



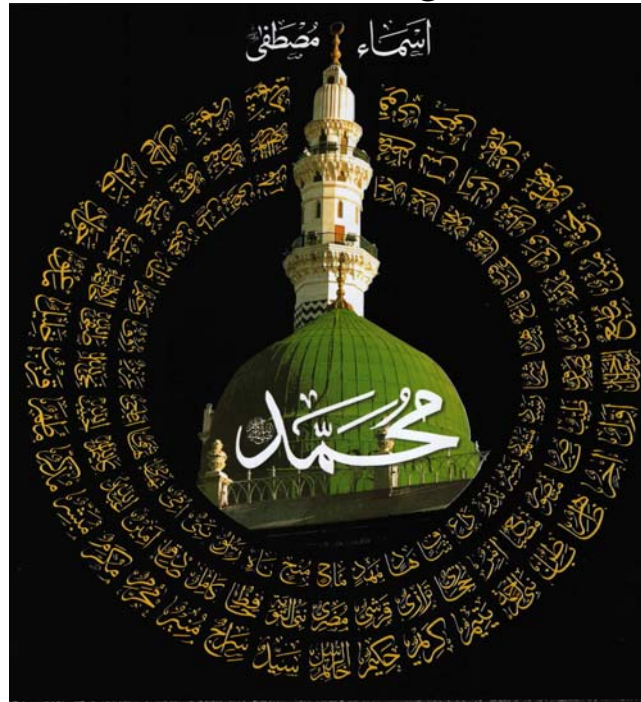
IMAMIA SUNDAY SCHOOL

The most valuable treasure is knowledge and wisdom and the worst misfortune is ignorance". Amir al-Mu'minin, Imam Ali (AS)

STUDENTS NOTES FOR CLASS 11

2006/2007

AKHLAQ



The names of Prophet Muhammad Mustafa (S)

NAME: _____

TEL: _____



Imamia Sunday School

AKHLAQ SYLLABUS – CLASS 11 (16-18 Years Old)

AKHLAQ CLASS 11 - LESSON 1.....	3
HONESTY AND LYING.....	3
AKHLAQ CLASS 11 - LESSON 2.....	7
CHEATING AND EMBEZZLEMENT	7
EMBEZZLEMENT	8
AKHLAQ CLASS 11 - LESSON 3.....	9
LOOKING AT FORBIDDEN (NA-MAHRAM) WOMEN AND MEN.....	9
AKHLAQ CLASS 11 - LESSON 4.....	11
LOVE OF LEADERSHIP HONOUR AND WEALTH.....	11
AKHLAQ CLASS 11 - LESSON 5.....	13
TAKABBUR.....	13
AKHLAQ CLASS 11 - LESSON 6.....	15
VANITY	15
AKHLAQ CLASS 11 - LESSON 7.....	16
DECEITFULNESS & CUNNINGNESS.....	16
AKHLAQ CLASS 11 - LESSON 8.....	18
a) LOYALTY AND BREACH OF PROMISE.....	18
b) YAQEEEN (CERTAINTY)	18
AKHLAQ CLASS 11 - LESSON 9.....	20
EXTRAVAGANCE	20
AKHLAQ CLASS 11 - LESSON 10 & 11.....	22
GOING TO THE CINEMA AND WATCHING FILMS	22
AKHLAQ CLASS 11 - LESSON 12, 13 & 14.....	24
MUSIC AND ITS EFFECTS.....	24
AKHLAQ CLASS 11 - LESSON 15 & 16.....	27
BRIBERY AND USURY	27
PERMISSIVENESS	29
AKHLAQ CLASS 11 - LESSON 19 & 20.....	31
CHASTITY.....	31

AKHLAQ CLASS 11 - LESSON 1

HONESTY AND LYING

Honesty = truthfulness - in words and actions.

Lying = saying something that we know is wrong intentionally.

The perfect example of Honesty is Our Holy Prophet (SAW), who was known as the Truthful one (As-Sadiq) even by his enemies.

Once a man came to the Holy Prophet (SAW) and told him that he was committing many sins like drinking, gambling, stealing, etc. and now he had decided to become a Muslim but could only give up one of the sins at a time.

The Holy Prophet (SAW) told him to give up lying.

The man agreed, thinking he had gotten off lightly.

The next day, when the man went to do something wrong (stealing), he stopped and thought. If he got caught, he would not be able to deny it because he could not lie. And even if he did not get caught, how would he be able to face the Holy Prophet (SAW) and tell him all the wrong he had done. It would be so embarrassing.

So by giving up lying the man also gave up his other sins.

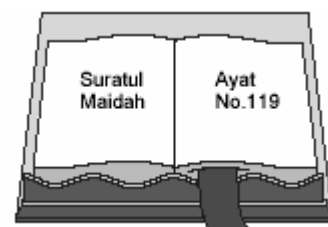
We all know that lying is a great sin; however, sadly, we do not realise how often we are doing it.

One lie usually leads to another, as we try to cover our tracks to keep our lies from being discovered. Therefore, it is better to tell the truth at the beginning; otherwise it will soon develop into a habit.

Allah knows everything, so although we may think we have gotten away with telling a lie without anyone knowing, we have to remember at all times that Allah knows, and we are ultimately answerable only to Him.

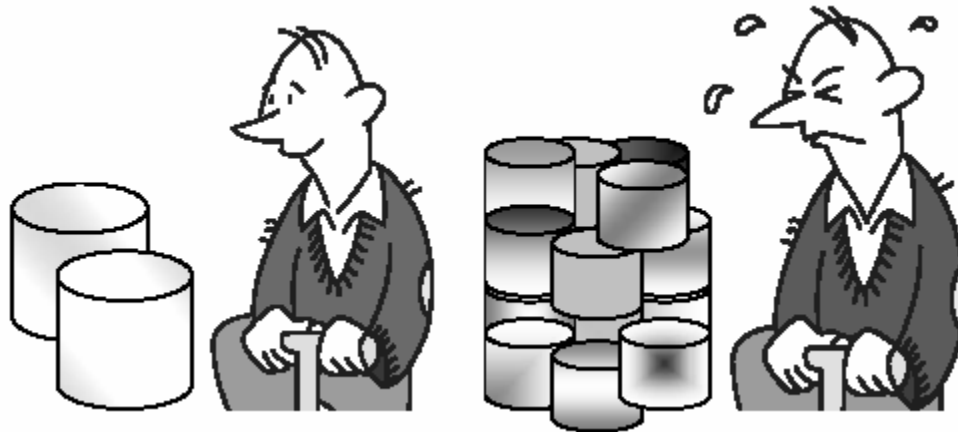
We have all heard about the English saying "Honesty is the best policy", but what does it actually mean? A policy is a long-term strategy. This phrase means that if we make honesty a part of our character it will not only make our life easy but will also include us among the people "liked" by Allah.

