i.e. Europe. It was called Rome by the Arabs), Egypt and Abyssinia (Ethiopia).

When Rasulullāh (s) sent a letter to the Emperor of Persia (Iran) inviting him to Islām, the Emperor flew into a rage. He tore the letter to pieces and rudely turned the messenger out of his court. Rasulullāh (s) was displeased to hear this and prayed, ‘O Lord! Tear his kingdom into pieces.’

Meanwhile, the Emperor of Persia sent a letter to the ruler of Yemen, who was under him, ordering him to send some men to capture Rasulullāh (s) and bring him to his court. Accordingly, two officers from Yemen came to Madina to carry out his orders. When they saw that Rasulullāh (s) had the powerful support of the Muslims, they realized that it was impossible to arrest Rasulullāh (s).

However, they informed Rasulullāh (s) of their orders and warned him of the consequences of displeasing the powerful Emperor of Persia. In reply Rasulullāh (s) told them that the Emperor had just been killed by his own son who was now the new Emperor.

Rasulullāh (s) then advised them to tell the people of Yemen to come out of Persian control and to embrace Islām. The officers were so impressed with the miraculous knowledge of Rasulullāh (s) that they accepted Islām and later many people from Yemen also became Muslims.

To the Caesar of Rome, Rasulullāh (s) sent another messenger with a letter of invitation to Islām. He was received with honour and the Caesar was impressed with the contents of the letter.

After making enquiries in Arabia and discussions with the Roman priests, he was convinced that the message was from the very same Prophet whose coming had been foretold in the Tawrāt and Injil. However, he was afraid that if he openly declared himself a Muslim, he would be removed from power by the influential Christians priests. Nevertheless, he wrote a letter to Rasulullāh (s) expressing his faith and devotion to him and sent to him several gifts.

To the Ruler of Egypt, Rasulullāh (s) sent another messenger. After the king read the message he thought over the contents of the letter for a long time. He debated with the messenger for a long time and was convinced but he was not prepared to give up his position as the head of the Coptic Church. He wrote a letter of regret to Rasulullāh (s) and sent some gifts back. When Rasulullāh (s) received the letter in Madina he remarked, 'he has not accepted Islām because of fear losing his power, but his rule and authority will soon come to an end.'

To the King of Abyssinia, Rasulullāh (s) sent two letters with a messenger. In one letter he invited him to Islām. In the other he requested him to allow and make arrangements for the return of Ja'far b. Abu Tālib and the other Muslims who had migrated to Abyssinia in the early difficult days of Islām.

The King received the messenger of Rasulullāh (s) with great respect and kissed the letters as a mark of respect before reading them. On finishing the letter regarding the invitation to Islām, he immediately recited the *kalima* and became a Muslim. He also obeyed the request of Rasulullāh (s) regarding the arrangements for the return of the Muslims and sent his own son with them.

In addition, Rasulullāh (s) also sent letters to many other tribes and states. Some did not give a firm commitment to Islām because it did not suit them politically. However, many other chiefs and rulers became inclined towards Islām and sent their representatives to Madina to learn more about Rasulullāh (s) and Islām.

By sending his messengers far and wide, Rasulullāh (s) showed that Islām was a religion not only for the Arabs, but for the whole world.

At times though, the Muslims who risked their lives going as messengers to propagate Islām were tortured and killed. For example some tribes living outside Madina came to Rasulullāh (s) and claimed that they wished to become Muslims and that they needed someone to teach them and their people about Islām. Rasulullāh (s) sent 10 trained Qur'ān reciters to accompany them back to their tribes but once they left Madina, they were surrounded and killed.

A few months later, Rasulullāh (s) was requested to send some missionaries to a tribe in Najd. Rasulullāh (s) could not refuse anyone who asked for guidance and

decided to send 40 learned Muslims. Although some of the people tried to save them, the missionaries were attacked by others. They were outnumbered and after a brave fight, they were all martyred, except for one man whose name was Ka'b. He was wounded, but managed to return to Madina and give news of what had happened. These events teach us about the great sacrifices made by the early Muslims in the spread and defence of Islām.

The Lapsed 'Umra

One of the conditions of the Peace Treaty of Hudaibiyya was that the Muslims would be permitted to visit Makkah the following year for 'Umra and would be allowed to stay there for three days to carry out their religious duties. After a year had passed, Rasulullāh (s) declared that the Muslims should prepare for the 'Umra. 2000 Muslims put on the *ihram* and went with Rasulullāh (s) to Makkah.

The sight of Rasulullāh (s) with 2000 Muslims reciting the talbiyya (*Labbayk, Allāhumma Labbayk - Here I am, my Lord, here I am*) as they entered Makkah was so majestic and inspiring that many idol-worshippers decided to join Islām and become Muslims. As Rasulullāh (s) did the tawāf around the Ka'bah, he ordered all the Muslims to recite with him:

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ صَدَقَ وَعْدُهُ وَنَصَرَ عَبْدَهُ وَهَزَمَ الْأَحْزَابَ وَحْدَهُ

There is no god but Allāh. He is only One. He has acted according to his promise (that the Muslims would visit the Ka'bah soon). He helped His servant. And He overcame the (polytheist) allies.

The presence of the Muslims in Makkah was so great that they in fact took control of the whole place, including Masjid al-Harām, the Ka'bah and the Hills of Safa and Marwa. Seeing the Muslims perform their 'Umra with such force made the Quraysh leaders realize that Islām was here to stay and nothing could now stop this mighty religion of God from spreading.

When it was noon time, Bilāl gave the adhān from the top of the Ka'bah. It was very hard for the Quraysh leaders to see a black freed slave standing on the Ka'bah and speaking against their gods and idols by declaring, '*ash-hadu an lā ilāha ilallāh*' (I bear witness there is no god but Allāh!).

When the 'Umra was over, those Muslims who had migrated with Rasulullāh (s) i.e. the muhājirun, and who had not seen their homes and families in Makkah for over 7 years, went home to meet their families and they took their Muslim brothers from Madina (the Ansār) with them to introduce them to their family and show them hospitality just as the Ansār had welcomed them when they migrated to Madina.

After three days, Rasulullāh (s) ordered the Muslims to keep their promise in the treaty and leave Makkah and return to Madina.

The short visit of the Muslims had nonetheless left a deep impression on the minds of the Makkah citizens. Those who had not yet embraced Islām were now very keen to learn more about Islām and the Muslims. With their excellent morals and behaviour that they learnt from Rasulullāh (s), the Muslims had won the hearts of the Makkan people and gained a far greater victory than any battle or war could ever have given them. The Qur’ān says:

﴿لَقَدْ صَدَقَ اللَّهُ رَسُولَهُ الرُّؤْيَا بِالْحَقِّ لَتَدْخُلَنَّ الْمَسْجِدَ الْحَرَامَ إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ آمِنِينَ
مُحَلِّقِينَ رُءُوسَكُمْ وَمُقَصِّرِينَ لَا تَخَافُونَ فَعَلِمَ مَا لَمْ تَعْلَمُوا فَجَعَلَ مِنْ دُونِ ذَلِكَ
فَتْحًا قَرِيبًا﴾

Certainly Allāh has fulfilled His Apostle’s vision in all truth: You will surely enter the Sacred Mosque, God willing, in safety, with your heads shaven or hair shortened, without any fear. So He knew what you (all) did not know, and He assigned [you] besides that a victory near at hand.

- Surah al-Fath, 48:27

Project Ideas

In the year 8 AH, Rasulullāh (s) had to fight two battles. Research these battles and write summaries on them following the instructions below:

1. **The Battle of Mu’tah.** Write a one-page summary of this battle explaining why it took place, who it was fought against, where it took place, etc. Include all key facts about the battle and how it ended. In your summary, make sure you mention:
 - a. Which brother of Imām Ali (‘a) was martyred in this battle?
 - b. How did he die?
 - c. What did Rasulullāh (s) say about him and his condition in Paradise?
2. **The battle of Dhāt as-Salāsil.** Write a one-page summary of this battle explaining: why it took place, who it was fought against, where it took place, etc. Make sure your summary also mentions:
 - a. Who brought victory to the Muslims in this battle?
 - b. What Surah of Qur’ān was revealed to describe this battle?

A good resource to use for your research is ‘The Message’ by Ayatullah Ja’far Subhani, which can also be read online at: <http://www.al-islam.org/message/> . However make sure you do other searches on these two battles as well and then write your summary in your own words - do not simply copy and paste from the internet.

Lesson 3

Fath Makkah, Hunayn & Tabuk

The Conquest (Fath) of Makkah

In the year 8 AH, barely two years after the Treaty of Hdaybiyya was signed, the Quraysh of Makkah broke the ten year truce and asked one of their ally tribes to attack a tribe that was an ally of the Muslims. The Muslim ally tribe – Banu Khuzā'ah was attacked while they slept and many were killed while others were taken as prisoners. Rasulullāh (s) was upset to know of this and decide he would avenge the Banu Khuzā'ah.

When the Quraysh heard of this, they realized what they had done was not to their advantage and so they asked their leader, Abu Sufyan, to go to Madina and speak to Rasulallah (s). They wanted Abu Sufyan to convince Rasulallah (s) that the Quraysh were not to blame for what had happened to the Banu Khuza'ah.

