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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Introduction

The Book in your hands is part of a twelve-book series named “Sirāt Books”, produced by the ISSC West Madrasah (of Brampton, Canada) as part of its Religious Education (Diniyāt) programme.

Each book consists of 28 lessons: 7 each on Islāmic Beliefs (Aqāid), Islāmic Laws (Fiqh), Islāmic History (Tārikh), and Islāmic Ethics (Akhlāq). The first seven books are also supplemented by Workbooks from which teachers can assign exercises either in class or as homework.

The ISSC West Madrasah’s objectives in imparting Islāmic education to students as well as their approach and strategy in the creation of these Textbooks, can be reviewed in the “White Paper on Teaching at the Madrasah” available at its website: <http://www.madrasah.ca/>

The Sirāt Textbooks and Workbooks are also accompanied by a Teacher’s DVD and a Quiz Book. The DVD contains media intended to serve as a teaching aid and the Quiz Book covers all Diniyāt key concepts in every Sirāt Textbook. This Quiz Book, it is hoped, will be a great resource for children at home as well as at inter-Madrasah quiz events.

The ISSC West Madrasah hopes to *inshā Allāh* continue developing and enriching the Sirāt Textbooks and their related resources on an annual or bi-annual basis.

Each Sirāt Textbook also has the syllabus and objectives for its own grade printed at the start. Topics that are highly recommended for students to demonstrate proficiency in before the end of the Madrasah year are prefixed with an asterisk (in the syllabus). The ISSC West Madrasah plans to use this as their criterion for promoting students to the next grade.

It is hoped that these Textbooks will *inshā Allāh* not only be of relevance to other Madāris, especially in the North American continent, but will also benefit parents living in places where there is no local Madrasah and they need to home-school their students in Islāmic education.

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

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DU`A BEFORE STARTING A LESSON

In Islām, learning and teaching, like other virtuous acts, are *'ibādāt* – acts of adoration and worship of Almighty Allāh (s.w.t). They have both physical and spiritual aspects. The physical is what we normally do while learning and teaching. The spiritual is when we invoke Allāh (s.w.t) to purify our souls and give us success in our endeavours. This we can do by performing *wudu* and reciting a supplication (*du'a*) before learning and/or teaching. The following is a *du'a* that can be recited before studying. It is given in the *Mafātih al-Jinān* of Shaykh `Abbās al-Qummi.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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

اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِ مُحَمَّدٍ

O Allāh, send your blessings on Muḥammad and his household

اللَّهُمَّ أَخْرِجْنِي مِنْ ظُلُمَاتِ الْوَهْمِ

O Allāh, remove me from the darkness of ignorance

وَ أَكْرَمْنِي بِنُورِ الْفَهْمِ

And favour me with the light of understanding

اللَّهُمَّ افْتَحْ عَلَيْنَا أَبْوَابَ رَحْمَتِكَ

O Allāh, open for us the doors of Your mercy

وَ انْشُرْ عَلَيْنَا خَزَائِنَ عُلُومِكَ

And unfold for us the treasures of Your knowledge

بِرَحْمَتِكَ يَا أَرْحَمَ الرَّاحِمِينَ

By Your mercy, O the most Merciful of the Merciful

اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِ مُحَمَّدٍ

O Allāh, send your blessings on Muḥammad and his household

Syllabus for Book 9

Note: The [●] symbol indicates topics the ISSC West Madrasah highly recommends a student to know (and where applicable demonstrate successfully) before he/she is promoted to study the next Book.

Lesson	Aqāid	Fiqh
1	TAWHID – Roots of idol worship – Types of Shirk	Salāt al-'Id
2	Types of Tawhid and Shirk (Cont'd)	Daily Nawāfil Prayers
3	Types of Tawhid and Shirk (Cont'd)	Nawāfil continued - Salāt al-Layl
4	NUBUWWAH – The Qur'ān and Its Terminologies - Nāsikh and Mansukh - Muhkam and Mutashābih - Makki and Madani - Asbāb an-Nuzul	ZAKAH & KHUMS - Definition and Importance
5	NUBUWWAH – The Qur'ān and Its Terminologies (cont'd)	Khums (continued) - How to calculate [●] - Whom to give
6	IMAMAH – Knowledge of the Hidden ('ilm al-ghayb)	ZAKAH - Types of Zakah - Items on which wājib [●] - Whom to give
7	QIYAMAH - Concept of ar-Raj'ah - Objections to ar-Raj'ah - Proof of ar-Raj'ah in Qur'ān and Hadith	Revision of Gender-specific topics from Book 8

Lesson	Tārikh	Akhlāq
1	QASAS AL-ANBIYA – Nabi Lut ('a) – Ashāb al-Kahf	Giving benefit of doubt to others (husn al-dhan) - negative attitude to others (suu al-dhan) - the vice of exposing others shortcomings
2	SIRAH - Treaty of Hudaibiyah - Pledge of Ridwān - the Year of Deputations (Aam al-Wufud) – Battle of Mu'tah	Tolerance (hilm) - Humility (tawādu)
3	SIRAH – Freeing (Fath) of Makkah – Battle of Hunayn – Expedition to Tabuk	Contentment (rida and qana'ah) vs. Greed (hirs)

Lesson	Tārīkh	Akhlāq
4	SIRAH - Mubāhala – Masjid adh-Dhirār	Bravery vs. Cowardice
5	AIMMAH - IMAM HASAN AL-MUJTABA ('a) - The treaty with Mu'āwiya - The Myth of his divorces	Materialism - Find one's self-worth and others worth from taqwa and not materialism
6	AIMMAH - IMAM HUSAYN ('a) – His Life until his martyrdom	The evils of Alcohol & Drugs
7	AIMMAH - IMAM HUSAYN ('a) - Family members and companions at Karbala - Sayyida Zaynab ('a) and Hadrat Abul Fadl al-Abbās ('a)	Vandalism and Mischief

Objectives for Book 9

At the end of the year the student should:

For Aqāid

- understand the root causes of idol worship, how it evolved and why Islām condemns it
- know the various types of tawhid and shirk
- understand key terminologies used in Qur'ān Sciences
- understand the validity of hidden knowledge ('ilm al-ghayb) in others besides Allāh
- understand the concept of raj'ah and how it is proven from Qur'ān and hadith

For Fiqh

- have learnt how salāt al-'Id is performed
- know what the daily nawafil prayers are for each corresponding wājib salāh and in particular the importance of salāt al-layl
- know the importance of khums and how it is calculated
- know the importance of zakāt, items of which zakāt is wājib and how to calculate it, including zakat al-fitr

For the gender specific class:

- in the girls class have reviewed gender issues from the previous Book, with specific issues/questions addressed
- in the boys class have reviewed gender issues from the previous Book, with specific issues/questions addressed

For Tārikh

- (a) have studied brief history of the Ashab al-Kahf and of Nabi Lut ['a]
- (b) know about the treaty of Hdaybiya and the pledge of Ridwan, in the sirah of Rasulallah (s) and how these led to the Fath of Makkah
- (c) have studied the major events just before and after the Fath (victory) of Makkah such as the Year of Deputations, the Battle of Hunayn and the Expedition to Tabuk
- (d) appreciate the focus by Rasulallah (s) to guide the Muslim community and equip them with the means to continue on after him through major events in the last two years of life such as Mubahala and the incident of Masjid ad-Dirar
- (e) know the brief biography of Imam al-Hasan ['a] and Imam al-Husayn ['a], Sayyida Zaynab ['a] and Hadrat Abbās ['a]
- (f) be aware of major events in the aftermath of Karbala and the implications of Imām al-Husayn ['a]'s rising on the Muslim Ummah

For Akhlāq

- (a) understand the importance of giving others the benefit of doubt
- (b) understand the importance of being humble and forbearing
- (c) know the importance of being content in Islām and not being greedy
- (d) know the importance of being brave
- (e) understand the harms of materialism
- (f) understand human nature to be easily addicted and the various forms of addictions that are harām
- (g) know the Islāmic prohibition to vandalism and creating mischief in society

Aqáid **(Beliefs)**

Lesson 1

Roots of Idol Worship

In Book 7 we learnt about Tawhid and the belief in one God as being a natural instinct (*fitra*) in all human beings. We also learnt a little bit about *shirk* i.e. associating partners with Allāh and why it is the greatest sin in Islām that can never be forgiven.

In this lesson we shall learn more about *shirk* and the various forms in which it exists; but before that, we need to understand how humans developed the idea of worshipping idols. The Qur'ān condemns people who make representations of God out of stone or wood or any material and then prostrate before it and make offerings to it. In fact any attempt to give Allāh a physical form is *harām*.

A long time ago, when a prophet would come to preach to a nation and then die, the people would want to keep the memory of that prophet alive. So they would paint his pictures to show their children and the future generation in their community. In time, some of them got more creative and began making statues of the prophets and soon everyone wanted a statue of the prophet in their home. Gradually, people forgot the message of the prophet and began venerating the prophet and teaching others that the prophet was superhuman and must be adored by everyone. They gave more importance to the prophet than the message he brought and their only concern was praying to the prophet's statue and asking for their needs to be fulfilled and their difficulties to be removed.