Allah says in the Qur'an.. ***This is the Day that shall benefit the truthful ones their truth; for them shall be gardens beneath which rivers flow to abide therein forever;....***



We all know that lying is a great sin. The unfortunate point is that we do not realize how often we are doing it.

Our Sixth Imam (A) said that it is more difficult to repent for many small sins than for one big sin. Remember the story of the two men who came to Imam (A) to repent for their sins.



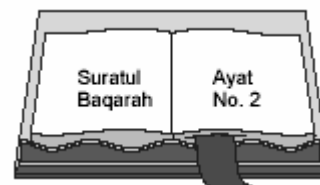
To lie is Haraam because we are **deceiving others**. How many times do we lie in a day? We lie:

- to avoid people or responsibilities,
- to get out of trouble,
- to make ourselves look better, or
- just to get attention.

All the above reasons are bad. If we have done something which gets us into trouble, then we should face it, and not lie our way out of it because that is being very irresponsible.

The Qur'an also tells us not to lie and not to cover up the truth,

"And cover not Truth with falsehood, nor conceal the Truth when you know (what it is)."



Prophet Muhammad (SAW) has also said:

"Beware of association with the liar for he is like a mirage which draws the far one nearer to you and the nearer far from you."

If we get into the habit of lying, then we will lie very often without realizing. We will lie to our family, our friends and everybody we meet. Then one day we will be caught out because we will have trapped ourselves in a corner, and there will be no escape.

Also if we make it a habit of lying, we may start doing other things that are even worse – and cover it up by lying! One evil leads to another.

There should never be any reason to avoid the truth. If we are honest in your dealings with people, if we have nothing to hide, then we should be able to speak the truth without fear.

"A person who is not honest cannot have a perfect and strong faith". Prophet Muhammad (SAW).

"I recommend two things to you: one of them is truthfulness and the other is honesty, for these two are the key to sustenance." Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (AS).

Lying is the doorway to any number of evils. But we may distinguish between lying in the sense of teaching a falsehood about reality (E.g. propagating atheism or a false doctrine) and lying in the sense of deliberately misleading and deceiving another about a matter of which he has certain knowledge.

The first type of lie may in fact be based on honest conviction; the second type of lie is deliberate deception. Untruth in the former sense may be classed as ignorance. Even so, often there is only a short distance between ignorance about truth and lying purposely.

What do other religions say about lying?

"Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord. " **Judaism and Christianity: Proverbs 12.22.**

"Do not assert with your mouth what your heart denies." **Taoism: Tract of the Quiet Way.**

"I tell you, on the day of judgment men will render account for every careless word they utter; for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned." **Christianity: Matthew 12.34-37.**

"There is no evil that cannot be done by the liar, who has transgressed the one law of truthfulness and who is indifferent to the world beyond." **Buddhism: Dhammapada 176.**

"All things are determined by speech; speech is their root, and from speech they proceed. Therefore he who is dishonest with respect to speech is dishonest in everything." **Hinduism: Laws of Manu 4.256.**

"A liar lies to himself as well as to the gods." **Buddhism: Sutra 27.**

When a person maintains honesty and truthfulness, they become characteristics of all his actions and he is righteous.

Scholars have identified **six aspects of truthfulness** that a Muslim must maintain:

- **Refraining** from telling any lies.
- **Sincerity of intention** - which means not to say something verbally and have something different in mind.
- **Truthful resolve** – which means if we intend to do something good, we should strengthen our resolve to do it, especially when the chance presents itself.
- **Acting** on what one has resolved.
- **Sincerity of action.**
- **Sincerity of attitude** – which means that if we say that we rely on Allah, we actually mean it and it is endorsed by our actions.

A person who combines **all** the six aspects of truthfulness is a true believer. Moreover, he is bound to be good, because truthfulness encourages every aspect of righteousness.

When a person maintains truthfulness, he earns the title of “truthful” not merely among his fellow human beings but also with Allah. This is a verdict passed on him and publicized among angels and other creatures of Allah.

Conversely, falsehood leads to evil, since a liar thinks that he can cover up any evil action he commits with a lie. If, he is successful once, he is encouraged to do it again.

In actual fact, every human being is on a journey that lasts throughout his life. He is either moving towards heaven or towards hell. Every deed he does is a step in his journey. He chooses his directions. When he dies, he reaches the position towards which he has moved progressively. He is not admitted into Heaven or thrown in Hell all of a sudden.

It is important to realize that Islam abhors lying in all situations. It should be noted however that there are cases when telling a lie is acceptable. However in normal situations, telling a lie is forbidden, whether it is said in earnest or in jest.

Exercise:

1. Why do people lie?
2. How does Prophet Mohammad (P.B.U.H) explain the demerits of lying?
3. How does 6th Imam show the importance of trust?

AKHLAQ CLASS 11 - LESSON 2

CHEATING AND EMBEZZLEMENT

To cheat means to gain something by **trickery**.
Cheating is **HARAAM**.

There are many different ways of cheating, a few examples are:

- a) To hide the defect of a thing one sells to another person.
- b) To copy someone during an exam.
- c) To borrow money off a person and then never pay it back.
- d) To collect money for a charity, and then spend it on yourself.

In English there is a saying,

"The end justifies the means"

This means that no matter what you do, it doesn't matter as long as the end result is good.

In Islam this is **NOT** the case. If you have to cheat to do something good, it is better not to do the good deed.

Example:

I want to donate some money to the mosque. Now, if I go around telling people that I am in hardship, and that I need money, and I donate the money which I am given to the mosque, will I get thawaab?

The answer is NO. Instead of getting thawaab, I will get gunah (sins) for cheating the people.

One thing about cheating is that no matter how many people you cheat, or how well you can cheat, you can **NEVER** cheat yourself or Allah. If you are cheating someone, your conscience (the positive aspect of the nafs) will realize immediately.