At first, when Abu Sufyān arrived in Madina, he went straight to the house of his daughter Umm Habiba, who was the wife of Rasulullāh (s). Umm Habiba did not welcome her father and did not even let him sit on the mattress that Rasulullāh (s) used to sit on in her house. The experience at his daughter's house made Abu Sufyān very uneasy but he still went to meet Rasulullāh (s) and unashamedly he talked to Rasulullāh (s) about strengthening the bond of peace between the Muslims and the Quraysh, as if their actions against the allies did not matter. Rasulullāh (s) however remained silent, thus showing Abu Sufyān that he did not care for the proposal at all.

Abu Sufyān realised that his mission had failed so he returned to Makkah to warn the Quraysh that the Muslims might attack them. Rasulullāh (s) on the other hand decided to use this opportunity to bring Makkah under the control of Islām once and for all. However, he wanted to free Makkah of idol worship with as little bloodshed as possible so he planned to move swiftly and secretly to Makkah with a huge army. He hoped that when the Makkans would be faced with a powerful army that showed up suddenly, they would lose heart and not fight.

With this plan, Rasulullāh (s) left Madina on the 10th of Ramadān 8 AH with an army of 10,000 Muslims and marched towards Makkah. Once they left the outskirts of Madina, Rasulullāh (s) and the Muslims broke their fast (because they were no longer in their home town) and they continued on with their march.

The Muslim army finally stopped and camped at Ju'fah, just outside Makkah. The Makkani Quraysh were of course not prepared for this and they were shocked when they suddenly saw the hills around Makkah light up in the evening with hundreds of fires from the Muslim camp.

Before long, Abu Sufyān came to the Muslim camp accompanied by Rasullāh (s)'s uncle Abbās b. Abd al-Muttalib, to investigate further.

When Rasullāh (s) saw Abu Sufyān, he asked him, 'Has the time not come for you to accept that there is no god but Allāh?' However, Abu Sufyān was not very willing to give up his belief in idols. Seeing him hesitate, Abbās the uncle of Rasullāh (s) warned him that if he went to war, he would not win and may even lose his life. Abu Sufyān then recited the kalima and accepted Islām, but it was very obvious that he did that only to save himself and he had no love for Islām whatsoever.

Although Rasullāh (s) was well aware of Abu Sufyān's intentions, he accepted his words at face value because Abu Sufyān was the leader of the Makkans and his professing Islām would save the lives of many and free Makkah from idol worship without any fighting and bloodshed.

To encourage the Makkans not to resist the Muslims, Rasullāh (s) then ordered that any Makkan who puts down his weapons and takes refuge in the Ka'bah or in the house of Abu Sufyān would be safe from harm.

As Abu Sufyān left the Muslim camp, he saw the Muslim army marching past and how powerful they looked. This left Abu Sufyān frightened, and all thoughts of resistance vanished from his mind. Abu Sufyān said to Abbās b. Abd al-Muttalib, 'look at how powerful God has made your nephew!' and Abbās replied, 'not my nephew but the Messenger (Rasul) of Allāh!'

Rasullāh (s) set Abu Sufyān free to return to Makkah. Abu Sufyān told the Makkans what he had seen and gave them the message of Rasullāh (s). He further added that it would be impossible to attack an army so large. The morale of the Makkans was completely weakened when they heard the words of Abu Sufyān.

And so Rasullāh (s) entered the city of Makkah with great dignity riding on his camel named al-Qaswa. Nobody stood to oppose him. He stopped at the side of the grave of his uncle Abu Tālib and pitched his tent at that place.

Each unit of the Muslim army entered the city through different gates with no incident except for the unit of Khālid bin Walid. Some people tried to stop him and fighting broke out which was stopped by Rasullāh (s). Soon, the entire city of Makkah surrendered to the Muslims.

The Makkans were now terrified because for the first twelve years that Rasullāh (s) preached amongst them, they used to torture and harass him and they even tried to assassinate him before he migrated to Madina. Rasullāh (s) won the hearts of the Makkans by saying that he would take no revenge for their past actions, and that they were all free.

Rasulullāh (s) then mounted his camel and began performing tawāf of the Ka'bah. Every time he passed by an idol, he pushed it with his stick and it fell down and broke into pieces. As he broke the idols, Rasulullāh (s) recited the verse of Qur'ān:

﴿وَقُلْ جَاءَ الْحَقُّ وَزَهَقَ الْبَاطِلُ إِنَّ الْبَاطِلَ كَانَ زَهُوقًا﴾

And say, 'The truth has come, and falsehood has vanished. Indeed falsehood is bound to vanish.'

- Surah Bani Isrā'il, 17:81

Rasulullāh (s) then entered inside the Ka'bah and threw out all the idols. Some of the idols were placed high up, so he asked Imām Ali ('a) to stand on his shoulders and pull the idols down. Thus, the last traces of idol worship were removed from the Holy Ka'bah and Masjid al-Harām forever.

At Dhuhr time, Rasulullāh (s) asked Bilāl to call the adhān and after salāh, Rasulullāh (s) delivered a speech in which he summarized the message of Islām. The entire population of Makkah then offered their allegiance to Rasulullāh (s).

Thus the promise of Allāh was fulfilled:

﴿إِنَّ الَّذِي فَرَضَ عَلَيْكَ الْقُرْآنَ لَرَادُّكَ إِلَىٰ مَعَادٍ...﴾

Indeed He who has revealed to you the Qur'ān will surely restore you to the place of return....

- Surah al-Qasas, 28:85

The Battle of Hunayn

The news of the fall of Makkah created great surprise and disturbance among the surrounding tribes. Some of the tribes living around Makkah decided to join hands and fight Rasulullāh (s) together.

Meanwhile, Rasulullāh (s) had left Makkah after having stayed there for fifteen days. He appointed a guide to educate and instruct the people and entrusted the government and administration of the city, as well as the duty of leading prayers in the Masjid, to a pious Muslim from Madina.

When the tribes getting ready to fight Rasulullāh (s) found out he was departing from Makkah, they decided to ambush the Muslims in the hills of Hunayn. Rasulullāh (s) learnt of their intentions and decided to march on towards them with a huge force of 12,000 Muslims.

The enemies knew they could not fight such a large Muslim army but they also knew that at Hunayn, the Muslims will have to pass through a narrow mountain pass and

so they decided to use this to their advantage. This was in 8 AH, the same year as the Conquest of Makkah.

As the Muslims came to the mountain pass, they were forced to go through it in small numbers because it was very narrow. The Muslims were also very proud of their large number and thought no one could defeat them, so they were careless.

As soon as the Muslims entered the pass, the enemy attacked them from above the mountain cliffs and showered them with stones and arrows. Thereafter, a special group of skilled soldiers came down the mountain side and attacked the Muslims with their swords. The sudden attack broke up the Muslim ranks and they lost their courage. Many of the Muslims began fleeing from the battle, despite the command of Rasulullāh (s) to stay and fight.

The enemy made Rasulullāh (s) their main target, hoping to kill him as quickly as possible. When Imām Ali (‘a) realised their intention, he stood next to Rasulullāh (s) and the enemy could not overcome his skill at combat.

A famous warrior named Abu Jundal came out to fight from the enemy side and Imām Ali (‘a) came out to meet him in combat. Soon Abu Jundal lay dead. Imām Ali (‘a) continued attacking the enemy until he had killed forty of them. Seeing this, the Muslims regained their courage and returned to the battlefield as well. Thirty more of the enemy were killed before the battle came to an end.

Despite the initial setback, the Muslims won the Battle of Hunayn and the polytheists fled, leaving behind a large amount of war booty.

Allāh mentions this battle in the Qur’ān as well:

﴿لَقَدْ نَصَرَكُمُ اللَّهُ فِي مَوَاطِنَ كَثِيرَةٍ وَيَوْمَ حُنَيْنٍ إِذْ أَعْجَبَتْكُمْ كَثْرَتُكُمْ فَلَمْ تُغْنِ
عَنكُمْ شَيْئًا وَضَاقَتْ عَلَيْكُمُ الْأَرْضُ بِمَا رَحُبَتْ ثُمَّ وَلَّيْتُم مُّدْبِرِينَ﴾

Allāh has certainly helped you in many situations, and on the day of Hunayn, when your great number impressed you, but it did not help you in any way, and the earth became narrow for you in spite of its expanse,¹⁶ whereupon you turned your backs [to flee].

- Surah at-Tawbah, 9:25

In the distribution of the war booty, Rasulullāh (s) gave larger shares to the newly converted Muslims of Makkah. From his own share, he gave extra gifts to the chiefs of Quraysh, just to encourage their hearts to be loyal to Islām. These people are known in history as *muallafat al-quloob* (‘Those whose hearts were won over’). While this brought the new converts closer to Islām, it upset some of the long time Muslims like the Ansār of Madina.

¹⁶ That is, you were at a complete loss and at the end of your wits.

When Rasulullāh (s) came to know of their disappointment, he gathered the Ansār and addressed them. He told them they had every right to say to him that they had given him shelter when his life was in danger; but then he told them to realize that they were better because they didn't need to be given extra property just to make them loyal to Islām. Rasulullāh (s) said to the Ansār, 'Are you not satisfied that while others take away camels and sheep, you shall take away the Prophet with you? By Allāh! If all the other people go one way and the Ansār go the other way, I will choose the way of the Ansār.' Then he prayed to Allāh to bless the Ansār and their children. The words of Rasulullāh (s) made the Ansār weep with shame and they said, 'O Prophet of Allāh! We are content with our share.'

On the 18th of Dhul Qa'adah 8 AH, Rasulullāh (s) performed 'Umra and then left for Madina after appointing a deputy in Makkah. On his way back to Madina, he visited the grave of his mother at Abwa. Rasulullāh (s) arrived back in Madina on the 1st of Dhul Hijjah after having been away for three months.