As time passed, people created all kinds of rituals and superstitions around the statues of these prophets and began idolizing them. Over the years and generations that passed, it didn't matter what the idol looked like. People just felt good worshipping an idol and praying to it for help and offering sacrifices in its name.

In some regions of the world when people saw floods and other natural disasters like earthquakes that destroyed their property and lives, they immediately assumed there was a 'god' who was angry with them and trying to punish them, so they would try and please this 'god' by creating an idol for it and then presenting it with gifts and respecting it. If they saw something strange that they had never experienced before like a huge waterfall or a very large tree or a strangely shaped rock or mountain, they would assume it was a god and started worshipping it.

The rich people of course encouraged idol-worshipping because they first made money from selling the statues and thereafter they would charge people a fee to offer a sacrifice to the idol or to ask for their wishes. They would also create fear in people's minds that if they didn't offer something to the gods than something terrible would happen to them.

Different tribes competed with other tribes on whose 'god' was bigger or more powerful. And if anyone's wishes came true - by coincidence after praying to an idol - their faith in the idol was renewed and that 'god' became very popular. But what this also did was create a lot of myths and fears regarding the miraculous powers of the idols.

And in time, Allāh would send another Nabi or Rasul to teach the people not to worship what they had created with their own hands. Instead, the Nabi would ask the people to liberate themselves and worship the one and only true God – Allāh - Who has no form or shape.

﴿قَالَ أَفَتَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لَا يَنْفَعُكُمْ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَضُرُّكُمْ . أَفِ لَكُمْ وَلِمَا تَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ﴾

He (Nabi Ibrāhim ('a)) said, 'Do you then worship, besides Allāh that which cannot cause you any benefit or harm? Fie on you and what you worship besides Allāh! Do you not apply reason?'

- Surah al-Anbiyā, 21:66-67

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ ضُرِبَ مَثَلٌ فَاسْتَمِعُوا لَهُ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ لَن يَخْلُقُوا ذُبَابًا وَلَوْ اجْتَمَعُوا لَهُ وَإِن يَسْلُبْهُمُ الذُّبَابُ شَيْئًا لَا يَسْتَنْقِذُوهُ مِنْهُ ضَعُفَ الطَّالِبُ وَالْمَطْلُوبُ﴾

O mankind! Listen to a parable that is being given: Indeed those whom you pray to besides Allāh will never create [even] a fly even if they all get together to do so! And if a fly should take away something from them (i.e. these idols), they cannot recover that from it. How weak is the seeker and the sought!

- Surah al-Hajj, 22:73

In some cultures, the survival of the people depended on a river, mountain or even animal and therefore they treated that as sacred and began worshipping it. For example in India milk was precious so the cow became a 'god' and people would worship cows and this continues even to this day. When a cow wanders on to the highway no one moves it or forces it off the road. All traffic comes to a standstill until the cow moves away on its own accord!

In ancient Egypt the people depended on the overflowing of the River Nile in order to irrigate their lands and to water their crops. In any year when the Nile ran dry, there would be a drought and many people would die. So the Egyptians used to worship the River Nile or believe their King – the Pharaoh – was a god who could control the River Nile. When the Nile ran dry they assumed their 'god' was upset

with them and was punishing them so they would look for ways to appease their gods by offering sacrifices.

Do you see how the worship of other than Allāh makes a person superstitious and weak? Do you see how humans become so fearful and greedy and bow even before an animal when they forget Allāh? The worship of idols and the belief in myths, superstitions, astrology, or anything besides Allāh are like shackles that enslave human beings. Allāh in fact tells us in the Qur'ān that He sent Rasulullāh (s) to free humans from these 'shackles':

﴿الَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَ الرَّسُولَ ... يَأْمُرُهُمْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَاهُمْ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُحِلُّ لَهُمُ
الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَيُحَرِّمُ عَلَيْهِمُ الْخَبَائِثَ وَيَضَعُ عَنْهُمْ إِصْرَهُمْ وَالْأَغْلَالَ الَّتِي كَانَتْ
عَلَيْهِمْ...﴾

*- those who follow the Apostle... who bids them to do what is right and forbids them from what is wrong, makes lawful to them all the good things and forbids them from all vicious things, **and relieves them of their burdens and the shackles that were upon them....***

- Surah al-A'rāf, 7:157

Today, many people don't worship statues of stones or animals and fire but they still look up to something or someone as their 'idol' whom they think about all the time and are obsessed with. In other words, a person can carry and worship an 'idol' in the heart as well.

Allāh tells us:

﴿وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَتَّخِذُ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ أَنْدَادًا يُحِبُّونَهُمْ كَحُبِّ اللَّهِ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَشَدُّ
حُبًّا لِلَّهِ...﴾

Among the people are those who set up partners besides Allāh, loving them as they ought to love Allāh - but the faithful have an intense ardent love for Allāh...

- Surah al-Baqarah, 2:165

The problem with idol worship is that whatever a person thinks of as his or her 'God' also becomes a representation of perfection in his or her mind; and subconsciously, he or she tries to become like that 'God'. For example, if a person idolizes wealth or another person they will never see themselves or their lives as being worth anything more than wealth or that person. On the other hand, if a person worships Allāh alone, then Allāh is infinite and limitless – therefore such a person's desire to grow will also be limitless and if anything, they will try and acquire qualities similar to the attributes of Allāh such as knowledge, kindness, generosity, mercy and so on. That is perhaps why we are told in hadith:

تَخَلَّقُوا بِأَخْلَاقِ اللَّهِ

Make your etiquette the etiquette of Allāh!

In other words, a true faithful (*mu'min*) enjoys different blessings of Allāh but he or she always loves something or someone *for the sake of Allāh only*. A *mu'min* is only obsessed with Allāh and addicted to Him. He or she does not 'idolize' anyone or anything besides Allāh. In the words of Imām Ali ('a), 'a person's faith (*imān*) is not complete until he loves those whom Allāh, the Glorious, loves and he dislikes those who Allāh, the Glorified, dislikes.'

Someone asked Imām Ja'far as-Sādiq ('a) the meaning of the following verse:

﴿يَوْمَ لَا يَنْفَعُ مَالٌ وَلَا بَنُونَ. إِلَّا مَنْ أَتَى اللَّهَ بِقَلْبٍ سَلِيمٍ﴾

The day when neither wealth nor children will be of any use, except him who comes to Allāh with a sound heart,'

- Surah ash-Shu'arā, 26: 88-89

Imām Ja'far as-Sādiq ('a) replied, 'The *sound heart* is the one when it meets Allāh it does not have the love of anyone but Allāh. Every heart which has *shirk* and doubt is condemned to be destroyed.'

Allāh also says in the Qur'ān:

﴿قُلْ إِنْ كَانَ آبَاؤُكُمْ وَأَبْنَاؤُكُمْ وَإِخْوَانُكُمْ وَأَزْوَاجُكُمْ وَعَشِيرَتُكُمْ وَأَمْوَالٌ
اقتَرَفْتُمُوهَا وَتِجَارَةٌ تَخْشَوْنَ كَسَادَهَا وَمَسَاكِينُ تَرْضَوْنَهَا أَحَبَّ إِلَيْكُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ
وَرَسُولِهِ وَجِهَادٍ فِي سَبِيلِهِ فَتَرَبَّصُوا حَتَّى يَأْتِيَ اللَّهُ بِأَمْرِهِ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ
الْفَاسِقِينَ﴾

Say, 'If your fathers and your sons, your brothers, your spouses, and your family, the possessions that you have acquired, the business you fear may suffer, and the homes you are fond of, are dearer to you than Allāh and His Messenger and to waging jihād in His way, then wait until Allāh issues His command, and Allāh does not guide the sinful people.

- Surah at-Tawbah, 9:24

It is perhaps for this reason that Imām Ja'far as-Sādiq ('a) also said, 'By Allāh the *imān* (faith) of a person cannot be pure till he loves Allāh more than his near ones; his mother, his father, children, wife, other people and wealth.'

Rasulullāh (s) and the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) came to this world as **Teachers of Tawhid**. In time, some people idolized them as well and began believing they were incarnates of God or able to grant them their wishes independent of Allāh. The Imāms taught us

that we can pray to Allāh and ask Him to grant our wishes *'for the sake of Muhammad and Aali Muhammad'* or even to ask Rasulullāh (s) and the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) to intercede on our behalf before Allāh. But we must know that ultimately, everyone depends on Allāh for all their needs and we must therefore prostrate before no one but Allāh. That is what Rasulullāh (s) and the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) taught us and expect from us. Any less and they would be disappointed with us and we would be hurting them because it would be against all the sacrifices they made and what they came to teach us.