Some people say that it is OK to cheat people, as long as they are not Muslims.

This is NONSENSE!. All people have rights, and to cheat them out of their rights is forbidden, it does not matter who they are or what they believe in.

THE REASON WHY CHEATING IS **HARAAM** IS BECAUSE:

- 1) YOU ARE GAINING SOMETHING AT SOMEONE ELSE'S EXPENSE.
- 2) YOU ARE GAINING SOMETHING WITHOUT WORKING FOR IT.

Islam is very strict on justice. If you are to get something good, it must be through your

own deeds, and not through someone else's.

EMBEZZLEMENT

This means to cheat someone by committing some type of fraud, or to divert money by deceit for one's own use.

This is a very common thing among large organizations, especially in the world today where very few people are guided with moral values. Even in such cases where the person committing the crime is aware of his actions, and his conscience is warning him of the act, he will silence himself, stub out his conscience by saying that it is allowed during business, because business is played by a different set of rules!

Embezzlement is haraam for many reasons, amongst which the unfair gain at someone else's loss is of primary importance.

We must always remember, no matter what action we do, Allah is a witness, watching over us. We should not commit any unlawful act for a variety of reasons, some include Taqwa (to be ashamed of gaining Allah's displeasure), and fear of the day of Judgment (Allah is not cruel, HE will, if HE wishes, forgive those sins committed accidentally, or repented for, but due to His justice, how can we expect forgiveness for those sins we do on purpose against others?).

Exercise:

1. What is the difference between cheating & embezzlement?
2. Why Cheating & embezzlement are Haraam?

AKHLAQ CLASS 11 - LESSON 3

LOOKING AT FORBIDDEN (NA-MAHRAM) WOMEN AND MEN.

In Islam there is a great emphasis on virtue and piety. This is demonstrated by the importance of hijab.

Hijab does not mean to wear black all the time, it is a form of cover which protects **BOTH** men and women from staring at each other and help to maintain their dignity. Hijab allows men and women to talk on equal terms, since the man does not get distracted by the lady's beauty, and maintains a respectful distance from her so that he concentrates on what she says. The actual presence of the hijab causes the man to lower his glance.

Hijab comes in two stages, the first stage, which applies to both men and women is the most important. This stage is to **LOWER THE EYES**. This means that a man should not look at women who are na-mahram (forbidden) to him. This does not mean that you are not allowed to see or talk to a lady, but means that you should confine your gaze within the boundaries of modesty, ie you should not STARE at her face, you should avoid looking directly into her eyes.

The second stage applies to ladies only, and is the covering of the hair, and wearing of loose clothes which do not reveal the shape of her body.

Prophet Muhammad (S) has said that, the first look you take is for you, and the second look is against you.

This means that when you look at something, ie a lady without hijab, or anything else haraam, the first look is for you to see what it is, so that you know whether it is good or bad. If it is bad and you look a second time, then it is against you, and you are committing a sin.

Prophet Isa (A) has said:

"To look at a lady with lust in your eyes is to commit adultery with her in your heart."

This shows that to stare with desire at a lady is a sin which should be avoided. You cannot just say that you are enjoying the view, because your niyyat will be corrupt (bad).

Why is it forbidden to look at na-mahram women? Allah has told us that to enter heaven, we must control two things,

- a) our appetite (what we eat)
- b) our desires (what our nafs wants)

We control our appetite, by refraining from haraam food. In the same way we control our soul by refraining from haraam scenes. The way haraam food is bad for our body, haraam scenes are bad for our soul.

The soul is like pure clean water, and that which holds it (our body), is like a vase. Whatever we see through our eyes enters the water of our soul. If we look at bad things, then we are polluting (making dirty) the water and so our soul becomes dirty and this makes us do other things even worse.

We have to keep our soul clean by only allowing those things which are clean to enter our soul.

Not only should men avoid close contact with women who are unrelated to them, but the women should also avoid such contact with men, whether it is at school, university or on the street.

Whenever two people are present together, then Shaytan quickly becomes the third person, and starts trying to plant his evil thoughts

Exercise:

1. What is the proper meaning of hijab?
2. What are the two stages of hijab?
3. Why it is forbidden to look at na-mahrum? Explain.

AKHLAQ CLASS 11 - LESSON 4

LOVE OF LEADERSHIP HONOUR AND WEALTH

The love a person has for being famous stems from a desire to be better than others, and a desire to be admired by people.

If you look around, you will always see people who strive very hard to do things, either they work hard for money, practice for sports, or study for exams. If you ask some of them why they are working so hard, they will say that it is because they want other people to notice them.

This idea is totally against the principles of Islam. Everything, every act one does, should be totally for the pleasure of Allah, ('lillah'). This does not mean that we must sit and pray 24 hours a day, but means that we should work to make ourselves better so that we may use our talents to help others, in whatever field we choose.

This love for power and wealth is another of the lower desires that a human being possesses. Communities have fought and families have broken over people who are fighting for some sort of status above others.

Imam Ali (A) has said:

"Desire tends to the destruction of the understanding."

This can be seen in real life where people do crazy things just to get power and wealth; they cheat and fail to understand that what they are doing is wrong. They lose their reason and become one track minded.

There is nothing wrong in being a leader; there is nothing wrong in being rich or famous, or having any thing valuable. The only condition which a person needs when having any of the above, is taqwa (awareness of Allah's presence). We must always remember that it is Allah who has given us our gifts and He has given them to us so that we can use them to help others.

This applies from school to when we are all adults; we must never try to become top or rich just for others to praise us.

One important point which not many people understand is that if you are the type of person who possesses any quality, whether money or fame, you will become a leader automatically if you possess taqwa. You will not have to chase leadership, it will chase you.

Imam Ali (A) has also said:

"Love for the dunya is the head of all evil."

which means that if you are working for things with ONLY this life in mind, then your desires will take you over and you will commit one sin after another.

He also said:

"The love of the present world is the source of all misery."

Which means that if ALL your attention is focused on becoming great by whatever means (wealth, leadership, and honor) in this world only, then we might get all our worldly wishes, but we will never really gain happiness.

"There are people who worship Allah for the sake of (fulfilling their) desires and that is the worship of business people. And verily there are those who worship Allah out of fear of Him, this is the worship of slaves. But there are those who worship out of thanks giving to Him, this being the worship of free minded people and is the best of worship"

No matter how rich we are we can never buy happiness or love.