The Battle of Tabuk

As the power of Islām expanded across Arabia, the Caesar of Rome (Byzantine) heard of the fall of Makkah and he felt threatened. And so in 9 AH, he sent a well-equipped army of 4000 men to Syria (that was a Roman colony at the time) and they camped at a fort in Tabuk, near Damascus, awaiting further orders on when to attack the Muslims.

When trade caravans returned to Arabia from Syria, they informed Rasulullāh (s) that the Romans were gathering an army at the borders of Syria. Rasulullāh (s) realized that the threat to the Muslim State would have to be stopped, so he sent messages to Makkah and around Madina asking the Muslims to come to fight in the way of Allāh. He also asked the rich to provide for the expense of war by paying their Zakāh.

At the call of Rasulullāh (s), 30,000 Muslims gathered near Madina, ready to participate in battle. 10,000 of these men were mounted soldiers, while the rest were infantry men. At that time it was extremely hot in Madina. A hypocrite tribal leader called Abdullah bin Ubay started weakening the spirit of some Muslims by warning them of the great strength of the enemy and the difficulty of marching the long distance to Tabuk in the terrible heat. With his words this hypocrite managed to change the minds of some members of his own tribe, the Khazraj.

The following verse of the Qur'ān was revealed at this time.

﴿فَرِحَ الْمُخَلَّفُونَ بِمَقْعَدِهِمْ خِلَافَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ وَكَرَهُوا أَنْ يُجَاهِدُوا بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ
وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَقَالُوا لَا تَنْفِرُوا فِي الْحَرِّ قُلْ نَارُ جَهَنَّمَ أَشَدُّ حَرًّا لَوْ كَانُوا
يَفْقَهُونَ﴾

Those who were left behind (i.e. stayed back from jihād) were happy for their sitting back against [the command of] the Messenger of Allāh, and were reluctant to do jihād with their possessions and lives in the way of Allāh, and they said, 'Do not go forth in this heat.' Say, 'the fire of hell is severer in heat', should they understand.

- Surah at-Tawbah, 9:81

The day of departure of the Muslim army arrived, and Rasulullāh (s) addressed the soldiers to strengthen their morale. Then the army marched out of Madina towards Tabuk.

Amir al-Mu'mineen, Imām Ali b. Abi Tālib ('a), had always been in the front of every Islāmic battle. However, in the Expedition to Tabuk, Rasulullāh (s) left him in charge of Madina and asked him not to join the Muslim army. This was because Rasulullāh (s) was travelling a long distance and there was a danger that the hypocrites in Madina like Abdullah b. Ubay may try and create disturbances in Madina.

The hypocrites staying back in Madina were indeed planning to create problems and were disappointed to learn that Imām Ali ('a) was staying back in Madina. To try and get Imām Ali ('a) to leave as well, they began spreading a rumour that Rasulullāh (s) was upset with Imām Ali ('a).

It was on this occasion that Rasulullāh (s) praised Imām Ali ('a) and to clarify matters, he said to Imām Ali ('a), 'O Ali, you are to me as Hārūn was to Musa, except that there is no Nabi after me.'

In other words, just as Nabi Musa ('a) had left his brother Nabi Hārūn ('a) as his representative when he went up the mountain for forty days¹⁷, similarly, Imām Ali ('a) was Rasulullāh (s)'s representative in his absence.

The journey of the Muslim army to Tabuk was filled with difficulties and the weather was extremely hot. At one point they ran out of water but there was a heavy shower of rain that brought relief to the advancing army. Finally, the Muslims reached Tabuk but the Romans had already retreated when they received news of the size and strength of the Muslim forces. Rasulullāh (s) stayed in Tabuk for 20 days and when the enemy did not come back, he decided to return to Madina.

The journey to Tabuk was not wasted because Rasulullāh (s) managed to get most of the surrounding chiefs to accept Islām while the others agreed to pay tax to the Muslim State in return for protection. Furthermore, the Romans changed their mind

¹⁷ To receive the Tawrāt.

about ever attacking Muslim territories after having seen the might of the Muslim army.

On the way back, Rasulullāh (s) passed the valley of Uqba through a narrow hilly road with steep slopes on either side. It was night time and Hudhaifa al-Yamani and Ammār Yāsir were put in charge to help Rasulullāh (s) cross safely by holding the reins of his camel. Some of the hypocrites amongst the Muslims plotted that when Rasulullāh (s)'s camel was on the edge of a steep slope, they would frighten the camel so that it would throw Rasulullāh (s) off its back and down the cliff. But just then, lightning began flashing and both Rasulullāh (s) and Hudhaifa saw the group of people waiting to ambush them. When they realized they had been seen, the hypocrites ran away. Rasulullāh (s) told Hudhaifa the identity of each and every one of those in the group but he asked him never to reveal this to anyone.

From that day onwards, Hudhaifa al-Yamāni came to be known as 'The Keeper of Rasulullāh (s)'s Secret'. Some of the Muslims pressed Rasulullāh (s) to reveal the identity of these hypocrites so they could be punished but Rasulullāh (s) said if he did that, people would say, 'Now that Muhammad has secured power, he is killing his own companions.' This hint from Rasulullāh (s) tells us that the group must have included some very prominent members from the Muslims.

Lesson 4

Mubāhala & Masjīd ad-Dīrār

The Event of Mubāhala

In the year 9 AH, after Islām had been firmly established in Madina and Rasulullāh (s) was sending letters to invite different nations and groups to join Islām, one of the groups invited were the Christians of Najrān.

Najrān was the main Christian centre in Arabia and the most senior bishops of Christianity lived here.

Rasulullāh (s)'s letter to the Bishop of Najrān talked of Nabi Ibrāhim ('a), Nabi Ishāq ('a), Nabi Ya'qub ('a) and those anbiyā that the Christians could identify with in their own scriptures. The Bishop of Najrān realized this was a message from someone special because up until then, Arabia was filled with mostly idol worshippers and some Jews in Madina and its surrounding areas. Rasulullāh (s) invited the Christians of Najrān to worship One God – Allāh – and not to associate anyone with Him.

By using the names of the anbiyā of Banu Isrāil, Rasulullāh (s) also wanted to let the Christians of Najrān know that the belief in One God he was preaching was the same message that all these previous anbiyā ('a) preached.

The Bishop's name was Abu Hārith and after discussing with other senior priests, they decided to form a special delegation and to come to Madina to see for themselves if the claim of Rasulullāh (s) was true, that he was indeed sent by Allāh.

Sixty of the most knowledgeable Christians were selected from the people of Najrān and they were all led by the three senior-most bishops that included Abu Hārith.

When they first entered the Masjīd of Rasulullāh (s), they asked to pray and Rasulullāh (s) allowed them to pray in a corner of the Masjīd. Thereafter they began meeting with Rasulullāh (s) and asking questions and having debates with him.

A lot of the debates revolved around Nabi Isa b. Maryam ('a) whom the Christians regarded as the "Son of God". Rasulullāh (s) tried to show them that Allāh has no partners and it is very easy for Him to create anyone without a father. Rasulullāh (s) also tried to convince them that Nabi Isa ('a) was in fact never crucified but he was lifted to the heavens by Allāh. Therefore the idea that Nabi Isa ('a) died for the sins of mankind was incorrect.

When Rasulullāh (s) wanted to invite them to Tawhid and to worship Allāh alone, he recited the following verse of Qur'ān:

﴿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 (i.e. those who have submitted to Allāh).'

- Surah Al-i Imrān, 3:64

The Christians argued that they already believed in God. Rasulullāh (s) however told them that some of their beliefs were against the teachings of God, such as worshipping the cross, eating pork, the belief in trinity, and so on.

The bishops argued that it was impossible for anyone to be born without a father. And if Nabi Isa ('a) did not have a human father, than his father must have been God! In response, Allāh revealed to Rasulullāh (s) that he should argue with the bishops saying:

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

Indeed the case of Jesus with Allāh is like the case of Adam: He created him from dust, then said to him, 'Be,' and he was.

- Surah Al-i Imrān, 3:59

In other words, if not having a human father makes a person the son of God then Nabi Adam ('a) did not even have a mother! So Nabi Adam ('a) had an even greater right to be the son of God than Nabi Isa ('a)!

The Bishops had no reply to this and for several days they simply argued stubbornly without reaching any conclusion. Finally, Allāh revealed:

﴿فَمَنْ حَاجَّكَ فِيهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَكَ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ فَقُلْ تَعَالَوْا نَدْعُ أَبْنَاءَنَا وَأَبْنَاءَكُمْ وَنِسَاءَنَا وَنِسَاءَكُمْ وَأَنْفُسَنَا وَأَنْفُسَكُمْ ثُمَّ نَبْتَهِلْ فَنَجْعَلْ لَعْنَةَ اللَّهِ عَلَى الْكَاذِبِينَ﴾

Should anyone argue with you concerning him, after the knowledge that has come to you, say, 'Come! Let us call our sons and your sons, our women and your women, our souls and your souls, then let us pray earnestly and call down Allāh's curse upon the liars.'

- Surah Al-i Imrān, 3:61

This was an invitation to Mubāhala, meaning to come together and pray to Allāh to curse the liars and those who are wrong. Rasulullāh (s) presented this āyah of Qur'ān

to the Christians as a challenge and they asked for some time to think about it. After consulting each other, they said they would accept the challenge.