Lesson 2

Tawhid vs. Shirk

Types of Shirk

Just as there are levels of Tawhid, so there are levels of Shirk. We will review five levels of Tawhid and Shirk:

1. Tawhid & Shirk regarding the Essence (Dhāt) of Allāh
2. Tawhid & Shirk regarding the Attributes (Sifāt) of Allāh
3. Tawhid & Shirk regarding the Actions (Af'āl) of Allāh
4. Tawhid & Shirk regarding the Obedience (Tā'ah) to Allāh
5. Tawhid & Shirk regarding the Worship ('Ibādah) of Allāh

Tawhid and Shirk regarding the Essence (Dhāt) of Allāh

Tawhid with regards to the Essence (Dhāt) of Allāh means believing that the Essence of the Lord of the Universe is One only.

As opposed to this, *Shirk* in the Essence (Dhāt) of Allāh is to believe that Allāh, in His very essence is more than one. An example of this form of *shirk* is the belief in trinity by the Christians because they say, God's Essence is made up of three: the father, the son and the holy spirit. In other words, Christians can be regarded as Ahl al-Kitāb (People of the Book) in one sense but also mushrikun in the sense of *Shirk fi Dhātillah*. Regarding trinity, Allāh says:

﴿لَقَدْ كَفَرَ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْمَسِيحُ ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ وَقَالَ الْمَسِيحُ يَا بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ رَبِّي وَرَبَّكُمْ إِنَّهُ مَنْ يُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدْ حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ الْجَنَّةَ وَمَأْوَاهُ النَّارُ وَمَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ مِنْ أَنْصَارٍ . لَقَدْ كَفَرَ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ ثَلَاثَةٌ ثَلَاثَةٌ وَمَا مِنْ إِلَهٍ إِلَّا إِلَهٌ وَاحِدٌ وَإِنْ لَمْ يَنْتَهُوا عَمَّا يَقُولُونَ لَيَمَسَّنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ﴾

They are certainly faithless who say, 'Allāh is the Messiah, son of Mary.' But the Messiah had said, 'O Children of Israel! Worship Allāh, my Lord and your Lord. Indeed whoever ascribes partners to Allāh, Allāh shall forbid him [entry into] paradise, and his refuge shall be the Fire, and the wrongdoers will not have any helpers.' They are certainly faithless who say, 'Allāh is the third [person] of a trinity,' while there is no god except the One God. If they do not stop what they say, there shall befall the faithless among them a painful punishment.

- Surah al-Māidah, 5:72-73

Another example is the Zoroastrians who believe that the universe is controlled by two forces: the Force of Good and the Force of Evil. People with such beliefs are also called Dualists. The Hindus believe in One God but also believe in many demi-gods and therefore are polytheists. Polytheists will usually believe in a god of rain, and a god of thunder and a god of fertility and a god of death and a good of the mountains and a god of the oceans, and so on. So when they want their crops to grow, they pray to the 'god of harvest'. When they are travelling by sea, they pray to 'the god of the oceans', and so on. The Qur'ān rejects all this and says:

﴿... قُلْ كُلُّ شَيْءٍ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ فَمَالِ هَؤُلَاءِ الْقَوْمِ لَا يَكَادُونَ يَفْقَهُونَ حَدِيثًا﴾

...Say, 'All is from Allāh.' What is the matter with these people that they would not understand any matter?

- Surah an-Nisā, 4:78

Tawhid and Shirk regarding the Attributes (Sifāt) of Allāh

Tawhid with regards to the Attributes (Sifāt) of Allāh means believing that Allāh's Attributes (Sifāt) are not separate from His Essence (Dhāt). In other words, when we say one of Allāh's attributes is that He is All-Knowing or All-Powerful, we do not mean that His Knowledge or Power is separate from Who He is.

To understand this better, think of any of these attributes in humans. When we say a person has knowledge, we immediately know that he did not have that knowledge at birth. We also know that the knowledge was acquired from someone and it is also possible that as the person grows old their knowledge may change or reduce. However in the case of Allāh, when we say Allāh knows everything, we don't mean what He knows is separate from Him or that it can change, increase or decrease. We mean nothing can exist, change or even move or breathe without His permission and knowing it. Similarly, Allāh is All-Powerful but not in the sense of someone having a lot of strength or ability. Rather we mean He is the source of all power itself. Anything and anyone that has any power is only drawing from Allāh's Power and manifesting a little bit of Allāh's attribute of Power.

The opposite of this – *Shirk* in the Attributes (Sifāt) of Allāh - is to believe in Sifāt az-Zāid i.e. that the attributes of Allāh are independent of Him. A person who commits *shirk* in the attributes of Allāh will assume that his own attributes are also independent and not from Allāh. When such a person says, 'my knowledge, my love, my strength, my beauty' and so on, they imagine that they possess these attributes by their own selves. On the other hand, Tawhid in the Sifāt of Allāh teaches us that actually all goodness and all positive attributes belong to Allāh only. Even the qualities of knowledge, power, and so on that are shown by Prophets and Messengers and Imāms are a grace and blessing of Allāh.

When Allāh loves a person, He increases the amount of His attributes in a person. That is why a person who understands Tawhid in the Sifāt of Allāh is always humble.

He or she does not think of any good coming from themselves. If they, for example, give something in charity, they do not feel proud but instead they thank Allāh for choosing them to do that good when He could have done that act of love and kindness through any other of His creatures; and they beg Allāh to continue using them to manifest His attributes to His creation.

That is also why Allāh tells us not to boast and praise ourselves, because without Him, we would have no goodness in ourselves. He tells us:

﴿... هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِكُمْ إِذْ أَنْشَأَكُمْ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ وَإِذْ أَنْتُمْ أَجِنَّةٌ فِي بُطُونِ أُمَّهَاتِكُمْ فَلَا تُزَكُّوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ اتَّقَى﴾

... He knows you best since [the time] He produced you from the earth, and since you were fetuses in the bellies of your mothers. So do not pretend yourselves to be pure:

He knows best those who are Godwary.

- Surah an-Najm, 53:32

﴿... وَلَوْلَا فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُ مَا زَكَا مِنْكُمْ مِنْ أَحَدٍ أَبَدًا وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يُزَكِّي مَنْ يَشَاءُ...﴾

Were it not for Allāh's grace and His mercy upon you, not one of you would ever be pure. But Allāh purifies whomever He wishes...

- Surah an-Nur, 24:21

The munājāt (whispered prayer) of Imām Ali ('a) that we recite in the month of Ramadān is a good way to realize that all good attributes (sifāt) come from Allāh. In this du'a, we say to Allāh, 'You are the Master, I am the slave; You are the Generous One, I am the miser; You are the Living One, I am the lifeless; You are the Kind One, I am mean; You are All-Knowing, I am ignorant; You are All-Powerful, I am weak; You are Truly Needless, I am in need of You,' and so on.

It is also for this reason, that a true faithful (mu'min) is never pleased when others praise him or her. Imām Ali ('a) describes the faithful as follows:

"When any one of them is spoken of highly, he says: 'I know myself better than others, and my Lord knows me better than I know myself. O Allāh do not deal with me according to what they say, and make me better than what they think of me and forgive me (those shortcomings) which they do not know.'

- Nahj al-Balāgha, Sermon 193¹

One can therefore say that *Shirk* in the Sifāt of Allāh is both, to believe that Allāh's attributes are separate from His Essence (Dhāt), as well as to associate others in the

¹ The sermon to Hamām on the qualities of the Godwary (*muttaqun*).

attributes of Allāh, as if they have earned those attributes themselves, independent of Allāh. And Tawhid in the Sifāt of Allāh is to believe that the attributes of Allāh are one and the same as His Essence and also that all good attributes belong to Him alone. The many Names (asmā) of Allāh are also His attributes and Allāh (s.w.t.) says:

﴿قُلْ اذْعُوا لِلَّهِ أَوْ اذْعُوا الرَّحْمَانَ أَيَّامًا تَدْعُوا فَلَهُ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ...﴾

Say, 'Call "Allāh" or call "the All-beneficent" (ar-Rahmān). Whichever [of His Names] you may call out, to Him belong the most beautiful Names'...

- Surah al-Isra, 17:110

Allāh also reminds us:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ أَنْتُمْ الْفُقَرَاءُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ هُوَ الْغَنِيُّ الْحَمِيدُ﴾

O mankind! You are the ones who stand in need of Allāh, and Allāh - He is the All-sufficient, the All-praiseworthy.

- Surah al-Fātir, 35:15

This is also the secret of why it is so recommended to praise and glorify Allāh.

For example, as we recite *Subhān Allāh!* (*Glory be to Allāh*) repeatedly, we also realize that in fact all the glory belongs to Allāh Alone and no one else besides Him! And just as He has no partners in His Essence, no one shares His attributes either and there are no partners in Sifāt of Allāh, the Mighty and Glorious.

A true *muwahhid* (monotheist) should therefore never praise himself or herself and say, 'I have such-and-such good qualities', 'I have the power and knowledge to do this', and so on.