That is when we realize that the richest thing of all is contentment, which we can only gain by following Allah's command and getting close to Him.

Exercise:

1. How does Desires tend to the destruction of understanding?
2. How do we control the desires which destroy our taqwa?

AKHLAQ CLASS 11 - LESSON 5

TAKABBUR

Takabbur means to have pride, to think that you are above, or superior to someone else. This is a very dangerous attribute to have, and leads only to downfall.

If you are good at something, or achieve good results in something, don't start thinking too much of yourself.

When you accomplish something good, your nafs starts to tell you that you are great, and that you are better than the rest. It makes you think that there is no one else like you, and that you have reached the top.

When this happens, you start to believe that you are the greatest, and then you will not try harder to become better.

Takabbur enters our hearts very secretly, it tries to hide from us, and takes our thoughts over quietly that is why Prophet Muhammad (S) has told us:

"Pride enters the heart like a black ant crawling over a black rock at night."

The first thing that you should do when you achieve something good is to thank Allah. Just by saying 'Alhamdulillah', you will stop your nafs from praising yourself. Remember, it was through Allah's help that you achieved it, so thank Allah instead of forgetting, and thinking that you did it all by yourself. By thanking Allah, we are including Him in all aspect of our lives, and sharing our joy and happiness with Him, and recognizing that it is through His bounty that we have achieved success.

In the du'a after Asr prayers we say to Allah

"Allaahumma maa binaa min ni'matin faminka"

"My Lord , whatever talents I have got, it is only from You."

When Allah created Prophet Adam, he told all the creatures to bow down before Adam. Iblis refused, saying that **I am BETTER than him**. This was the first takabbur, the first pride, and it was because of this that Iblis is called Shaytan, one who is removed from Allah's Pleasure.

We all achieve something good in our lives. It doesn't mean that we should not be happy. We should be happy, we should feel glad, we should laugh and enjoy, but we should also remember that it was Allah who helped us, and so we should thank Him. What Islam does not like is that we think "Oh, I am fantastic; there is no one else in the world like me. What a brilliant person I am." If we think like this, then Allah will also remove us from His pleasure, and then we will fall, just like Shaytan.

Allah has created us all equal, how can one person say that he is better than another?

Exercise:

1. What are the demerits of Takabbur?
2. How can we avoid Takabbur?

AKHLAQ CLASS 11 - LESSON 6

VANITY

Vanity means to have false ideas about how great you are, about your appearance, or about yourself.

When a person becomes vain, they spend a large amount of time making sure they look good, not a hair is out of place, clothes are new and beautiful. All this is to make others think *"That person really looks the business!"*

Vanity is harmful, since it leads to pride, and it stops you from becoming better. If you spend plenty of time over your own appearance without any reason, then it is bad akhlaq, and this will make you think very highly of yourself. You start spending so much time on your dress and image (outside) that you forget about spending time to improve your character (inside), you forget about Allah, the One who gave you all your qualities.

The Prophet (S) said

"There will come a time when people will have unclean inner selves, but BEAUTIFUL APPEARANCES; they will have greed for the worldly affairs (things) and they will not wish for that which is with Allah. Their religion will be for show. Then they would pray like a drowning one, and Allah will not answer their prayer."

There is nothing wrong with looking and dressing well, but there should be limits to the amount of attention you pay to yourself. If you start using mousse, cream and gel just for an ordinary occasion such as going to school or with friends, and if this takes up time, then you should try and avoid it. If you have an appointment, an interview, or some other occasion which requires you to be presented in a special way, then it is perfectly acceptable to spend more than your usual amount of time on dressing.

The most important thing to note is that you should not dress up to impress others, to show off or to act as something which you are not. This will only make you think that you are great and then you will be fooling yourself as well as others. Be happy with what you are, and everyone else will also be happy with you.

Exercise:

1. What is vanity and how it is harmful?
2. How do we get rid of vanity?

AKHLAQ CLASS 11 - LESSON 7

DECEITFULNESS & CUNNINGNESS

One of the fundamental principles of living is to co-operate and mix with people so that both groups benefit from one another, and both are satisfied.

We are all after the same goal, to attain the pleasure of Allah and Inshallah enter His eternal paradise. This makes us all like partners, working together to achieve the same ends.

To be deceitful or cunning means to put yourself in a better position by tricking or lying to someone else, while at the same time making them think that you are helping them.

This is why it is an extremely bad act and can not be forgiven by anyone else, but the victim himself.

To gain at someone else's expense is never allowed in Islam.

To commit deceit, you have to make the person believe one thing while the opposite is true.

If I was to tell you that this stamp is very rare and worth \$5000, and I'll make you a deal by selling it for \$2500.

If you bought it and then found out it was worth only \$5 then you have been DECEIVED by me.

A lot of people do this in real life and claim that in business, everything is allowed!

This sort of business will lead to ruin. Your name will be spoilt and your heart will become mean and no one will trust you.

Once you have lost trust then you will never find happiness in your life, nor when you rise on the Day of Judgment.

Not only do we have to be fair and true, but we must be aware of those people who try and deceive us!!

There are people who pretend to follow Islam, but try and lead us away from the right path. When anything good happens to you, they pretend to be happy, but really, they are very jealous and mean. These people are just trying to deceive you into thinking they are good.

Allah explains to us in the Holy Qur'an (Surah 3 ayat 120):

*"If aught that is good befalls you, it grieves them; but if some misfortune overtakes you, they rejoice at it. But if you are constant and do right, not the least harm will their **CUNNING** do to you, for God compasses round about all that they do."*

Shaytan is always trying to deceive us. He makes us think so much of this world that we forget that we are here only temporarily. But Allah explains to us, in the above verse and in the next, that if we believe and have faith, no one will be able to trick us (Surah 4 ayat 76)

"Those who believe fight in the cause of God, and those who reject faith fight in the cause of evil: so fight you against the friends of Satan: feeble indeed is the CUNNING of Satan."

The worst thing to be tricked in is your belief. When people come to you and talk to you, and say that what you are following is wrong, think about what they say. Do not follow them blindly, but question yourself and try and understand your faith. Allah tells us that there will always be someone trying to guide us astray, we should be careful and avoid these people (Surah 6 ayat 112/3),

*"Likewise did We make for every Messenger an enemy, evil ones among men and Jinns, inspiring each other with flowery discourses by way of **DECEPTION**... To such (deceit) let the hearts of those incline, who have no faith in the Hereafter: let them delight in it, and let them earn from it what they may."*

We are told in this ayat, the ONLY PEOPLE who will be deceived are the ones who have no belief in the next life, and in the Day of Judgment. If we keep firm on our path, Allah will guide us through all dangers and trickery.