Later on that day, when the Christian delegation from Najrān returned to their tents, their leader advised them, saying, 'Tomorrow, if Muhammad comes out of his house with the members of his family, then you should never agree to go ahead with the Mubāhala because a liar would never risk putting his own family and loved ones in danger. But if he brings his companions and a large number of people, then you have nothing to fear!'

He knew that the Mubāhala was a question of life and death for both sides. If Rasulullāh (s) had the slightest doubt in the truth of the message of Islām, he would not have given the challenge of Mubāhala to the Christians. If he had the slightest fear of the curse affecting him and the close members of his family, he would not have considered coming out with them to face the Christians.

The next day, on the 24th of Dhul Hijjah, in the desert outside the city of Madina, both parties came out for Mubāhala under the open sky. As the sixty Christian priests and bishops stood on one side, they saw Rasulullāh (s) coming out, holding the hand of Imām Hasan ('a) on one side and carrying Imām Husayn ('a) on the other hand. Behind him was his daughter Sayyida Fātima ('a) and behind her walked Imām Ali ('a).

In obeying the āyah of Mubāhala, Rasulullāh (s) had brought his grandsons as his 'sons', his daughter as his 'women' and Imām Ali ('a) as his 'self'. All the words in the āyah – sons, women and selves – are in plural but Rasulullāh (s) did not bring any of his wives or companions to show that these only were his Ahl al-Bayt ('a) whom Allāh had purified with a thorough purification and kept away from all impurities.

Rasulullāh (s) said to his family, 'when I raise my hand and ask Allāh to descend his curse on the liars, you should all say "Amen"'.

The Christians were spellbound to see this family. Their hearts trembled and they began to shake on seeing the power radiating from Rasulullāh (s) and the Ahl al-Bayt ('a). Their leader asked someone, 'who are these persons, who have come with Muhammad?' and he was told who they were and their relationship to Rasulullāh (s).

One of the Bishops exclaimed, 'By God, I am seeing such faces that if they were to pray to God to move the mountain from its place, God would move the mountain for them. O you people of Najrān, if you engage in Mubāhala with Muhammad then I warn you that all of you will be destroyed and not a single Christian will remain on this earth. It would be best not to engage in Mubāhala with them.'

The Christian delegation therefore backed away and told Rasulullāh (s) that they no longer wished to engage in Mubāhala. Rasulullāh (s) remarked, 'By Allāh, if the Christians of Najrān had engaged in Mubāhala with us, fire would have rained upon them.'

Rasulullāh (s) then gave them two choices: either to accept Islām or to sign a treaty and pay taxes to the Muslim State in exchange for protection of being under the Muslim State.

Many of the Christian priests realized this was the truth but because of the positions they held, they did not want to accept Islām and therefore they signed a treaty in which they promised that the Christians of Najrān would pay a certain amount of taxes to the Muslims every year and also that if there should ever be a war against the Muslims then the Najrān Christians would support and help the Muslims.

In exchange, Rasulullāh (s) promised them in the treaty that the Christians of Najrān would remain under the protection of Allāh and His Rasul (s). The lives, lands and property would all remain safe and it will be the responsibility of Allāh and His Rasul (s) to protect them.

One of the important conditions agreed in this treaty was that the people of Najrān would not deal in usury (charging others interest) of any sort, otherwise Rasulullāh (s) would not remain bound by the treaty with them.

After the Christian delegation returned home, several respectable Christians from Najrān came to Madina and willingly accepted Islām and became sincere Muslims.

The event of Mubāhala is an extremely important part of Islāmic history because it shows who Rasulullāh (s) considered as his Family (Ahl al-Bayt) (‘a) and how special they were to him and to Allāh. Imām Ali (‘a), for example, earned the title of being the nafs (i.e. ‘soul’ or ‘self’) of Rasulullāh (s) after the event of Mubāhala.

Masjid ad-Dirār

The hypocrites in Madina, led by Abdullah b. Ubay realized that they could not plan their mischief against Islām unless they had a base and place where they could meet regularly and recruit more people to join them. But they also knew it was impossible to build their own centre while Rasulullāh (s) was present. So they decided they would build a “masjid” so that no one would suspect their plans.

In other words, the hypocrites realized that in a country in which religion is fully established, the best way to destroy it is to use the name of religion itself because religion can be harmed more using its own name than by any other means.

As Rasulullāh (s) was getting ready to leave for Tabuk, the representatives of the hypocrites came to him and requested him to give them permission to construct a mosque in their own area near Masjid Quba, on the excuse that when the nights were dark or it was raining, their old men and the disabled were not able to walk the long distance between their homes and Masjid Quba. Rasulullāh (s) did not give

them any reply, either in the affirmative or in the negative, and postponed final decision in the matter till after his return from Tabuk.

The hypocrites selected a place in the absence of Rasulullāh (s) and completed the construction of their base as quickly as possible, giving it the name of mosque. On the day Rasulullāh (s) returned to Madina they requested him to perform the opening ceremony of this place of worship by offering a few rak'ahs of prayers there. In the meantime the Archangel Jibrāil ('a) came and informed Rasulullāh (s) of the situation and he called the building "Masjid ad-Dirār" (the Harmful Mosque) since it had been constructed to create differences amongst the Muslims. The verses that Jibrāil ('a) revealed from Allāh to Rasulullāh (s) included:

﴿وَالَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا مَسْجِدًا ضِرَارًا وَكُفْرًا وَتَفْرِيقًا بَيْنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ... وَكَيْخُلْفَنَّا إِنَّ أَرْدْنَا
إِلَّا الْحُسْنَى وَاللَّهُ يَشْهَدُ إِنَّهُمْ لَكَاذِبُونَ . لَا تَقُمْ فِيهِ أَبَدًا ...﴾

As for those who took to a mosque for sabotage and for defiance, and to cause division among the faithful... they will surely swear: 'We desired nothing but good,' and Allāh bears witness that they are indeed liars. Do not stand in it ever!...

- Surah at-Tawbah, 9:107-108

Rasulullāh (s) then ordered this "Masjid" to be demolished completely.

The destruction of *Masjid ad-Dirār* was a serious blow to the hypocrites and thereafter their group broke up and Abdullah bin Ubay, their leader, also died after two months of the Expedition to Tabuk.

Lesson 5

Imām Hasan al-Mujtaba (‘a)

The second divinely-appointed Imām from the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) is Imām Hasan (‘a). His father is Imām Ali (‘a) and his mother is Sayyida Fātima az-Zahra (‘a), the daughter of Rasullāh (s). Imām Hasan (‘a)’s title is ‘al-Mujtaba’ which means ‘the chosen one’.

Imām Hasan (‘a) was born in Madina on Tuesday, the 15th of Ramadān in the year 3 AH. Imām Hasan (‘a) is also the eldest grandson of Rasullāh (s). When he born, Rasullāh (s) himself named him ‘al-Hasan’, on Allāh’s command, before reciting the adhān in his right ear and the iqāmah in his left ear.

When Rasullāh (s) passed away, Imām Hasan (‘a) was only seven years old. In less than six months, his mother passed away too. When he was even younger, he would sit in the masjid and listen to the lectures of his grandfather Rasullāh (s) and then rush home and tell his mother what he had learnt from Rasullāh (s).

Imām Hasan (‘a) lived in Madina all his life until the year 37 AH when his father Imām Ali (‘a) became the Caliph and he moved with him to Kufa. When Imām Ali (‘a) was struck with a poisoned sword on the 19th of Ramadān 40 AH and was martyred on the 21st of Ramadān, Imām Hasan (‘a) became the next Imām of Islām at the age of 37. But after 6 months of living in Kufa, the caliphate went to Mu’āwiya and Imām Hasan (‘a) returned to Madina, the city of his grandfather, and he lived there for the rest of his life. The period of his Imāmah was 10 years, from 40 AH to 50 AH.

Imām Hasan (‘a) was poisoned by the Umayyad Caliph Mu’āwiya b. Abu Sufyān (the father of Yazid) through Ja’dah, one of the wives of Imām Hasan (‘a). Mu’āwiya promised Ja’dah that he would give her 100,000 dirhams and marry her to his son Yazid if she poisons her husband. The evil woman put the deadly poison sent to her by Mu’āwiya in the water of Imām Hasan (‘a). When Imām Hasan (‘a) broke his fast drinking that water, the poison spread through his body so quickly that soon he was lying in bed, coughing and throwing up blood and pieces of his liver. Imām Hasan (‘a) was martyred in Madina on Thursday, 28th Safar 50 AH at the age of 47.

Imām Hasan (‘a) made his will to his brother Imām Husayn (‘a). He told Imām Husayn (‘a) not seek his revenge but to leave the matter to Allāh. He also asked Imām Husayn (‘a) to bury him next to Rasullāh (s) if possible but if it would cause a fight, then he should bury him at the Jannat al-Baqi cemetery.

Imām Husayn (‘a) arranged his funeral and burial rites and along with the other brave young Hashimi men, took the body of Imām Hasan (‘a) to bury him next to Rasullāh (s). The Banu Umayya and ‘Aisha bt. Abu Bakr, the wife of Rasullāh (s) (who used to hate Imām Ali (‘a) very much), all came out to protest that because Uthmān had not been buried next to Rasullāh (s) therefore they wouldn’t allow Imām Hasan (‘a) to be buried there. The Umayyads then shot 70 arrows into the

body of Imām Hasan (‘a). Because of Imām Hasan (‘a)’s orders, Imām Husayn (‘a) and the other Banu Hāshim men could not fight back. They took Imām Hasan (‘a)’s body back home and amidst weeping for their brother, they had to pull out all the arrows and replace the blood-stained shroud (kafan) of Imām Hasan (‘a) with a fresh kafan. Imām Hasan (‘a) was then buried in Jannat al-Baqi in Madina.