A man once knocked the door of Rasulullāh (s)'s house and when Rasulullāh (s) asked, 'who is it?', the man replied, 'I' (as if with pride). Rasulullāh (s) got angry when he heard this and he came out saying, 'who dares to say "I"? Let it be known that no one has the right to say "I" (with pride) except Allāh, who declares: "I am the Almighty (al-Jabbār) and I am the Subduer (al-Qahhār)!"'

During the time of Nabi Musa ('a), there lived a rich man named Qārūn who was very arrogant and used to love showing off his wealth and boasting, 'I have got this wealth by my own knowledge!'

﴿قَالَ إِنَّمَا أُوتِيْتُهُ عَلَىٰ عِلْمٍ عِنْدِي...﴾

He said, 'I have indeed been given [all] this because of the knowledge that I have.'...

- Surah al-Qasas, 28:78

Allāh caused the earth to open up and swallow him along with all his wealth and then Allāh reminds us:

﴿... أَوْلَمْ يَعْلَمِ أَنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ أَهْلَكَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ مِنَ الْقُرُونِ مَنْ هُوَ أَشَدُّ مِنْهُ قُوَّةً وَأَكْثَرَ﴾

﴿جَمَعًا...﴾

...Did he (Qārūn) not know that Allāh had already destroyed before him some of the generations who were more powerful than him and greater in amassing [wealth]?...

- Surah al-Qasas 28:78

﴿فَإِذَا مَسَّ الْإِنْسَانَ ضُرٌّ دَعَانَا ثُمَّ إِذَا خَوَّلْنَاهُ نِعْمَةً مِنَّا قَالَ إِنَّمَا أُوتِيْتُهَا عَلَىٰ عِلْمٍ بَلْ﴾

﴿هِيَ فِتْنَةٌ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ﴾

When distress befalls man, he prays to Us. Then, when We grant him a blessing from Us, he says, 'I was given it by virtue of [my] knowledge.' Rather, it is a test, but most of them do not know.

- Surah az-Zumar, 39:49

Tawhid and Shirk in the Actions (Af'āl) of Allāh

Tawhid in the Actions (Af'āl) of Allāh means to believe firmly that Allāh not only created everything and brought them into existence, but He remains in control of them and He sustains the entire universe. Allāh says in the Qur'ān:

﴿إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُمَسِكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ أَنْ تَزُولَا وَلَئِنْ زَالَتَا إِنْ أَمْسَكَهُمَا مِنْ أَحَدٍ مِنْ﴾

﴿بَعْدِهِ إِنَّهُ كَانَ حَلِيمًا غَفُورًا﴾

Indeed Allāh holds the heavens and the earth from falling apart, and if they were to fall apart there is none who can stop them (for falling apart) except Him. Indeed He is All-forgiving, All-forgiving.

- Surah al-Fātir, 35:41

Other verses of the Qur'ān that show that Allāh is in command of everything in the universe, are for example:

﴿اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ سَبْعَ سَمَاوَاتٍ وَمِنَ الْأَرْضِ مِثْلَهُنَّ يَتَنَزَّلُ الْأَمْرُ بَيْنَهُنَّ لِتَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ﴾

﴿اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ أَحَاطَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عِلْمًا﴾

It is Allāh who has created seven heavens, and of the earth [a number] similar to them. The command gradually descends through them, that you may know that Allāh has power over all things, and that Allāh encompasses all things in knowledge.

- Surah at-Talāq, 65:12

﴿وَسَخَّرَ لَكُمُ اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ وَالشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ وَالنُّجُومَ مُسَخَّرَاتٍ بِأَمْرِهِ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ
لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ﴾

He made the night and the day for you, and the sun, the moon and the stars are in service by His command. There are indeed signs in that for a people who apply reason.

- Surah an-Nahl 16:12

One of the most common attributes of Allāh is that of **ar-Rabb**. Ar-Rabb means the Sustainer or Provider. A Sustainer is one who keeps something alive and maintains it so that it does not perish. *Shirk* in the Actions (Af'āl) of Allāh is to believe that there is anyone or anything else that sustains us or gives us our needs independent of Allāh. Tawhid in the Actions (Af'āl) of Allāh is to believe that even when we get things from others (such as our halāl wages from an employer), it is actually Allāh giving us but through someone else and when we are sick and a doctor cures us, it is actually Allāh curing us through the doctor and the medicine, and so on. That is why Nabi Ibrāhim ('a) said about Allāh (s.w.t.):

﴿وَالَّذِي هُوَ يُطْعِمُنِي وَيَسْقِينِ . وَإِذَا مَرِضْتُ فَهُوَ يَشْفِينِ﴾

And it is He who provides me with food and drink, and when I get sick, it is He who cures me.

- Surah ash-Shu'arā, 26:79-80

Sometimes we claim that Allāh is our Provider (Rabb) but if we hoard a lot of money because we are afraid that no one will look after us when we grow old, then it is a sign of *shirk* in the Af'āl of Allāh. Similarly, if we commit harām only to keep our jobs because we are afraid of becoming poor, then it shows that we don't really believe that Allāh is in control of our lives and sustenance. Instead it would show that we believe that someone else has the power to control our sustenance besides Allāh. Allāh has promised that as long as we go out and seek our sustenance He will feed us:

﴿وَمَا مِنْ دَابَّةٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا عَلَى اللَّهِ رِزْقُهَا...﴾

There is no animal on the earth, but that its sustenance lies with Allāh...

- Surah Hud, 11:6

﴿إِنِّي تَوَكَّلْتُ عَلَى اللَّهِ رَبِّي وَرَبِّكُمْ مَا مِنْ دَابَّةٍ إِلَّا هُوَ آخِذٌ بِنَاصِيَتِهَا...﴾

Indeed I have put my trust in Allāh, my Lord and your Lord. There is no living being but He holds it by its forelock...

- Surah Hud, 11:56

And Allāh also tells us that it is Shaytān who frightens us with poverty:

﴿الشَّيْطَانُ يَعِدُكُمُ الْفَقْرَ وَيَأْمُرُكُمْ بِالْفَحْشَاءِ وَاللَّهُ يَعِدُكُمْ مَغْفِرَةً مِنْهُ وَفَضْلًا وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ﴾

Shaytān frightens you of poverty and prompts you to [commit] indecent acts. But Allāh promises you His forgiveness and grace, and Allāh is all-bounteous, all-knowing.
- Surah al-Baqarah, 2:268

﴿إِنَّمَا ذَلِكُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ يُخَوِّفُ أَوْلِيَاءَهُ فَلَا تَخَافُوهُمْ وَخَافُونِي إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ﴾

That is only Satan frightening his followers! So fear them not, and fear Me, should you be faithful.

- Surah Al-i Imrān, 3:175

Other examples: A person may fear an army or a tyrant or travelling on an airplane or the strength of another human being, or a nation that calls itself a ‘superpower’ and so on. These are also all because of *shirk* in the Af’āl of Allāh. A person who is convinced that no one can overcome the Will and Power of Allāh, only places his or her trust in Allāh and thereafter, they fear no one because they know that everything is under Allāh’s control and dominion. In the words of Allāh (s.w.t.):

﴿إِنْ كُلُّ مَنْ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ إِلَّا آتِي الرَّحْمَانَ عَبْدًا﴾

There is none in the heavens and the earth but he comes to the All-beneficent as a servant.

- Surah Maryam, 19:93

﴿وَمَا كَانَ لِنَفْسٍ أَنْ تَمُوتَ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ...﴾

No soul can (even) die except by Allāh’s permission...

- Surah Al-i Imrān, 3:145

A farmer who plants seeds and then worries about his crops also displays *shirk* in the actions of Allāh because he believes that other factors can influence the outcome of his crops and can have an independent action over Allāh’s Will. A farmer who is a true *muwahhid* sleeps at ease knowing every raindrop falls only by Allāh’s Will and nothing can escape His Knowledge or Permission. And so he surrenders to what Allāh wishes to do.

A person who is ill and has sought all the medical attention and help he or she can find, must then place his or her trust in Allāh and surrender to His Will. To worry

about the outcome of the surgery or if one will die, etc. is also a form for *shirk* if one believes that someone (like the doctor) or something can influence when and how one dies. A true muwahhid is always conscious that even the number of breathes he or she will take in life is in Allāh's hands and by His Will alone.

In summary, Tawhid in the Af'āl of Allāh is shown by having fear of no one and nothing by Allāh and *Shirk* in the Af'āl of Allāh is the opposite – to fear something or someone other than Allāh.

Allāh reminds us:

﴿وَإِنْ يَمْسَسْكَ اللَّهُ بِضُرٍّ فَلَا كَاشِفَ لَهُ إِلَّا هُوَ وَإِنْ يُرِدْكَ بِخَيْرٍ فَلَا رَادَّ لِفَضْلِهِ
يُصِيبُ بِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ وَهُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ﴾

Should Allāh visit you with some distress, there is no one to remove it except Him; and should He desire any good for you, none can stand in the way of His grace: He grants it to whomever He wishes of His servants, and He is the All-forgiving, the All-merciful.