When a person commits deceit, they might gain for a little while, in this world. They might gain money or fame, but in the long run, they are losing because on the Day of Judgment, the person they tricked will be in front of them, and only then will they be sorry, but it will be too late!!

(Surah 6 ayat 123):

"Thus have We placed leaders in every town, its wicked men, to plot (and burrow) therein: but they only plot against their own souls, and they perceive it not."

The points to learn from this is that if you commit deceit, you are harming yourself in the long run. You should never let others suffer from your gain. If you do, that is selfishness and going against the creatures of Allah, and therefore against Allah Himself.

AKHLAQ CLASS 11 - LESSON 8

a) LOYALTY AND BREACH OF PROMISE

b) YAQEEEN (CERTAINTY)

Loyalty means to be faithful to ones duties (promises).

Since loyalty is a word that we very often use, we tend not to dwell upon it much, however its importance in Islam can be shown by the following hadith from Prophet Muhammad (S):

"He who is untrustworthy has no faith"

Loyalty is part of the akhlaq that Islam has taught us, and to have loyalty makes a person higher (more dignified) in the eyes of Allah.

We know that the opposite of loyalty is betrayal. This is to break your promise, or let someone down. The Holy Prophet has also said:

"There is no higher kind of betrayal than to relate an incidence to your fellow brother whilst he believes you whereas you have lied to him."

This shows that to control you tongue (speech) is an important part of loyalty; however, loyalty covers the performance of actions as well.

When you make a promise, then you are bound by it. Others are then relying on you, and you can not let them down. If you are not sure that you can do what ever you said, then don't promise. Just say that you will try to do it.

People often make promises which they do not or cannot keep.

What do you think are the reasons for this? Why do people make such promises? Can you think of some examples?

YAQEEEN (CERTAINTY)

We have discussed faith, and eiman.

Yaqeen means to have certainty, to be sure, and it is a higher stage than eiman.

We are told that there is a God, have we seen Him ? When we read and learn, and when we are explained we get faith, and we believe that God then exists. Then we use our logic, we see that God must exist, we see His signs all around us, and we know through our intelligence that, yes there can only be one God, and He must exist. This is faith.

When we have faith, we then try harder to obtain Allah's pleasure, we talk to Him from our prayers, we talk to Him when we are in need, and if we are sincere enough, if we mean

what we say, we will feel His answer. Allah will talk to us. He will not talk to our ears, but will talk directly to our hearts.

That is why when Imam Ali (A) was asked "Do you worship a God that you cannot see?"

Imam (A) replied "No, I would never worship something that I can not see. I see Allah with my heart, not with my mind."

This shows that when we reach the state of yaqeen, (Inshallah), we will know for a fact that Allah is there. We will have felt his presence everywhere, and we will be sure without doubt. Then Shaytan will not be able to put doubts in our head.

That is why Yaqeen is such a high stage. One which can only be reached with patience, and understanding.

AKHLAQ CLASS 11 - LESSON 9

EXTRAVAGANCE

Extravagance means to use too much of something when it is not necessary. It means WASTAGE.

The Arabic word for this is pronounced as *ASRAAF*.

Allah explains to us in the Holy Qur'an, Surah 5, ayat 90:

"O you who believe! Make not unlawful the good things which God has made lawful for you, But commit not excess for God does not love those given to excess."

In Islam, we place great importance on stopping wastage.

Most children will remember that when they leave food on their plates, then they are told not to commit Asraaf. However, Asraaf does not apply only to food, although that is an important area.

When non-Muslims see a Muslim finish every morsel of food on his plate, they think that this person is greedy, or that he is stingy. This just shows a lack of understanding on the other person's part.

Islam teaches us to have respect for all things that Allah has blessed us with, and what is more worthy of respect than the sustenance (food) that HE has provided?

This means that we should respect food, by not abusing it. We should not play with food, even for fun. We should never abuse it in any way, and should NEVER throw it away unless it is spoiled. If we throw food away without reason, then we are throwing away a gift from Allah. This shows how ungrateful we are.

If I was to give you a present, and you were to throw it away in front of me, this would obviously be due to lack of respect for me and my present. Similarly with food.

If we are hungry, no one is saying that we should not eat. However we should put only as much on our plate as we think we will be able to finish. If we are still hungry after finishing, we can put some more. But how many times have you seen people who are hungry, put a heap of food on their plates, eat half of it, and throw the rest away!!

How many people are there in the world who do not have enough to eat, and don't even know where their next meal will come from. What right have we to take food for granted so as to be able to throw it away, as if it were rubbish.

This extravagance is very often seen in day to day life. Even buying food to eat outside, when you know there is food waiting at home is a form of Asraaf.

Islam explains to us that to waste is not allowed. Allah has given us whatever wealth we possess. No one is telling us not to spend it. No one is telling us not to buy expensive things, cars, clothes, food.

No one is refusing us to buy good things, food or clothes.

The Holy Qur'an itself says in Surah 7 ayat 31.

"O children of Adam! wear your beautiful apparel at every time and place of prayer: eat and drink: but waste not by excess, for God does not love the wasters."

It is not wrong to buy valuable things if WE ARE GOING TO USE THEM. However, to spend money unnecessarily on something of no use, this is not allowed.

Why are there people who spend extravagantly on purpose, what are their reasons?

Reasons for Asraaf include,

- 1) for the sake of showing off to others.
- 2) buying something just because your neighbor has it, (keeping up with the Jones)
- 3) having no value for wealth, buying for the sake of buying.

All these reasons are abominable and show the person has lack of responsibility with his/her wealth. When, on the day of Judgment, Allah will ask "How did you spend the wealth with which I provided you ?", the people who have committed Asraaf will have no excuse, and will earn the displeasure of Allah.

If we think of Allah whenever we spend the money He has given us, and think whether He would approve of our purchase, than we will never commit Asraaf.

AKHLAQ CLASS 11 - LESSON 10 & 11

GOING TO THE CINEMA AND WATCHING FILMS

In our society there has always been misunderstandings about the cinema and the theatre.