In his time, Imām Hasan (‘a) worshipped Allāh the most and was the most learned and the best of mankind. He very much resembled Rasullāh (s) even in his physical appearance and was known for his generosity and courteousness to others.

One of his acts of extreme courteousness and kindness was when a Syrian horseman came to Madina and began cursing and abusing Imām Hasan (‘a). The Imām did not respond to him until he finished abusing him. Then the Imām approached him, greeted him, smiled and said to the man, ‘I suppose you are a stranger here. If you have any difficulties, I can help solve them; if you have a need for anything, I will give you; if you are hungry, let me feed you; if you have no garments, allow me to clothe you; if you have no place to go to, you can be my guest.’

When the man heard this he cried and said, ‘I bear witness that you are the rightful Caliph of Allāh on the earth and Allāh knows whom to appoint!’

And an example of his generosity was shown when a maid once presented him with a bouquet of flowers. The Imām (‘a) freed her from working for him and told her, ‘you are free for the sake of Allāh.’ Then he added, ‘when you are given a gift, return one that is equal to it or even better.’

Imām Hasan (‘a) was in fact blessed with wealth but he preferred to help the poor and needy instead of living a luxurious life. Twice in his life he gave away his entire wealth in charity and began all over again.

Imām Hasan (‘a) also used to have an open house for meals where anyone could come and eat for free every day. All the poor and needy as well as strangers and travelers passing by would stop to eat at his home. Yet he himself ate very simple food just like his father Imām Ali b. Abi Tālib (‘a) did.

Imām Hasan (‘a) went for Hajj 25 times from Madina to Makkah and he used to travel on foot.

Rasullāh (s) said, ‘whoever wishes to see the leader of the youth of paradise should look at Hasan.’ And he also said, ‘whoever loves me should love him’ (i.e. Imām Hasan (‘a)).

One of the companions (ashāb) of Rasullāh (s) relates that Imām Hasan (‘a) once came to the people and greeted them with salām but this companion of Rasullāh (s) did not recognize Imām Hasan (‘a). When Imām Hasan (‘a) left, the companion of Rasullāh (s) asked who he was and when he was told, he ran after Imām Hasan (‘a) and greeted him saying, ‘Salutations be on you, O master!’ The people around asked

him why he had addressed Imām Hasan (‘a) as ‘master’ and the companion of Rasulullāh (s) said, ‘I bear witness that I heard Rasulullāh (s) saying, “Indeed he (Hasan) is a master (sayyid)”.’

Imām Hasan (‘a) and Mu’āwiya

Before Imām Ali (‘a) left the world, he appointed his son Imām Hasan (‘a) as his successor and the next Imām, in accordance with the orders of Allāh and Rasulullāh (s). All the people of Madina and Iraq accepted him as their Imām except for the people of Syria who were ruled by Mu’āwiya b. Abu Sufyān.

Mu’āwiya had been appointed as a governor of Syria even before Imām Ali (‘a), during the times of the Caliphs ‘Umar and Uthmān. When Imām Ali (‘a) became the Caliph in 37 AH, he asked Mu’āwiya to step down and he appointed another man as the governor of Syria but Mu’āwiya refused to step down and even fought Imām Ali (‘a) in the Battle of Siffin in which thousands of Muslims died on both sides.

When Imām Hasan (‘a) became the Imām and Caliph, he still had to face the resistance of Mu’āwiya but he also inherited the so-called followers of Imām Ali (‘a) who were cowardly and unwilling to continue fighting Mu’āwiya.

Imām Hasan (‘a) did not want people to think he was afraid to do what is right or that his policy was different from that of the previous Imām. He therefore immediately ordered the people of Kufa to head out to a place called Nukhayla where the army always assembled before war and to prepare to fight Mu’āwiya again. To Imām Hasan (‘a)’s disappointment, only 4000 men went out to Nukhayla.

Imām Hasan (‘a) returned to Kufa and urged the men to fight for the truth and for justice and to head out to Nukhayla once again. Slowly and sluggishly, with hesitation, the men began to respond. But very few were his sincere Shi’ah. Some were Kharijites and were only there because they wanted to fight Mu’āwiya. Others were there for the war booty and yet others came only because their greedy tribal leaders asked them to come.

Imām Hasan (‘a) addressed this band of Muslims and after praising Allāh and Rasulullāh (s), he urged them to unite and not to be divided. The people misunderstood what he was saying and thought he wanted to compromise with Mu’āwiya. They got very upset even though it was they who had stopped Imām Ali (‘a) from fighting Mu’āwiya at the Battle of Siffin. A riot broke out and the tent of Imām Hasan (‘a) was attacked. One of the men struck Imām Hasan (‘a) on his thigh with an axe and the Shi’ah had to protect the Imām and take him away. The Imām was severely wounded and had to be carried to the nearby town of Madāin to recover.

Still, Imām Hasan (‘a) did not give up his fight for justice and he now appointed Ubayd Allāh b. al-Abbās to lead an army of 12,000 men to fight Mu’āwiya, while he

was injured and recovering. Mu'āwiya now began bribing the commanders in Imām Hasan ('a)'s army and even managed to bribe Ubayd Allāh b. al-Abbās to abandon his army in the night and move to Mu'āwiya's camp in exchange for one million dirhams.

Imām Hasan ('a) was very disheartened to hear of this and he realized that there was no point in senseless killing and fighting because his men would never fight against Mu'āwiya. In the meantime, Mu'āwiya offered Imām Hasan ('a) a truce and said if he was made the caliph, he would agree to any conditions that Imām Hasan ('a) wished to set for him.

In the interest of Islām and to save the Muslims from a civil war and unnecessary bloodshed, Imām Hasan ('a) thus agreed to this and set the following conditions for Mu'āwiya:

1. That as Caliph, Mu'āwiya would rule according to the Qur'ān and the Sunnah of Rasullāh (s).
2. That Mu'āwiya would not appoint a successor. After Mu'āwiya, the caliphate (khilāfah) would return to Imām Hasan ('a) or his brother Imām Husayn ('a).
3. That Mu'āwiya would stop the practice of cursing Imām Ali ('a) from the pulpits and during every Friday prayer sermon that he had instructed the Syrian prayer leaders to do.
4. That the family of Imām Ali ('a) and their Shi'ah would not be harmed by Mu'āwiya and his men.

Mu'āwiya very quickly agreed to all these conditions because he wanted to grab the caliphate but as soon as he had the treaty signed, he declared that he would no longer fulfill any of it and that the truce was 'under this feet'.

Imām Hasan ('a) was of course still the Imām of the time and Allāh's representative on the earth. He moved back to Madina and continued teaching Islām to the sincere Muslims for the next ten years until he was poisoned by Mu'āwiya.

Imām Hasan ('a) & the Myths of his Divorces

One of the great injustices done against Imām Hasan ('a) was the attempt by his enemies to portray him in history as someone who was not brave like his brother Imām Husayn ('a) and that he spent a large part of his life only marrying women and divorcing them. These malicious lies are still found in the books of history of the non-Shi'ah Muslims and it is important to know how these lies began and what the motives were behind them.

We know of Imām Hasan ('a)'s courage and bravery from numerous examples in history. He was a commander in the army of Imām Ali ('a) in the battles of Jamal,

Siffin and Nahrawan and even after the martyrdom (shahādah) of Imām Ali (‘a), he encouraged the Muslims of Kufa to rise against Mu’āwiya but did not find people to support him.

As for the myth about Imām Hasan (‘a)’s divorces, this was spread much later by the Banu Abbās.

After the tragedy of Karbala, the Muslims were horrified with what the Banu Umayya had done with family of Rasulullāh (s). The Banu Abbās used this as an opportunity to rise against the Banu Umayya and to take power by using the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a)’s name. They created uprisings with the slogan, ‘ar-Rida li Aali Muhammad’ (“To please the family of Muhammad!”) and succeeded in overthrowing the Banu Umayya in 132 AH during the time of Imām Ja’far as-Sādiq (‘a).

The descendants of Imām Husayn (‘a) i.e. Imām Ja’far as-Sādiq (‘a) and his brothers did not get involved in the uprising but the descendants of Imām Hasan (‘a) were involved. And in fact, the Banu Abbās initially promised that if they took power, they would make Muhammad Nafs az-Zakiya the Caliph and they even pledged allegiance (bay’ah) to him. Muhammad Nafs az-Zakiya was the son of Abd Allāh the son of Hasan al-Muthanna the son of Imām Hasan (‘a). In other words he was the great-grandson of Imām Hasan (‘a).

However, when the time came to appoint the Caliph, the Banu Abbās leaders ignored the pledge of allegiance they had made and instead they appointed their own family member called Abu al-Abbās as-Saffāh.

Abu al-Abbās as-Saffāh died after ruling for four years and was succeeded by his brother Mansur. Muhammad Nafs az-Zakiya did not forget the pledge of allegiance that Mansur and others had made to him and so began a conflict between the Banu Abbās and the descendants of Imām Hasan (‘a) from the Banu Hāshim.

Muhammad Nafs az-Zakiya and his family members decided they would rise against Mansur. And Mansur and his family decided they would kill all the Hasanids.

Mansur came to Madina in 144 AH and arrested all the family members of Imām Hasan (‘a) and took them as prisoners to Baghdad (Iraq) where he had them tortured and killed. In fact, besides the massacre of Karbala, the Banu Abbās tortured the descendants of Rasulullāh (s) even more than the Banu Umayya.