- Surah Yunus, 10:107

Elsewhere the Quran says:

﴿وَمَا بِكُمْ مِنْ نِعْمَةٍ فَمِنَ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ إِذَا مَسَّكُمُ الضُّرُّ فَإِنَّهُمْ يُجَارُونَ . ثُمَّ إِذَا كُشِفَ
الضُّرُّ عَنْكُمْ إِذَا فَرِيقٌ مِنْكُمْ بِرَبِّهِمْ يُشْرِكُونَ﴾

Whatever blessing you have is from Allāh, then when a distress befalls you, you make pleas to Him. Then when He removes the distress from you, behold, a part of them ascribe partners to their Lord.

- Surah an-Nahl 16:53-54

One of the most important ways in which we show that we truly believe that all good actions come from Allāh is to always thank Allāh and also to thank Him *first* before thanking others who are just the means and the agent of that good that we receive.

Most people thank others without acknowledging Allāh, as if they could have gotten that good, had it not been for Allāh's Will and Action. And this is perhaps the meaning of the verse of Qur'ān:

﴿وَمَا يُؤْمِنُ أَكْثَرُهُمْ بِاللَّهِ إِلَّا وَهُمْ مُشْرِكُونَ﴾

And most of them do not believe in Allāh without ascribing partners to Him.

- Surah Yusuf, 12:106

To praise a creature while ignoring the Creator is therefore a form of *shirk* in the actions (af'āl) of Allāh. In explaining the verse of Qur'ān above, Imām Ja'far as-

Sādiq (‘a) said that one form of *shirk* is when a person says, ‘if so-and-so had not been there, I would have been destroyed’. Or ‘if so-and-so had been there, I would have got that thing.’ Or ‘if so-and-so had not been there to help me, my children would have perished!’

Instead, Imām Ja’far as-Sādiq (‘a) continued to explain, a person should say, ‘if Allāh had not helped me through so-and-so, I would have been destroyed’ and so on.

How often do we hear ourselves saying, ‘if so-and-so had not been there, I don’t know what I would have done!’? Or ‘if so-and-so had been there, this would not have happened to me!’? It doesn’t mean we cannot say this. But what Imām as-Sādiq (‘a) meant is that even when we say this, we should be aware that we would only be helped by so-and-so through Allāh. The problem is when we forget Allāh and truly believe that someone can help us by his or her own imagined power, wealth, influence, and so on.

Can you see how differently our realization of Allāh’s blessings would be if every time we thanked someone we said, ‘All thanks be to Allāh who helped me through you’ or ‘May Allāh bless you for His help to me through you’ and so on?

Imām Ja’far as-Sādiq (‘a) and the Beggar

A man named Masma b. Abd al-Malik relates that Imām Ja’far as-Sādiq (‘a) was at Mina (just outside Makkah) when a beggar approached him. Imām as-Sādiq (‘a) ordered that a bunch of grapes be given to him. The beggar said, ‘I do not need these, if possible give me money.’ The Imām (‘a) did not give him anything but said, ‘May Allāh make you self-sufficient.’

After this another beggar approached. Imām Ja’far as-Sādiq (‘a) picked up three grapes from the bunch and offered them to him. The beggar picked them up and said, ‘All Praise is for Allāh who has given me sustenance.’ Imām as-Sādiq (‘a) said, ‘Wait!’, and he placed as many grapes as his hands could hold. Twice again he gave him the same quantity. The beggar thanked Allāh again.

Imām as-Sādiq (‘a) again stopped him and asked his servant how much money they had. The servant replied, ‘Twenty dirhams.’ The Imām (‘a) ordered him to give these to the beggar. The beggar took the money and said, ‘All praise is for Allāh alone. O Allāh You are the Sustainer, You are One, there is no partner for You.’ Imām Ja’far as-Sādiq (‘a) again stopped him. Then the Imām (‘a) removed his outer shirt and gave it to the beggar and said, ‘Wear it.’ The beggar put the shirt on and thanked Allāh who had bestowed him with the dress and made him happy. At this stage the beggar turned towards the Imām (‘a) and said, ‘O slave of Allāh, may Allāh reward you for this!’ After this he went his way. The narrator (Masma) says that if the beggar had not addressed the Imām (‘a) like this, ‘I felt the Imām would have continued to give him gifts for his thankfulness to Allāh.’

In conclusion then, one who believes in Tawhid should accept all the actions of Allāh with humility and surrender, even if he or she is tested with illness, poverty, or death of loved ones. He or she should not question Allāh's actions and ask, 'why did this happen?', 'why is so hot?', 'why did it not rain?', 'why hasn't Allāh given me wealth or children?', 'why did this young child die?' and so on.

To question Allāh's actions or believe that our opinion should also play a role in Allāh's actions and Will is a form of *shirk* in Allāh's actions, even if we outwardly claim to believe in Tawhid and we pray and fast.

Lesson 3

Tawhid vs. Shirk (Cont'd)

Tawhid and Shirk in the Obedience (Tā'ah) of Allāh

Tawhid in the Obedience (Tā'ah) of Allāh means not to associate any partners to Allāh by obeying anyone against Allāh's orders. A true *muwahhid* (believer in Tawhid) does not regard anyone else fit for obedience except Allāh. Even when he or she obeys his or her parents, for example, it is because Allāh has ordered it and therefore it is actually an obedience to Allāh. Unless of course the parents ask them to do something against Allāh's commands.

As an example from the Qur'ān of whom Allāh wants us to obey, Allāh says:

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

O you who have faith! Obey Allāh and obey the Messenger and those vested with authority (Ulil Amr) among you...

- Surah an-Nisā, 4:59

Ulil Amr are the Imāms from the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) who have been given authority by Allāh to represent Rasulullāh (s) after him. Since this command to obey them is from Allāh, it means obeying Rasulullāh (s) and the Ulil Amr is part of Tawhid in the Obedience (Tā'ah) of Allāh.

It is also for this reason that Allāh says:

﴿مَنْ يُطِيعِ الرَّسُولَ فَقَدْ أَطَاعَ اللَّهَ...﴾

Whoever obeys the Messenger has obeyed Allāh...

- Surah an-Nisā, 4:80

﴿...وَمَا آتَاكُمْ الرَّسُولُ فَخُذُوهُ وَمَا نَهَاكُمْ عَنْهُ فَانْتَهُوا...﴾

...And whatever the Messenger gives you, take it; and whatever he forbids you, then keep away (from it)...

- Surah al-Hashr, 59:7

In other words, because Allāh Himself is ordering us to obey His Messenger, therefore obeying Rasulullāh (s) is not a form of *shirk*. It is the same as obeying Allāh and it is, in fact, necessary for us to say we practice Tawhid in the Obedience (Tā'ah) of Allāh.

At the same time, to follow or obey anyone else as the Ulil Amr, Imām, Khalifa, spiritual leader, etc. whom Allāh has not commanded to follow - or even forbidden us to follow - is a form of *shirk* in the Obedience of Allāh.

Similarly, committing sins is a form of *shirk* in the obedience to Allāh. Why? Because a person who obeys his or her desires or the whispers of Shaytān or even a friend who tells him or her to do something wrong, is associating a partner to Allāh in his or her obedience and is obeying two masters: Allāh and Shaytān, or Allāh and his or her desires, or Allāh and another sinful person.

To show that sinful desires are like a ‘god’ and obeying them is a form of *shirk*, Allāh tells us in the Qur’ān:

﴿أَفَرَأَيْتَ مَنْ اتَّخَذَ إِلَهَهُ هَوَاهُ...﴾

Have you seen him who has taken his desire to be his god...

- Surah al-Jāthiya, 45:23

Tawhid and Shirk in the Worship (‘Ibādah) of Allāh

Tawhid in the worship (‘ibādah) of Allāh is that firstly, a person should not worship or prostrate before anyone or anything besides Allāh.

Sometimes however, a person worships Allāh outwardly only but in his or her heart, he or she worships something besides Allāh such as wealth or a career or job or a friend or games, and so on. This only becomes apparent when a person has to choose between Allāh and the other ‘god’. For example, if a person is watching their favourite show or talking to a friend and it is time for salāh, who do they choose? If they ignore salāh – which is like talking to Allāh, meeting with Him and spending time with Him privately – then it shows that they idolize and ‘worship’ the show or friend more than Allāh. Similarly if a person worships wealth, they will give up salāh because of their business or job.

Another danger and form of *shirk* in the worship (‘ibādah) of Allāh is when a person worships Allāh but their intention (niyyah) is not to worship Allāh alone. For example, they may pray to Allāh but they also desire to show off to others who are around them. Or they may fast in the month of Ramadān for the pleasure of Allāh but also to lose some weight and go on a diet. Or they may go for Hajj but also to do some business. All such acts of worship are *shirk* in the Worship (‘Ibādah) of Allāh.

Allāh refuses to accept any worship that is not done purely and 100% for Him alone. Even if we worship Allāh 99.99% and include someone or something else as only 0.01%, it is rejected by Allāh.