The cinema is a place where films are shown to the public. People often say that the cinema is Haraam, Haraam, Haraam.

The reason some people say this is because when your parents were your age, the cinema was predominantly used for films which contained songs and dance. For this reason, the cinema was looked at as Haraam and those who went there were told that they should not.

Today, we have television inside our houses, and can see anything we want to. Thus the question of watching or not watching does not apply any more; it is rather a question of what we watch.

Think of it as a restaurant. To go to a restaurant to eat becomes Haraam only if the food they serve is Haraam. However if the restaurant serves halal food, then there is no problem to go and eat there. Therefore it doesn't matter whether we go to a restaurant or a not, it is what we have to eat that is important.

In the same way it doesn't matter whether we go to the cinema or not, but it is IMPORTANT what we watch there.

If we go to see a film which shows offensive scenes such as people acting shamelessly, wearing hardly any clothes, then of course it becomes Haraam.

If we go to watch films which are of educational interest or for fun, where we actually gain in some way without seeing anything Haraam, then we are allowed to see those films.

We should not go so often that we just pass our time, and waste it.

Unfortunately, the majority of films today are aimed at the desires of the youth. These films show scenes which encourage youngsters to think and practice those thoughts which should be kept under control by the youngsters own will power. These films are Haraam because they influence the actions of the one who watches them. They make the desires of the nafs so strong that it becomes very difficult to control, and eventually, the mind will give in and become the slave of our desires rather than our intellect.

One point which people often bring in is that today, all films and programs contain music. If the film contains music such that the music is one of the important parts of the film, then those programs should be avoided.

However if the music is in the background, and is not the central theme of the program, then it is permissible to watch them. This is because according to the fatwa (verdict) of both Ayatollah Al Khomeini (may Allah rest his soul) and Ayatollah al Khui (may Allah keep him well), background music is allowed.

This also applies to watching television in our own homes.

At the end of the day, if we want to go to see a film, we must ask ourselves why. If the film will be fun, but will still contain sections which would go against our principles, then we should avoid them. In the cinema, you are exposed to whatever is on the screen, you can not switch it off like a television, nor can you forward it like on a video. It is very rare to find a film that contains no sections which should be avoided.

You can't trick yourself by saying, I don't know what its about. There are films which are obviously funny, but make jokes which are filthy and crude. Those are not the films you should watch, since they provide a negative influence over you.

Then there are films which are decent, and respectable, where you will gain an insight into human behavior, develop your imagination, or learn and at the same time have fun. Those films are allowed since they have a positive effect.

In this way Allah has given you a test, can you control your nafs from tempting you to watch X rated films, or will it control you?

There is no 18 certificate or Adult rating in Islam, if a film is obscene, shameless or pornographic than it is Haraam for all to see, whether they are 5 years old or 50.

You will notice, at first it will be very difficult to refrain, but as soon as you make your mind up and be firm, you will feel as if your character has improved a hundred times, and you will not even be tempted any more. You will ask yourself, how can I have let that nafs of mine have so much control over something which I can now see to be so childish and so material?

AKHLAQ CLASS 11 - LESSON 12, 13 & 14

MUSIC AND ITS EFFECTS

Islam does not recommend or encourage music amongst a community. This may sound a drastic step to take, but we shall discuss some of the reasons in the text below.

Why do people listen to music? It is obvious they enjoy it, and the reasons for this may include passing time, as a form of relaxation, it is a fashionable habit to have.

There may not seem anything wrong in that, but as we go into further detail the reasons should become clear.

First of all, we must try to understand the concept of Halaal and Haraam.

Human beings are highly versatile and can adapt to different situations easily, so it is very rare that everyone will react to an influence in exactly the same way. Thus all human beings may not be affected by a **tiny bit of alcohol**, or a **little music** to the same degree.

However, Islam is a religion for all the people **AS WELL** as the individual. Therefore, if there is something that affects a large percentage of the people in an undesirable manner, such as alcohol causing drunkenness and disorder, then Islam will make it Haraam at the very beginning on the basis that **"PREVENTION IS BETTER THAN CURE."** This means that it is better to stop something bad happening in the first place rather than doing something about it after it happens. This approach is common sense.

Allah also says in the Holy Qur'an, that some things in small quantities do have good effects for us, but the bad effects outweigh the good, therefore overall it is harmful and so forbidden.

They ask you concerning wine and gambling. Say: "In them is great sin, and some profit, for men; but the sin is greater than the profit.".... Thus doth God make clear to you His Signs: in order that you may consider. Surah 2:219

Now back to music. What is undesirable about music?

Music has an affect on the mind and the body. The effect depends on the type of music.

With some types of music, soft and soothing, one relaxes and opens up the mind, closes the eyes, and lets the music "flow" through the body. This causes the heart beat and other electric signals of the body to start adapting to the beat of the music, and this can cause disorder.

With other types of music, the mind is almost possessed. Very often, with loud music, played at discos, and parties, the people begin to dance and move in rhythm to the music. This causes them to lose control of their nafs, so that they dance with partners, coming very close and losing all sense of shame, thinking and committing acts which

are the result of their desires.

It is also this type of music which tends to groups such as head bangers and heavy metal who lose all control over their actions and morals under the influence of such music.

Music then becomes like a drug, a person requires more and more of it and finds it very difficult to stop, and to obtain the same effect, they play the music louder and louder, this is bad for the ears as well as causing even more effect on the nervous system.

One of the more important reasons, is the effect music has on society. Many youngsters growing up in the western world identify themselves with a certain band and club. You will see posters in their bedroom, their clothes, and personality changes to emulate this idol. When you then see the screaming, dancing atmosphere in the concerts, you can imagine what powerful effect music then has on the mind and the body.

It is unfortunate that the society we live in, defines enjoyment as anything which makes you forget the world. Music, alcohol, drugs.

They all have two common factors,

(i) they are an escape from reality, and (ii) they are addictive. What does this tell you about the level of contentment in a normal life?

Many of the singers and groups can be seen to use music to arouse the desires which should be controlled. Many of the groups today while performing, make gestures which are indecent; they have ladies and men with scant and revealing clothing on stage or video to attract the gaze. This is all a result of the effects of music.

Music itself may have many consequences, since there are so many different themes and instruments with which it can be made.