To ensure that the Muslims would not rise against him, Mansur gave a public speech after the arrest of the descendants of Imām Hasan (‘a) and in the speech, he shamelessly said:

“By Allāh, we left the descendants of Abu Tālib and the Khilāfah; we did not interfere at all. Ali b. Abi Tālib became Khalifa. After him Hasan b. Ali became Khalifa. By Allāh, he did not deserve it. He was offered money, which he accepted; Mu’āwiya sent him a message that he would make him his successor. So, Hasan gave up the Khilāfah and

left the government and power. He left everything to Mu'āwiya, and turned his attention, to women, marrying one woman today, divorcing another one tomorrow. He remained like this till he died in his bed."¹⁸

His speech was of course filled with lies. The Banu Abbās had no power during the khilāfah of Imām Ali ('a). And Imām Hasan ('a) did not give up his right for money but to spare senseless bloodshed. Mansur also ignored the fact that his family had used the name of the Banu Hāshim and the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) to gain power and that he had already pledged allegiance to Muhammad Nafs az-Zakiya.

Mansur then wrote a letter to Muhammad Nafs az-Zakiya and in the letter he again argued that the descendants of Imām Hasan ('a) did not have a right to rule anymore.

After Mansur, others began repeating his lies and false accusations of Imām Hasan ('a) marrying many wives and divorcing them. And each 'scholar' or historian added his own lies to the original lie. One non-Shi'ah historian wrote that Imām Hasan ('a) married 70 wives and divorced them! Then another one came later and said he it was 90 wives. Later, another one wrote it was 250 or 300 wives!! And they wrote nonsense like for example, 'Hasan would often marry four wives in one sitting and then divorce four wives in one sitting!'

The whole fabrication started with the attempt to stop the descendants of Imām Hasan ('a) from opposing the Banu Abbās and the Banu Abbās felt the best way was to spoil the name of Imām Hasan ('a).

We can also prove this accusation is a myth with a simple calculation:

In the early days of Islām and in Arab tradition, a man never chose his own wife as long as his father was alive. So as long as Imām Ali ('a) was alive, only he would arrange the marriages of Imām Hasan ('a). When Imām Ali ('a) became the Caliph and move to Kufa (37-40 AH), Imām Hasan ('a) had three wives and they all remained married to him until his martyrdom in 50 AH. These three wives were:

1. Khawal Fazariya, the mother of Hasan al-Muthanna (who was the grandfather of Muhammad Nafs al-Zakiya).
2. Umm Ishāq bt Talha. She later married to Imām Husayn ('a).
3. Ja'dah bt Ash'ath, the woman who poisoned Imām Hasan ('a).

Given that these three wives of Imām Hasan ('a) were still married to him until his shahādah, it means that Imām Hasan ('a) could only have married one more woman because in Islām, a man is only allowed four wives at a time. We know for example, he had a wife named Farwa, the mother of Qāsim, who was martyred in Karbala.

¹⁸ Al-Mas'udi, Muruj adh-Dhahab, v. 3, p. 226

So given all this facts, how could he “marry four wives in one sitting and divorce four wives in one sitting”?!

Now let us suppose that Imām Hasan (‘a) married a fourth wife and then divorced her and married another and so on. A divorced woman has to wait for a period of 4 months before she gets married again. This period is called ‘iddah and during that time, she is still considered the legal wife of her husband. Which means Imām Hasan (‘a) could not marry a fourth wife as long as his previous fourth wife was observing the ‘iddah period. So even if Imām Hasan (‘a) married another woman as soon as the iddah period of the previous wife was over, the maximum number of wives he could marry in one year (as a fourth wife) would be 3 wives.

Now the period from Imām Ali (‘a)’s shahādah (40 AH) to Imām Hasan (‘a)’s shahādah (50 AH) was 10 years. So even if we stretch our imagination, the maximum number of wives Imām Hasan (‘a) could have married and divorced in 10 years (though hard to even imagine!) would be 30 wives; yet the fabrications mention a minimum of 70 wives!

It is therefore very clear that there were people with lots of imagination but without intellect and piety who were hired to make up these lies and propagate them.

Lesson 6

Imām Husayn (‘a)

After Imām Hasan (‘a), his brother Imām Husayn (‘a) is the Imām from the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) and he is therefore the 3rd successor of Rasulullāh (s) appointed by Allāh. Imām Husayn (‘a) is also the son of Imām Ali b. Abi Tālib (‘a) and Sayyida Fātima (‘a) and therefore the 2nd grandson of Rasulullāh (s).

In Arabic a grandson is called ‘sibt’ and Imām Hasan (‘a) and Imām Husayn (‘a) were sometimes called as-Sibtayn (the Two Grandsons) and sometimes al-Hasanain (the Two Hasans) because Husayn means ‘the little or younger Hasan’.

Imām Husayn (‘a) was born in Madina on the 3rd of Sha‘bān in the year 4 AH. Therefore Imām Husayn (‘a) was a year younger than his brother Imām Hasan (‘a). And just like Imām Hasan (‘a), when he was born, Rasulullāh (s) himself named him ‘al-Husayn’ on Allāh’s command, and then recited the adhān in his right ear and the iqāmah in his left ear.

Imām Husayn (‘a) lived in Madina all his life. He moved to Kufa for two or three years when his father Imām Ali (‘a) was the Caliph from 37 AH to 40 AH but after Imām Ali (‘a) was martyred in 40 AH, Imām Husayn (‘a) returned to Madina with his brother Imām Hasan (‘a).

In the year 50 AH, Mu‘āwiya poisoned Imām Hasan (‘a) through his wife Ja’dah bt. Ash’ath. Imām Husayn (‘a) was very grieved to lose his brother and Imām. Imām Husayn (‘a)’s Imāmah therefore began in 50 AH and lasted for 11 years.

In the year 60 AH, the Caliph Mu‘āwiya died and his wicked son Yazid became the Caliph. Yazid was a cruel, sinful and evil man who drank wine, played chess, loved to play with dogs and monkeys and had no respect at all for Allāh, Rasulullāh (s) or Islām.

When Yazid tried to force Imām Husayn (‘a) to accept him as the caliph and leader of the Muslims (i.e. to pledge allegiance to him), Imām Husayn (‘a) refused and left Madina and went to Makkah. This was in the month of Rajab 60 AH. In Makkah, Imām Husayn (‘a) received a lot of letters from the people of Kufa, inviting him to come to Kufa and help them fight Yazid. Imām Husayn (‘a) knew the people of Kufa cannot be trusted so he sent his cousin Muslim b. Aqil to Kufa to find out more.

Muslim b. Aqil was at first received very well in Kufa. More than 18,000 people pledged allegiance to him and promised to support Imām Husayn (‘a). Muslim therefore wrote to Imām Husayn (‘a) and encouraged him to come towards Kufa.

In the meantime, Imām Husayn (‘a) also found out that Yazid had hired some assassins to murder Imām Husayn (‘a) while he was doing the tawāf of the Ka’bah.

Imām Husayn (‘a) therefore did not stay for Hajj and on the 9th Dhul Hijjah 60 AH, when everyone in Makkah was heading to Arafat, Imām Husayn (‘a) left with his family and few companions towards Kufa.

Yazid found out that the people of Kufa had invited Imām Husayn (‘a). So he sent a brutal and ruthless man called Ubayd Allāh b. Ziyād to Kufa to be his governor and to threaten the people. The people of Kufa were cowards. As soon as Ubayd Allāh entered Kufa, he bribed some of the people of Kufa and threatened others. They all abandoned Muslim b. Aqil and soon Muslim was surrounded by Ibn Ziyād’s men. He fought bravely against the soldiers of Ibn Ziyād until they captured him and he was beheaded and martyred. To scare the people further, Ibn Ziyād had the headless body of Muslim b. Aqil – the ambassador of Imām Husayn (‘a) - dragged around the streets of Kufa.

Before reaching Kufa, Imām Husayn (‘a) found out that his cousin Muslim had been killed. And shortly thereafter, a group of soldiers of Yazid led by Hurr blocked Imām Husayn (‘a)’s way to Kufa and forced him to turn eastwards towards the desert of Karbala. Hurr later on repented and joined Imām Husayn (‘a).

Imām Husayn (‘a) arrived in Karbala on the 2nd of Muharram 61 AH and on the Day of Ashura (10th Muharram 61 AH), the forces of Yazid surrounded Imām Husayn (‘a) and his family members and 72 companions in the desert of Karbala and then brutally killed him and all the men after denying them access to water for three days. Imām Husayn (‘a) and his companions fought their enemies bravely from early morning until late afternoon. All the men with Imām Husayn (‘a) were beheaded after their martyrdom and their heads were put on spears and taken to Kufa and Sham to show the Caliph, along with the women and children who were taken as prisoners. Imām Husayn (‘a)’s body was also trampled by horses on the orders of Ubayd Allāh b. Ziyād, may Allāh curse him.

Imām Husayn (‘a) is buried in Karbala where his shrine stands today. Near him are buried his sons and companions who were martyred with him and not too far away is buried his step-brother Abul Fadl al-Abbās (‘a) who was the commander-in-chief of Imām Husayn (‘a) small army of 72 men that stood with him against the over 30,000 soldiers of Yazid.

Rasulullāh (s) loved his two grandsons Imām Hasan (‘a) and Imām Husayn (‘a) and called them, ‘my flowers in this world’ and also said, ‘Hasan and Husayn are Imāms whether they are standing or sitting (i.e. whether they are fighting or they make a truce).’