To worship Allāh but also with the intention to impress others is a sin and is called “riyā”. We have studied about the sin of riyā in Book 5 (under Akhlāq) but here we will mention just some examples from Qur’ān and hadith:

Allāh condemns those who pray only to be seen by others:

﴿فَوَيْلٌ لِلْمُصَلِّينَ الَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنْ صَلَاتِهِمْ سَاهُونَ. الَّذِينَ هُمْ يُرَاءُونَ﴾

Woe to them who pray, - those who are heedless of their prayers, those who show off.

- Surah al-Mā’un, 107:4-6

﴿إِنَّ الْمُنَافِقِينَ يُخَادِعُونَ اللَّهَ وَهُوَ خَادِعُهُمْ وَإِذَا قَامُوا إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ قَامُوا كُسَالَى

يُرَاءُونَ النَّاسَ وَلَا يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا﴾

The hypocrites indeed seek to deceive Allāh, but it is He who outwits them. When they stand up for prayer, they stand up lazily, showing off to the people and not remembering Allāh except a little.

- Surah an-Nisā, 4:142

In other words, a person might be a Muslim and *muwahhid* (monotheist) in his or her belief but a mushrik (polytheist) and munāfiq (hypocrite) in his or her ‘ibādah.

Rasulullāh (s) once said, ‘what I fear for you most is the *minor shirk*.’ So someone asked him, ‘O Rasulullāh, what does *minor shirk* mean?’ and he replied, ‘it is riyā. On the Day of Judgement, when Allāh will reward His creatures for their deeds, He will say to those who did riyā, ‘go to those whom you wanted to impress with your good deeds and ask them to reward you!’²

Often when Allāh mentions His worship, He also mentions that it should be done sincerely for Him alone.

﴿وَمَا أُمِرُوا إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ...﴾

Yet they were not commanded except to worship Allāh, sincere in their faith to Him only...

- Surah al-Bayyinah, 98:5

﴿قُلْ إِنِّي أُمِرْتُ أَنْ أَعْبُدَ اللَّهَ مُخْلِصًا لَهُ الدِّينَ﴾

² Allama Dastghayb, *Dhunub al-Kabirah*, chapter on shirk. It is perhaps called minor shirk because it is committed by a Muslim and therefore does not make him a mushrik from a fiqh point-of-view. Riyā is also called “hidden shirk” (shirk al-khafiyy).

Say, 'Indeed I have been commanded to worship Allāh with exclusive faith in Him,
- Surah az-Zumar, 39:11

﴿قُلْ أَمَرَ رَبِّي بِالْقِسْطِ وَأَقِيمُوا وُجُوهَكُمْ عِندَ كُلِّ مَسْجِدٍ وَادْعُوهُ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ
الدِّينَ كَمَا بَدَأَكُمْ تَعُودُونَ﴾

Say, 'My Lord has commanded justice,' and [He has commanded,] 'Set your heart [on Him] at every occasion of prayer, and call out to Him, putting your exclusive faith in Him..'

- Surah al-A'rāf, 7:29

A person who worships Allāh but also associates others in the worship will have the most regret on the Day of Judgement because he or she loses this world as well as the Hereafter. He or she struggles hard to worship Allāh but it is all useless because it is not for Allāh only and therefore there is nothing for him or her in the Hereafter.

Thus Allāh commands us:

﴿... فَمَنْ كَانَ يَرْجُوا لِقَاءَ رَبِّهِ فَلْيَعْمَلْ عَمَلًا صَالِحًا وَلَا يُشْرِكْ بِعِبَادَةِ رَبِّهِ أَحَدًا﴾

...So whoever hopes to meet his Lord - let him act righteously, and not associate anyone with the worship of his Lord.

- Surah al-Kahf 18:110

In fact, some people will end up in Hellfire because of their *shirk* in the 'ibādah of Allāh. Abu Basir was a companion of Imām Muhammad al-Bāqir ('a) and Imām Ja'far as-Sādiq ('a) and he narrates that he heard Imām Ja'far as-Sādiq ('a) saying that on the Day of Judgement some people who prayed salāh all their lives will be brought before Allāh and told, 'you worshipped only to show off to others' and then they will be sent to Hellfire. Others will be reciters of Qur'ān and will be told, 'your intention was only to impress people with your voice when reciting Qur'ān' and they too will be sent to Hellfire. Others will have given a lot of charity but always to have their name mentioned and they will be sent to Hellfire because they worshipped Allāh but also so that people would praise them for being generous. And some people will have died in jihād but they will be told, 'you fought only to show off your fighting skills and for people to see how brave and courageous you were' and they too will be sent to Hell even though they died in jihād.

We see therefore that the most important thing in any 'ibādah is the intention (niyyah). Whatever we do we must do it for Allāh only and once we have done it, we should hide our good deeds and in fact forget about them so that we don't mention them to others even many years later.

Lesson 4

The Qur'ān & Its Terminologies

In order to understand the Qur'ān better and to equip ourselves with the right skills to undertake a deeper study of the Qur'ān, it is necessary that we are aware of the various terminologies that are used by experts of Qur'ān to classify and categorize different verses (āyāt) of the Qur'ān. In this lesson and the next, we shall review some of the most common terminologies and give examples of them.

Surah and Juz

A surah of Qur'ān means a 'chapter' of the Qur'ān. The plural of Surah is Suwar. In total, Allāh revealed 114 suwar. The order in which the suwar of Qur'ān are arranged today is not the order in which they were revealed. For example, the first surah in our copies of the Qur'ān is Surah al-Fātiha but we know the first verses (āyāt) of Qur'ān to be revealed were the first five verses of Surah al-'Alaq (96).

Sometimes Allāh would reveal a complete surah to Rasullāh (s) and sometimes He would reveal to him only some āyāt. Rasullāh (s) had scribes whom he would instruct to write down the āyāt and he would tell them where to place them i.e. in which surah.

Much later on, the Muslims wanted to find a way to recite the whole Qur'ān in one month, such as in the month of Ramadān. So they divided the Qur'ān in 30 parts (one for each day). Each part is called a Juz and the plural of Juz is Ajzā.

The number of Suwar in a Juz can vary. For example, the first Juz only has Surah al-Fātiha and Surah al-Baqarah and Surah al-Baqarah is not even complete in this Juz and it continues on in the 2nd Juz. But as opposed to this, the last Juz (called Juz 'Ammah) has 37 suwar from Surah an-Nabā (78) to Surah an-Nās (114). This is because all the Makki suwar, which are shorter, have been placed at the end of the Qur'ān; and as we recite the Qur'ān from the start to the end, the suwar get shorter.

The longest surah in the Qur'ān is Surah al-Baqarah (2), which has 286 āyāt. And the shortest surah in the Qur'ān is Surah al-Kawthar (108), which has only 3 āyāt.

Every surah of the Qur'ān begins with "Bismillahir Rahmānir Rahim" (*In the Name of Allāh, the Most Kind, the Most Merciful*)³ except for Surah at-Tawbah (9) which talks a lot about the punishment and wrath of Allāh against the evildoers and therefore it does not begin with the Mercy (Rahmah) of Allāh. However the Basmalah occurs in the middle of Surah an-Naml (27) and therefore Surah an-Naml has the Basmalah twice and the entire Qur'ān still has 114 Basmalahs.

³ And this is known as the "Basmalah".

Makki and Madani

Rasulullāh (s) preached in Makkah for 12 years before migrating to Madina and preaching there for 11 years. The Qur'ān was therefore revealed to Rasulullāh (s) over a period of 23 years. Those suwar of Qur'ān that were revealed in Makkah are called Makki Suwar and those that were revealed in Madina are called Madani.

Makki suwar are typical short in length and they discuss matters of aqāid (usul ad-din) such as Allāh being only One, about the Day of Judgement, Paradise and Hellfire. This is because in the early days of Islām, the people to whom Rasulullāh (s) preached were mostly idol worshippers and did not believe in life after death. Most of the suwar in the last part of the Qur'ān (Juz 'Ammā) are Makki suwar.

A Madani surah is usually long and it discusses matters of furu' such as the laws of Islām regarding salāh, sawm, marriage, divorce, inheritance, matters related to social etiquette, political affairs, the Muslim community, and so on. This is because Madani suwar were revealed after the establishment of an Islāmic State in Madina and in the midst of those who were mostly Muslims. Madani suwar also discuss the history of past prophets and relationships with the Jews and Christians whom the Muslims interacted with in Madina and its neighbouring areas.

Most copies of the Qur'ān will mention whether a surah is Makki or Madani. Some copies of the Qur'ān even have an index at the back to show a list of all the suwar and where they were revealed.

Knowing where a surah was revealed is extremely important. Sometimes we call tell if a hadith is forged because the hadith will mention an āyah of Qur'ān and whom it was revealed for or an incident related to the āyah. But if the surah was, for example, Makki and the incident took place later on in Madina, then we know the hadith explaining that āyah is not true and was forged.

Nāsikh and Mansukh

When the Qur'ān was being revealed, Allāh placed some laws (shari'ah) for the Muslims and then changed or lifted those laws later. Sometimes He placed laws that were easier and then the laws were made stricter. This was to make the Muslims realize certain things or out of kindness to them because many of them were idol worshippers and it took time to change the whole community. This is different from now when a non-Muslim can easily integrate into Islām without needing to adjust slowly.