Music affects us in the same way as alcohol; it causes us to be unaware of our actions. We can become very angry if the music around us is loud and dominating.

Music might not affect everyone to the same degree, but it definitely affects a large enough percentage of people to be made Haraam.

It is also Haraam to go to a place which is solely for the listening of music, ie a disco.

People often say that they listen to music very little, and don't open themselves up to it. Well, like all drugs, it is **ADDICTIVE**. If you start off with small quantities, you will soon increase until you become helpless.

The next question, is what about the background music which we here day to day on the television, etc.

The term "background music" refers to those sounds that you are unaware of, which are used to describe certain scenes such as in a television program. Examples are the

sounds leading up to a point of suspense, fear or some other occurrence.

It **DOES NOT** mean listening to music in the background, ie leaving it on while you do your homework, or lowering the volume so that you can have a conversation in the background, whether in a car, a restaurant or at home. This type of music is Haraam, and should be avoided.

There is a big difference between **LISTENING** to and **HEARING** a sound. When you hear something, it is just a sound which enters your ears, you do not pay attention to it, and in the majority of cases, you do not even notice it, ie the sound of air blowing past you, the sound of cars and conversation etc... While when you listen to something, it is an actual positive action, which you do consciously.

Thus any form of music which you put on purposely to LISTEN to, even if it is in the background, does not become "background music" in the above context, whether the volume is low or not. This type of music becomes Haraam.

Not only should we avoid music, but we should not go to places which are designed to play music, or places where people dance to music. Such places, like discos and parties, cause people to lower their guard, and act in a loose and permissive manner. When you dance to music, you are letting that music control your actions and your thoughts. This can lead you to perform other immoral actions.

One final point to be aware is that Allah makes things Haraam for our benefit. We should try and understand why things are Haraam and justify them as above, but at the end of the day, if we are convinced and have faith, we should accept the rules of Islam.

It is vital to ask questions and thus understand our faith, but we should never become so stubborn and say "Just because I don't understand something, that it can not be understood, and therefore it is wrong."

Allah is our creator and He is closer to us than our own skin. We must realize that His laws are there to help us perfect our own character and fulfill our function as being His deputies on this earth.

Verse 3 of Suratul Mu'minoon.

*Al ladheena hum 'anil lagwhi mu'ridhuun.
and those who, from what is vain, keep themselves aloof.*

Lahv ie Vain, the first Holy Imam Ali ibne Abi Taleb (A) says that all that is void of remembrance of God is meant by this term, with the Ahlul Bait this term included all useless entertainment's, wasteful of time, including musical enjoyments, and vain games played just to while away the time, are also covered by this term.

*Satan's plan is (but) to excite enmity and hatred between you, with intoxicants and gambling, **and hinder you from the remembrance of God**, and from prayer: will you not then abstain? Surah 5:94*

AKHLAQ CLASS 11 - LESSON 15 & 16

BRIBERY AND USURY

To bribe someone means to INFLUENCE their decision by offering them payment of money or some other worldly gain.

This is a **MAJOR** sin and is condemned by Islam.

Imam Ali (A) has said that:

*"God has **cursed** one who TAKES a bribe, one who GIVES a bribe and one who CAUSES a bribe to be taken."*

The reason that Allah has forbidden bribery for us is that it is very UNFAIR.

Suppose that there is a person who is stealing money from a company. Now, if a second person sees the thief taking the money, this person can go and tell the Police.

If the thief says to the person, "If you don't tell anyone, I will give you some of the loot!!"

This means that the second person has changed his mind from calling the police to helping the thief get away. (i.e. he has been influenced.)

This is bribery. It is haraam because the person is letting money or other riches make up his mind, not his heart or conscience.

If something is right, you should do it, it doesn't matter what others say or think. If something is wrong, you should not do it, no matter how much people will pay you for it. Never let anything influence your decision from the truth.

A person who accepts a bribe is cursed by Allah, because he is selling his heart (conscience) for this world, this means in the next life, he will be among the losers.

What other examples of bribery can you think of?

USURY

Usury means to charge too much interest.

We all know that to charge interest is HARAAM anyway.

Interest means that if you lend money, you charge a bit extra when the person comes to pay you back.

Example: If you lent 10 to me, and when I come to pay you back, you ask for 11, then this is interest at 10%. This is haraam.

Usury means to charge too much interest.

Example: If you lent 10, and when I come to pay you back, you ask for ,16, then that is usury, because the interest rate is now 60%.

Allah tells us in Qur'an, Surah 2, ayat 275,

*"Those who devour **usury**..... they say "Trade is like usury", whereas Allah has made trade lawful and has forbidden usury."*

Surah 2 ayat 278,279

"Oh you who believe! Fear Allah and give up your demand for usury, if you are indeed believers."

"If you do not, take notice of WAR from Allah and his Apostle."

Why is Usury haraam?

One of the reasons why usury is haraam is because you are taking advantage of people who are not as well off as yourself.

Whatever you have, money, or good clothes or some other wealth, you should thank Allah, because He is the one who gave them to you. Does He charge you interest on what He gives you?

Since that money is given to you, you have no right to lend it to somebody **and** ask back for more than you gave, because that is being greedy.

AKHLAQ CLASS 11 - LESSON 17 & 18

PERMISSIVENESS

This means to be *too liberal, too free or too loose*.

It is a moral judgment and is difficult to define, but can be explained as in the following notes.

When people say that the western world is bad, what they actually mean is that the moral attitude is bad. The west itself technologically is very developed, but unfortunately there has been no parallel development within, in the morals.

Whenever you walk down the main road you will see people walking with scanty clothing, you will see books and magazines in windows which reveal scenes which are sexually attractive.

This is also true in the case of television, where programs often tend to provoke reaction and desires in their audience.

When society becomes such that almost every aspect of it tends to cater for human desires (not needs), especially sexual, than that society is said to be permissive.

In Islam, a human being is provided with a quality by Allah known as "*Hayah*". This means modesty, bashfulness, nobility all in one word. It is this quality which is constantly under attack in the western world.

The reason why it is so easy to fall into the trap of becoming permissive is because there is a physical pleasure which attracts a person more and more, and it is very difficult to avoid or deny.

When a person reaches the stage of responsibility and maturity (*baligh*), he has changed his spiritual appearance as well as his physical one. His desires are loose now; he is attracted by things which did not bother him when he was a child. That is why Islam has made its rules wajib for those people who are mature, because they will require ways of cleansing themselves from the filth which enters their minds from outside.