A famous hadith of Rasulullāh (s) is:

حُسَيْنٌ مِنِّي وَأَنَا مِنْ حُسَيْنٍ

Husayn is from me and I am from Husayn.

And another well-known hadith of Rasulullāh (s) is:

الحَسَنُ وَالْحُسَيْنُ سَيِّدَي شَبَابِ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ

Al-Hasan and al-Husayn are the leaders of the youth of Paradise.

When Rasulullāh (s) went for Mubāhala against the Christians of Najrān (that we studied in Lesson 4), Allāh revealed to him to take his 'sons' with him and Rasulullāh (s) took Imām Hasan ('a) and Imām Husayn ('a) as his 'sons'. The other Imāms from the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) have the same special status. That is why people always referred to the Imāms as 'Ibn Rasulillāh' meaning 'Son of Rasulullāh!'.

Imām Husayn ('a) was very learned and loved worshipping Allāh. Like his father Imām Ali ('a) he would often pray 1000 rak'ahs a day.

In the middle of the night Imām Husayn ('a) used to carry baskets full of food on his own shoulders and distribute it to the poor and needy. The marks of burden on his shoulders could be seen even after his martyrdom.

Imām Husayn ('a) was a generous and gentle person but would not tolerate anyone violating the laws of Islām.

An example of his generosity is when an Arab came to Imām Husayn ('a) and recited a poem in his praise reciting:

*'None has returned empty-handed
after coming to your door in hope and expectation.
You are generous and dependable.
Your father was the slayer of the wicked.
Had it not been for all that we received from your forefathers,
we would have perished in the fire of Hell.'*

Imām Husayn ('a) gave him 4000 dinārs which was a lot of money at time but even then, Imām Husayn ('a) apologized to him for not giving him more because he did not possess any more to give him.

Islām and its laws survived because of Imām Husayn ('a)'s bravery and courageous stand against Yazid and the Umayyad dynasty. Imām Husayn ('a) is known as 'Sayyid ash-Shuhadā' (The master of all martyrs) and even today he inspires courage to the oppressed and downtrodden to stand up for their rights and to fight oppressors. Imām Husayn ('a) is therefore the saviour of humanity.

Imām Husayn ('a)'s love for Allāh was so intense that even in his last moments in the battlefield, as he lay alone, wounded, thirsty, bleeding and dying on the hot sands of Karbala, he prostrated to Allāh and was heard saying to Allāh:

*I have abandoned all of creation in Your Love,
And I have orphaned my children that I may come to see You;
For it they cut me to pieces because of my love for You,
My heart would still not yearn for anyone besides You!*

Class activity: Watch the “Karbala Scene” video clip (less than 4 minutes) on the Teacher’s DVD. The clip is taken from the “Mukhtar Narrative” series and briefly recounts the battle of Karbala and the family (Ahl al-Bayt) of the Prophet (s) being taken as prisoners.

Also watch the 5 minute animated video clip “H Abbās fetches Water” on the Teacher’s DVD.

Lesson 7

Sayyida Zaynab (‘a) & Hadrat Abul Fadl al-Abbās (‘a)

The Martyrs and Heroes of Karbala

Imām Husayn (‘a) did not rise against Yazid to take power. He rose to wake up the conscience of the Muslim Ummah and to revive Islām again. If Imām Husayn (‘a) had kept quiet, Islām would not have remained today and Yazid would have destroyed all its values and practices.

In the words of Imām Husayn (‘a) himself:

إنني لم أخرج أشراً ولا بطراً ولا ظالماً ولا مفسداً، وإنما خرجت لطلب الإصلاح
في أمة جدي (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم) أريد أن آمر المعروف وأنهى عن
المنكر وأسير بسيرة جدي وأبي علي بن أبي طالب،

I have not risen for power or fame, nor as an oppressor or to create mischief. Indeed, I have only risen to seek reform in the Ummah (nation) of my grandfather (Rasulullāh), blessings and peace of Allāh be on him and his family. I wish to bid good (amr bil ma'ruf) and to forbid wrong (nahi 'anil munkar) and to follow the path of my grandfather and my father Ali b. Abi Tālib (‘a).

It is for this reason that Imām Husayn (‘a) did not take an army with him to Karbala. Instead he took his own family and he hand-picked his companions. Some of his most eminent companions were his childhood friend Habib b. Mudhāhir, Muslim b. Awsaja, and Zuhair b. Al-Qayn. Hurr was one of the first martyrs of Karbala. He was a commander in the army of Yazid and was the first commander to stop Imām Husayn (‘a) from going to Kufa and turning him towards Karbala. But on the Day of Ashura, Hurr repented and asked Imām Husayn (‘a) to forgive him and Imām Husayn (‘a) welcomed him as his guest and promised him Paradise.

Out of the 72 Shuhadā (martyrs) of Karbala, 18 were from the Banu Hāshim and these include Ali al-Akbar, the 18 yr old son of Imām Husayn (‘a); Abul Fadl Abbās and his three brothers, all the sons of Imām Ali (‘a) and step-brothers of Imām Husayn (‘a); Qāsīm, the 13 yr old son of Imām Hasan (‘a); Aun and Muhammad, the young sons of Sayyida Zaynab (‘a); and even Ali al-Asghar, the 6 month old baby of Imām Husayn (‘a).

After the Battle of Karbala, the message of Imām Husayn (‘s) sacrifices were carried to Kufa and Sham (Damascus) and back to Madina by Imām Husayn (‘a)’s only surviving son, Imām Ali Zayn al-Abidin (‘a) and Imām Husayn (‘a)’s sister Sayyida Zaynab (‘a) and all the other women from the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) who taken as prisoners to Kufa and Sham before being released and allowed to return to Madina. Imām Ali Zayn al-Abidin (‘a) was too ill in Karbala to fight with the other men and Allāh kept Imāmah alive through him. We shall study more about our 4th Imām, Imām Ali Zayn al-Abidin (‘a) in Book 10.

Sayyida Zaynab (‘a)

Sayyida Zaynab (‘a) was born on the 1st of Sha‘bān in the year 6 AH. She was the eldest daughter of Imām Ali b. Abi Tālib (‘a) and Sayyida Fātima az-Zahra (‘a) and therefore the granddaughter of Rasulullāh (s) and Sayyida Khadija al-Kubra (‘a). She was also the sister of Imām Hasan (‘a) and Imām Husayn (‘a) and had another sister named Umm Kulthum.

Sayyida Zaynab (‘a) was very close to Imām Husayn (‘a) and she played a very important role in the Tragedy of Karbala. The Message of Imām Husayn (‘a) did not disappear in Karbala because of her and Imām Zayn al-Abidin (‘a). She is therefore often referred to as ‘Shareekat al-Husayn’ i.e. the partner of Husayn.

The name ‘Zaynab’ is made of up two words: ‘Zayn’ (adornment or beauty) and ‘Ab’ (father). ‘Zaynab’ therefore means ‘the Adornment of her Father’. Sayyida Zaynab (‘a) was given this beautiful name by Rasulullāh (s) himself.

Sayyida Zaynab (‘a) was only four and half years old when her grandfather Rasulullāh (s) passed and barely five years old when her mother passed away. She therefore grew up under her father, Imām Ali (‘a)’s care, and soon became very knowledgeable and eloquent like him.

When Sayyida Zaynab (‘a) was taken as a prisoner to Kufa and Sham and she spoke before the tyrant governor Ubayd Allāh b. Ziyād in Kufa and before the tyrant Yazid in Sham, her speeches were so powerful that many people remembered the sermons and speeches of Imām Ali (‘a).

During the days in Madina, before the tragedy of Karbala, Sayyida Zaynab (‘a) used to hold classes for women and teach them tafsir of the Qur‘ān and hadith of Rasulullāh (s).

Sayyida Zaynab (‘a) was married to her cousin Abd Allāh b. Ja‘far at-Tayyār. Ja‘far at-Tayyār was the brother of Imām Ali (‘a). She had four sons and one daughter out of whom, two sons – Aun and Muhammad - were martyred in Karbala when Sayyida Zaynab (‘a) told them to fight and sacrifice their lives for Islām and for their uncle Imām Husayn (‘a)

Sayyida Zaynab (‘a) was extremely knowledgeable, chaste and patient. She was also very kind hearted and she observed her hijāb so well that no one ever saw her in public with her face uncovered until the time she was taken as a prisoner to Kufa and Sham.

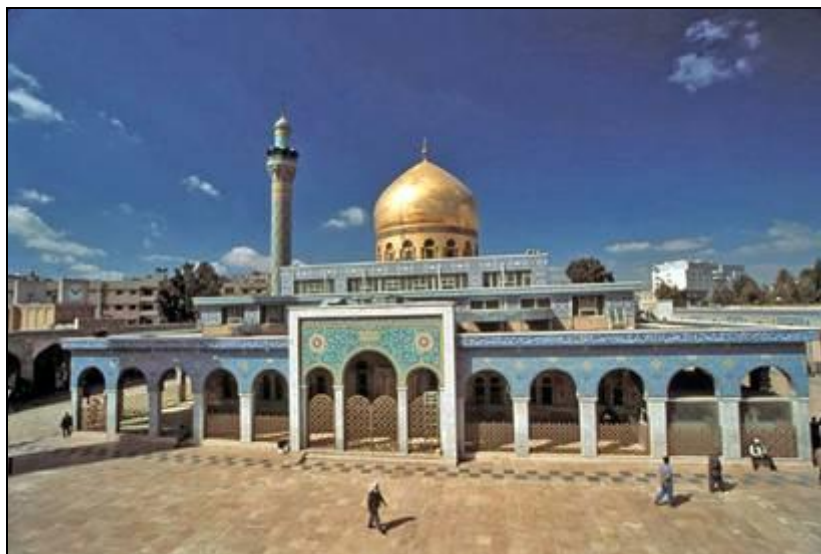
Our fourth Imām, Ali Zayn al-Abidin (‘a) called her, ‘*ālīma ghayr mu’alīma*’ (‘A scholar without a tutor’). Imām Husayn (‘a) respected and valued his sister’s piety so much that when he was leaving her for the last time to go to the battlefield, he said to his sister Zaynab (‘a), ‘do not forget me in your midnight prayers (salāt al-layl).’