In other words, sometimes an āyah of Qur'ān would be revealed and then later on, another āyah would be revealed to cancel the first one or modify it. Both verses however would still remain as part of the Qur'ān. The original āyah that got cancelled is called the Mansukh (Abrogated) verse. And the new āyah that cancels the old one is called the Nāsikh (Abrogating) verse.

Here are some examples:

The Ayah of Najwa

There was a time when the Muslims in Madina were constantly asking Rasulullāh (s) questions to an extent of bothering him with unnecessary questions, just for the sake of asking. To test the Muslims and see if they really were so interested in gaining knowledge from Rasulullāh (s), Allāh revealed a verse to say that anyone who wanted to ask a question had to give some money to the poor first:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا نَاجَيْتُمُ الرَّسُولَ فَقَدِّمُوا بَيْنَ يَدَيْ نَجْوَاكُمْ صَدَقَةً ذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ وَأَطْهَرُ فَإِن لَّمْ تَجِدُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ﴾

O you who have faith! When you talk secretly to the Apostle, offer a charity before your secret talk. That is better for you and purer. But if you cannot afford [to make the offering], then Allāh is indeed all-forgiving, all-merciful.

- Surah al-Mujādilah, 58:12

This law was for the rich only and not applicable for the poor. Suddenly people started thinking about their money and they stopped asking questions even though they could have done so by giving even a dirham to the poor!

All the exegetes (mufasirrun) of Qur'ān agree that when this verse was revealed, no one acted on it except for Imām Ali ('a). He had one dinar with him. He exchanged it for 10 dirhams and he gave the poor one dirham at a time until he had asked 10 questions from Rasulullāh (s). Then Allāh (s.w.t.) revealed another āyah to cancel this āyah and it is the following:

﴿أَأَشْفَقْتُمْ أَن تُقَدِّمُوا بَيْنَ يَدَيْ نَجْوَاكُمْ صَدَقَاتٍ فَإِذْ لَمْ تَفْعَلُوا وَتَابَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكُمْ فَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَأَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَاللَّهُ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ﴾

Were you afraid of offering charities before your secret talks? So, as you did not do it, and Allāh was forgiving to you, maintain the prayer and pay the zakāt, and obey Allāh and His Messenger. And Allāh is well aware of what you do.

- Surah al-Mujādilah, 58:13

So this verse 13 is the Nāsikh and the previous verse 12 is the Mansukh.

The Number of Warriors

Allāh revealed to Rasulullāh (s) about the faithful (mu'mineen):

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ حَرِّضِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ عَلَى الْقِتَالِ إِنْ يَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ عَشْرُونَ صَابِرُونَ يَغْلِبُوا
مِائَتِينَ وَإِنْ يَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ مِائَةٌ يَغْلِبُوا أَلْفًا مِنَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِأَنَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ﴾

O Prophet! Urge on the faithful to fight: If there be twenty patient men among you, they shall overcome two hundred; and if there be a hundred of you, they shall overcome a thousand of the faithless, because they are a people who do not understand.

- Surah an-Anfāl, 8:65

The verse was to tell the faithful that with their faith and patience and with Allāh on their side, one of them was sufficient against ten of the faithless. But then there were some amongst the Muslims who were cowards and could not face the enemy with a ratio of one against ten. So they expressed their fears to Rasullāh (s) and Allāh revealed:

﴿الآن خَفَّفَ اللَّهُ عَنْكُمْ وَعَلِمَ أَنَّ فِيكُمْ ضَعْفًا فَإِنْ يَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ مِائَةٌ صَابِرَةٌ يَغْلِبُوا
مِائَتِينَ وَإِنْ يَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ أَلْفٌ يَغْلِبُوا أَلْفَيْنِ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ﴾

Now Allāh has lightened your burden, knowing that there is weakness in you. So if there be a hundred patient men among you, they shall overcome two hundred; and if there be a thousand, they shall overcome two thousand, by Allāh's permission; and Allāh is with the patient.

- Surah al-Anfāl, 8:66

So the ratio was reduced to one Muslim against two of the faithless instead of one Muslim against ten of the faithless. This verse 66 is the Nāsikh and the previous verse 65 is the Mansukh.

There are other examples as well, where Allāh changed some of the laws regarding some punishments in Islām, the laws of inheritance, the permission to fight in Jihād to defend oneself, and so on.

Lesson 5

The Qur'ān & Its Terminologies (cont'd)

Muhkam and Mutashābih

Some āyāt of the Qur'ān are very direct in their message. As soon as we read them, the meaning is obvious and it can have only one meaning. There is no room for another interpretation. Such an āyah is called a Muhkam (Definite) verse. The plural of muhkam is muhkamāt.

And other āyāt of the Qur'ān cannot be interpreted directly. We must study them in relation to other āyāt of the Qur'ān in order to extract their meaning otherwise we can easily misunderstand what the āyah means to say. This type of an āyah is called a Mutashābih (Indirect) verse. The plural of mutashābih is mutashābihāt.

Some people define the muhkamāt as “clear” verses and the mutashābihāt as “ambiguous” verses. Then they debate why Allāh has made some of the āyāt of the Qur'ān ambiguous i.e. why verses have multiple meanings that cause confusion. And some Muslims (like the Wahabbi) interpret every verse of the Qur'ān literally. If it does not make sense literally they say we should just read and accept the āyah but not ask questions about it. But of course that does not make any sense because why would Allāh reveal a verse if He did not want us to know what it means!

Mutashābihāt therefore does not mean verses of Qur'ān that have multiple, confusing or contradicting meanings. Rather mutashābihāt refers to those verses with deeper meanings and we need to look at other verses of the Qur'ān in order to understand them.

And in fact, the āyāt (verses) of the Qur'ān are all interdependent. Some verses act as muhkamāt to help us understand other mutashābihāt verses and in some cases, the mutashābihāt act as muhkamāt to help us understand other verses.

The following are examples of muhkamāt and mutashābihāt verses in the Qur'ān. Look at the following āyah:

﴿الرَّحْمَانُ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ اسْتَوَى﴾

The All-beneficent, settled on the Throne.

- Surah Tā Hā, 20:5

At first we not are sure whether to interpret this āyah literally or not i.e. that Allāh sits on a Throne. Then we read other āyāt like:

﴿فَاطِرُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ... لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ...﴾

The Originator of the heavens and the earth... nothing is like Him....

- Surah ash-Shura, 42:11

This āyah, among others, makes us realize that Allāh is not a physical body limited by time and space and therefore 'settled on the Throne' means having dominance and mastery over the universe and not literally sitting on a throne. So the first āyah is a mutashābih verse and the second is a muhkam verse.

Here is another example:

﴿إِلَىٰ رَبِّهَا نَاظِرَةٌ﴾

looking at their Lord,

- Surah al-Qiyāmah, 75:23

The āyah above suggests that people will be able to look at their Lord on the Day of Judgement but then we find another āyah in the Qur'ān that says:

﴿لَا تُدْرِكُهُ الْأَبْصَارُ وَهُوَ يُدْرِكُ الْأَبْصَارَ وَهُوَ اللَّطِيفُ الْخَبِيرُ﴾

Eyes cannot reach Him, yet He reaches (even) the sights (of others), and He is the All-gracious, the All-aware.

- Surah al-An'ām, 6:103

This clarifies that Allāh cannot be seen with the eye and therefore "looking at their Lord" on the Day of Judgement means looking towards Him for mercy, salvation, and so forth, just like we "look" forward to something happening but it doesn't mean literally seeing with the eyes. So the first āyah is mutashābih and the second one is muhkam.

Here is a third example:

﴿... نَسُوا اللَّهَ فَنَسِيَهُمْ...﴾

... They (the hypocrites) have forgotten Allāh, so He has forgotten them....

- Surah at-Tawbah, 9:67

If we interpret this mutashābih āyah literally then it means that Allāh can also forget! But then we find other muhkam verses such as:

﴿... وَمَا كَانَ رَبُّكَ نَسِيًّا﴾

... and your Lord is not forgetful.

- Surah Maryam, 19:64

As well as:

﴿قَالَ عَلِمَهَا عِنْدَ رَبِّي فِي كِتَابٍ لَا يَضِلُّ رَبِّي وَلَا يَنْسَى﴾

He (Nabi Musa (‘a)) said, ‘Their knowledge is with my Lord, in a Book. My Lord neither makes any error nor forgets.’

- Surah Tā Hā, 20:52

This makes it clear for us that ‘*He (Allāh) has forgotten them*’ in 9:67 means He has left them alone to go astray instead of guiding them because they have neglected and forgotten Allāh and have been occupied with the world and its pleasures.

And as a final example, look at this verse:

﴿... وَلَا يُسْأَلُ عَنْ ذُنُوبِهِمُ الْمُجْرِمُونَ﴾

...The guilty will not be questioned about their sins.