If one takes no heed and ignores these rules, he will slowly become more like the thoughts that enter his mind until he will give himself totally up to his desires which will just waste his life away.

Examples of being permissive is dressing such that enough of your body is revealed to cause others to look at you, dressing with tight clothes so that the contours of your body can be seen, telling jokes which are crude, watching programs which arouse your own sexual desires.

Going out on dates to discos, or with girl/boyfriends, keeping loose relationships are all common examples of a permissive society.

The desires for companionship are not evil or wrong, but they have to be **CONTROLLED** within the border of Islam. It is like a fire, if you use it properly, it is a great help to cook food and keep warm, but if abused, it grows and spreads until it becomes out of control and consumes everything.

The real test of a person is to let the self control the desires, and not the desires controlling the self.

Permissiveness is one extreme of society, to be too loose, to be too free with your desires, the other extreme is celibacy, which means to never get married and to stop your desires all together. Both these are extremes, and Islam says that extremes are wrong. Islam takes the middle path of chastity, where you are allowed to fulfill your desires, but only within the boundaries of marriage.



The diagram shows 2 extreme ways in which society can behave, (i) being too permissive, ie letting the desires loose, and (ii) being celibate, ie stopping the desires all together.

*Islam explains to us the concept of chastity which lies between these two extremes, and allows us to **CONTROL** our desire, rather than **STOPPING** them.*

Why does a society become permissive? If you were given a locked box, and told that you should not look inside it for many years, you would always be curious of what is within. If that box was placed somewhere where it was easy to see, then day by day your curiosity would develop. If you were then given the key, and still told not to open it, you would feel a terrible urge to just unlock it when no-one was looking, and take a peek inside.

Why? In the western society, from a very young age, we are exposed to behavior and scenes which only display the glamorous and provocative aspect of sex. Yet, at that age, we are told that this is not something for children. Then as we grow up, we become baligh, and have the ability to "unlock the box" in the example above. Since we do not know what is in the box, or we think the box contains untold pleasure, we are tempted to open it and experiment. This is the cause of permissiveness.

AKHLAQ CLASS 11 - LESSON 19 & 20

CHASTITY

To be chaste means "*Abstaining from immoral or unlawful, from sexual intercourse, to be pure, virgin, decent of speech, restrained, pure in taste or style, simple.*" - The Concise Oxford Dictionary.

This is the opposite of permissiveness which has been discussed earlier.

Islam puts great emphasis on chastity and it is this aspect, among others which is under attack in the western world.

Why should we be chaste?

We should be chaste in our every action by not doing immoral or unlawful acts, by not using foul words. We should regard these things as wrong and avoid them.

Islam also tells us that until nikah (marriage) is recited; all relationships which can lead to intimacy between two people are disallowed.

A person's chastity is a gift given by Allah. It is a sign of purity and noble character. It is a very prized and personal possession. When a person marries, he/she enters a new stage of life. The bond of marriage is cemented by the couple sharing something that is personal and intimate to them. This helps to secure the marriage from breaking during future ups and downs and helps to make it endure.

If people do not guard their chastity, and treat sexual relationships as casual, then they are losing the higher purpose which Allah has made, the sharing of something very intimate which binds the two people.

If it is treated as easygoing and as enjoyment with any partner, then the sensitive side of the relationship will be closed off.

Allah has made the human being from several elements; one is the physical element with the five senses of touch, taste, sight, smell and sound. Then He added a whole new level to human beings, he gave them thought and understanding.

If we treat our most private parts without modesty, and go and abuse them carelessly, we will gain a physical pleasure, but we will lose all the "love and contentment" which our mind can give us.

Thus if we just be permissive and have sexual relations whenever the urge arises, we will be lowering our dignity from the intellect to the animal/physical element of our life, and will be missing out in the real sense of living.

What is wrong with being unchaste?

It is a well known fact that once a physical sense is stimulated by an object, it will require more of that object the next time, to reach the same level of stimulation.

ie If I drink alcohol, I will lose physical control over my body. The next time it will take even more alcohol to make me reach the same level of drunkenness, the next time even more... and so on.

Similarly, if I concentrate in sexual activities just for pleasure, the next time I will do more and more until I am addicted and cannot stop.

Thus if we are chaste in our every action (especially sexual), and treat them as something "sacred" not to be squandered, then we will attain a level of discipline that will make us strong, determined and able to achieve anything which we put our mind to.

Why is it difficult to be chaste?

The western society has lost all concept of spiritual life. They have closed the eye inside them and have concentrated totally on physical pleasures. Sex is something which is made into an open pastime, an enjoyment. This attracts our desires and makes us want to join in. Almost all pleasures are orientated about this idea, parties, videos, books, magazines, discos, film, t.v, cinemas. Then we ask what is wrong with having girl/boyfriends. If they can do it, why can't we?

Would you ask a person who 'shoots drugs', "if you can do it why can't I?"

No you would not, because you can see that he is damaging his mind and body by doing so.

It is only because we can not see the long term effects of being unchaste that we ask the above questions. Our elders who have watched and seen these effects warn us, but we call them old fashioned. If we knew what they did, there is a guarantee that we would never even think of following our desires and having sexual relations other than those allowed by Islam.

How can we be chaste?

Being chaste does not mean keeping locked up away from the west and not even listening to what they tell you.

It means listening to everything they ask you and following that which is right and not doing that which is wrong. Only by listening to them can you decide what is right and wrong.

It also means not letting your desires carry you away to commit something which you know might give you physical pleasure, but on the higher level, will make you lose out. We can be chaste by avoiding telling dirty stories or rude jokes, by not watching films/tv which display other peoples private parts and so cause arousal, by not allowing our relationships with people of the opposite sex to get too close, and by generally asking ourselves in our heart, "Am I doing this because my desires are telling me, or because my intelligence is telling me."

If it is because of desires, then don't do it. If it is because of intelligence, then do it and you will enjoy yourself much more, physically and spiritually.

The path to enjoying life truly is very difficult, and is balanced on both physical and spiritual pleasures. It is like climbing a mountain, only when you reach the summit, can you look around you and see how fresh everything is. And when you look down below, you see everything from a different point of view. You see the maze of life from above; the paths which confused you while you were in the maze are now suddenly clear and easy to see.