Imām Husayn (‘a) also left his 4 yr old daughter Ruqayya (also called Sukaina) in the care of Sayyida Zaynab (‘a) but the little girl could not survive all the hardship and torture and she finally passed away in the prison of Sham and was buried there. Today a shrine and mosque stands over the grave of Sayyida Ruqayya (‘a) in Damascus.

After the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) were released from the prison of Yazid in Shām, Sayyida Zaynab (‘a) held gatherings to mourn for her brother and to let everyone know what Yazid had done to her family. Sayyida Zaynab (‘a) is therefore the one who established the practice of majlis and matam among the Shi’ah of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a).

Sayyida Zaynab (‘a) returned from Damascus to Karbala and then back to Madina where she spent the rest of her life crying for her brother and family. Finally, on a trip to Damascus, she passed away from grief and is buried in Damascus where a large masjid and shrine stands today.

Sayyida Zaynab (‘a) passed away on the 15th of Rajab 62 AH. She was therefore 55 yrs old when the tragedy of Karbala took place and 56 yrs old when she left this world. Sayyida Zaynab (‘a) left behind a message of courage, love and self-sacrifice for the sake of Allāh and she continues to inspire millions of people to this today.



Haram (Shrine) of Sayyida Zaynab (‘a) in Damascus, Syria

Hadrat Abul Fadl al-Abbās ('a)

Hadrat Abbās ('a) was the son of Imām Ali b. Abi Tālib ('a). His mother's name was Fatima bt. Hazam but was more well known as Umm al-Baneen (the Mother of Sons) because she had four sons.

Hadrat Abbās ('a) was born in Madina on the 4th of Sha'bān 26 AH. This means when Imām Ali ('a) was martyred in 40 AH, Hadrat Abbās ('a) was only 14 yrs old and he was 24 yrs old when Imām Hasan ('a) was martyred and 34 yrs old in Karbala when he was martyred.

Hadrat Abbās ('a)'s mother came from a very brave family and Imām Ali ('a) married her after his first wife Sayyida Fātima az-Zahra ('a) passed away because he wanted to have children who would also be brave and who would one day support his son Imām Husayn ('a) in Karbala. Rasulullāh (s) had told Imām Ali ('a) that Allāh will one day bless him with brave sons who will fight in Karbala with Imām Husayn ('a). Hadrat Abbās ('a) and his three brothers were therefore all martyred in Karbala.

Besides being very courageous, Umm al-Baneen was also very loyal and when she came to Imām Ali ('a) house, she asked the children of Sayyida Fātima az-Zahra ('a) to think of her as a maid and not as a replacement for their mother. She also taught her sons to always think of Imām Hasan ('a) and Imām Husayn ('a) as their masters and not as their brothers or equals. Hadrat Abbās ('a) was very fond of his step-brother Imām Husayn ('a) and always addressed him as 'master'.

Hadrat Abbās ('a) was named by his father Imām Ali ('a) and his name 'Abbās' means a 'Lion' similar to 'Asad', which was a title of Imām Ali ('a), who was known as 'Asadullah' (The Lion of Allāh).

Hadrat Abbās ('a) resembled his father Imām Ali ('a) in many ways. In the battle of Siffin, Hadrat Abbās ('a) was barely a teenager but he was very tall and strong and he fought with such force and valour that people thought it was Imām Ali ('a) fighting. Just as Imām Ali ('a) held the standard of the army in all the battles that Rasulullāh (s) fought, similarly Hadrat Abbās ('a) was the standard-bearer of Imām Husayn ('a) in Karbala. The standard (*'alam*) is now always associated with Hadrat Abbās ('a).

Hadrat Abbās ('a) was not just very brave and loyal. He was also very learned and pious. He worshipped Allāh in the nights and he loved to help the poor and needy. He was pure in his thoughts, words and actions and he lived strictly according to the teachings of the Qur'ān and the ahādith of Rasulullāh (s). He was always surrounded by the Imāms of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) and was always obedient to their orders.

Hadrat Abbās was married to Lubāba bt. Ubayd Allāh b. Abbās b. Abd al-Muttalib and he had two sons, Fadl and Muhammad. And because of his older son Fadl, he was also known as Abul Fadl.

Hadrat Abbās ('a) at Karbala

When Imām Ali ('a) was leaving the world in 40 AH, he placed the hands of Hadrat Abbās ('a) in the hands of Imām Husayn ('a) and he told Hadrat Abbās ('a) that Imām Hasan ('a) and Imām Husayn ('a) were the 'sons' of Rasulullāh (s) but he was his son and he should therefore always protect his brothers and never leave their side.

In 60 AH, when Imām Husayn ('a) left Madina for Makkah and then to Karbala at the start of Muharram 61 AH, Hadrat Abbās ('a) was always right besides Imām Husayn ('a).

At Karbala, Hadrat Abbās ('a) wanted to fight the Yazid forces and protect the family of Rasulullāh (s) but Imām Husayn ('a) asked him not to because he did not want Karbala to be about the fight or about winning a war. The Yazid forces in Karbala knew of Hadrat Abbās ('a)'s courage and skills at war. This is why, to fight 72 men, there were 30,000 armed soldiers in Yazid's army. Hadrat Abbās ('a) had a towering figure. When he sat on a horse, his feet would almost touch the ground.

Umar b. Sa'd, may Allāh curse him, was the commander of Yazid's army and second to him was Shimr Dhil Jawshan, may Allāh curse him, who was also a commander in the army of Yazid and was the one who beheaded Imām Husayn ('a). On the Day of Ashura they offered Hadrat Abbās ('a) and his brothers a guarantee of safety if they would leave Imām Husayn ('a). Hadrat Abbās ('a) cursed Shimr and said to him, 'how dare you offer us safety and not the grandson of Rasulullāh (s)? May Allāh curse you and your guarantee of safety.' Shimr turned back in anger and humiliation.

Greater than Hadrat Abbās ('a)'s courage was his loyalty. He taught us that true faith is not about doing what we believe is right but rather about surrendering to the orders of our Imām and doing what our Imām believes is right because our Imām is guided by Allāh.

So when the army of Yazid asked Imām Husayn ('a) to move his tents from the river Furāt, it was very difficult for Hadrat Abbās ('a) to accept being forced to do this but he willingly moved the tents because Imām Husayn ('a) asked him to do so. Hadrat Abbās ('a) was also in charge of planning the defence of Imām Husayn ('a)'s army and he organized the tents in such a manner that the women and children were protected in the middle and the tents of the men were all around them.

On the Day of Ashura, as the companions and family members of Imām Husayn ('a) were martyred one after another, Hadrat Abbās ('a) kept asking Imām Husayn ('a) for permission to fight the enemy but Imām Husayn ('a) held him back because his presence was a source of comfort and safety for the women and children. In the end, when no one was left, Imām Husayn ('a) allowed Hadrat Abbās ('a) to go to the battlefield but only to fetch some water for the thirsty children.

Hadrat Abbās ('a) took a spear, the flag of the army and a water skin and rode out towards the battlefield. He cut through the large number of Yazid soldiers and

scattered them until he got to the river. Even though he was very thirsty himself, Hadrat Abbās (‘a) did not drink any water because Imām Husayn (‘a) and the children waiting for water were still thirsty. Instead he filled the water skin and rode back as fast as he could. When the soldiers of Yazid realized Hadrat Abbās (‘a) was taking water back, they were ordered by Umar b. Sa’d to stop him by any means possible. They tried fighting him but were no match for Hadrat Abbās (‘a). Some of the cowardly men therefore hid behind some of the trees and bushes in the desert and shot arrows at him.

Before Hadrat Abbās (‘a) could reach the tents of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a), both his arms were severed with arrows and the water skin, which he held on to with his teeth because he had no arms, was also pierced. A coward then came from behind and hit Hadrat Abbās (‘a) on the head with an iron mace. Hadrat Abbās (‘a) therefore fell near the banks of Furāt without his arms and was martyred thirsty and oppressed. The cowardly enemies later beheaded him and attacked his body, cutting it into pieces. Imām Husayn (‘a) wept bitterly at the loss of his brother saying, ‘now indeed my back is broken!’

Hadrat Abbās (‘a) is therefore remembered as the standard-bearer (hāmil al-liwā) of Imām Husayn (‘a)’s army but also as the as-Saqqā (the one who provides water) for the children of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a).

Over the years, people have found that whenever they pray to Allāh at the shrine of Hadrat Abbās (‘a) or they ask Hadrat Abbās (‘a) to intercede for them before Allāh, their prayers are answered. Hadrat Abbās (‘a) is therefore also known as Bāb al-Hawāij (“the Door where wishes are granted”) and he shares this title with our seventh Imām, Imām Musa al-Kādhim (‘a).



A monument in Karbala to mark the place where the left arm of Hadrat Abbās (‘a) was severed.