- Surah al-Qasas, 28:78

The verse above seems to suggest that the criminals will not be questioned for their sins. But why they ‘*will not be questioned*’ is clarified by the following muhkam āyah:

﴿فَيَوْمَئِذٍ لَا يُسْأَلُ عَنْ ذَنْبِهِ إِنْسٌ وَلَا جَانٌّ... يُعْرِفُ الْمُجْرِمُونَ بِسِيمَاهُمْ فَيُؤْخَذُ

بِالنَّوَاصِي وَالْأَقْدَامِ﴾

On that day neither humans will be questioned about their sins nor jinn.... the guilty will be recognized by their mark; so they will be seized by the forelocks and the feet.

- Surah ar-Rahmān, 55:39-41

Tarjumah, Tafsir, Ta’wil and Tadabbur

Tarjumah means ‘translation’. For example, when you read an āyah of the Qur’ān in English, you are reading the tarjumah of the original āyah that is in Arabic. In your diniyat text books, every āyah of Qur’ān is given in Arabic followed by its tarjumah in English.

Tafsir is the commentary of the āyāt of Qur’ān. A Mufassir (one who does tafsir) explains to us more about the verses of the Qur’ān. A tafsir may explain, for example, what each Arabic word in an āyah means, any special grammar points about the āyah, the history behind the āyah, when it was revealed, for whom it was revealed, any hadith from Rasullullāh (s) or the Imāms (‘a) about that particular āyah, and so on.

Tadabbur is to reflect on the āyāt of the Qur’ān and try and relate to them in our own lives. For example, the Qur’ān mentions that backbiting is like eating the flesh of dead body of the person we are backbiting:

﴿..وَلَا يَغْتَبِ بَعْضُكُمُ بَعْضًا أَيُحِبُّ أَحَدُكُمْ أَنْ يَأْكُلَ لَحْمَ أَخِيهِ مَيْتًا فَكَرِهْتُمُوهُ ..﴾

...and do not backbite one another. Will any of you love to eat the flesh of his dead brother? You would hate it....

- Surah al-Hujurāt, 49:12

Now, after reading this āyah, we may reflect on it (i.e. do tadabbur) and think of why Allāh has given this example and how it applies to our society today. Of course when we do tadabbur, we are not saying that what we have thought of is **the** meaning of the verse that Allāh intended. It is simply our own realizations and reflections. It is ok to do tadabbur as long as the views we come up with does not contradict any other āyah of the Qur'ān or the authentic ahādith. In fact, the Qur'ān itself encourages us not to just recite it but to ponder on its verses:

﴿أَفَلَا يَتَدَبَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ أَمْ عَلَى قُلُوبٍ أَقْفَالُهَا﴾

Do they not reflect (do tadabbur of) the Qur'ān, or are there locks on the hearts?

- Surah Muhammad, 47:24

And lastly, Ta'wil is the hidden meaning or inner interpretation of an āyah. Every āyah of Qur'ān can have up to seventy different inner meanings. That is why the Qur'ān is so profound and deep and it is a living miracle and still relevant and useful even 1400 years later. However ta'wil cannot be done by anyone. It can only be done by Rasulullāh (s) and the ma'sumeen ('a) from the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) whom the Qur'ān calls 'those firmly grounded in knowledge' (ar-rāsikhuna fil 'ilm).

In the words of the Qur'ān:

﴿... وَمَا يَعْلَمُ تَأْوِيلَهُ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَالرَّاسِخُونَ فِي الْعِلْمِ ...﴾

...But no one knows its (the Qur'ān's) interpretation (ta'wil) except Allāh and those firmly grounded in knowledge...

- Surah Al-i Imrān, 3:7

Rasulullāh (s) stressed that no one should try and give their own interpretation of the Qur'ān and he said, 'whoever interprets the Qur'ān according to his own opinion, reserves himself a seat in the Fire (of Hell).'⁴

Abu Basir reported from Imām Ja'far as-Sādiq ('a) that he said, 'whoever interprets the Qur'ān according to his own opinion, if he gets it right, he shall have no reward for it; and if he gets it wrong, he shall be further removed from paradise.'⁵

In other words, there is no benefit to forcing our own interpretation on a verse of Qur'ān even if it might be correct.

⁴ al-Fayd al-Kāshāni, *Tafsir as-Sāfi*, 3:7

⁵ Tabātabāi, *Tafsir al-Mizān*, 3:7

Why is there so much restriction and stress not to give our own ta'wil on the verses of the Qur'ān? Well, because if everyone did that, soon the Qur'ān will have a completely different meaning from what Allāh wanted it to have!

The Ma'sumeen ('a) can of course tell us the ta'wil of a verse. The beauty of their ta'wil is that it does not contradict the tafsir either i.e. the hidden meaning (ta'wil) can be true and so can the apparent meaning (tafsir). For example, Allāh says:

﴿فَلْيَنْظُرِ الْإِنْسَانُ إِلَى طَعَامِهِ﴾

So let man consider his food

- Surah 'Abasa, 80:24

Then Imām Ja'far as-Sādiq ('a) has explained this verse with a ta'wil and said, 'it means, let man see where he gets his knowledge from' i.e. his spiritual food.

This is a beautiful meaning. The literal meaning is true, that we should look at the food we eat, how it grows in the earth, how Allāh makes the earth fertile, the water cycle and rain that helps the crops grow, the sun and its heat, the nutrients in the food and how they help our body to become strong and to fight illnesses, etc. and how all these blessings are signs from Allāh. But also, the ta'wil is true: knowledge feeds our minds and hearts just like food feeds our body. Just like bad food can harm our body, similarly bad knowledge can create doubt and disbelief in Allāh in our minds and hearts. So instead of taking every idea from anyone, we should look where it is coming from and ensure it is coming from a pure source before we put that knowledge 'into our minds' just like we put food 'into our bodies.'

Another example of ta'wil is for the following āyah:

﴿عَمَّ يَتَسَاءَلُونَ . عَنِ النَّبَأِ الْعَظِيمِ . الَّذِي هُمْ فِيهِ مُخْتَلِفُونَ . كَلَّا سَيَعْلَمُونَ . ثُمَّ كَلَّا

﴿سَيَعْلَمُونَ﴾

What is it about which they question each other?! [Is it] about the Great News, the one about which they differ? No indeed! They will soon know! Again, no indeed! They will soon know!

- Surah an-Nabā, 78:1-5

The tafsir of this āyah is that the "Great News" is the Day of Judgement and that is what the Qur'ān was referring to when the verse was revealed. But from the Imāms ('a) we also have a ta'wil that says the "Great News" (Nabā al-'Adheem) is Amir al-Mu'mineen Imām Ali b. Abi Tālib ('a). This is also mentioned in the du'as of the Ma'sumeen ('a) such as in Du'a an-Nudba where Imām al-Hujjah al-Mahdi ('atfs) is referred to as 'Yabna Nabā al-'Adheem' meaning 'O Son of the Great News'.

The tafsir is also right and the ta'wil is also right because it is from a ma'sum Imām ('a) and because people are still 'asking each other' and arguing about the right of

Imām Ali (‘a). But of course ordinary people are not allowed to do such ta’wil of the Qur’ān.

On the other hand, the Wahabbi say any kind of ta’wil is harām and we should only understand the Qur’ān literally without trying to explain its inner meaning. And they say, if we don’t understand it then we should just keep quiet. But this makes no sense at all. For example, Allāh says:

﴿وَمَنْ كَانَ فِي هَذِهِ أَعْمَىٰ فَهُوَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ أَعْمَىٰ وَأَضَلُّ سَبِيلًا﴾

But whoever has been blind in this [world], will be blind in the Hereafter, and [even] more astray from the [right] way.

- Surah al-‘Isrā, 17:72

Now if we only interpret this literally, it means anyone who is visually-impaired and handicapped in this world will also be visually-impaired in the Hereafter. But the ta’wil means that whoever is ‘blind’ to the Truth and refuses to ‘see’ i.e. accept the Truth in this world then he or she will be raised literally blind on the Day of Judgement. We therefore need the ahādith of Rasullāh (s) and the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) to understand the Qur’ān correctly.

Asbāb an-Nuzul

The word ‘asbāb’ is the plural of ‘sabab’, which means ‘reason’ or ‘cause’. And an-Nuzul means ‘revelation’. Therefore *asbāb an-nuzul* means ‘the Reasons for Revelation’ or ‘the Causes of Revelation’.

When we study the Qur’ān, it is important that we first ask: why was this āyah revealed? Was it for a particular person or a particular reason or incident that took place? In other words, we must try and find the sabab an-nuzul (cause of revelation) for that āyah.

Of course the Qur’ān is not a book of history only and it is a living Book that we can apply to our lives even today. But in order to make sure that we don’t give the āyāt of the Qur’ān wrong meanings or apply it incorrectly in our lives, we should try and understand what Allāh intended when He originally revealed every āyah.

For example, look at the following verse:

﴿سَأَلَ سَائِلٌ بِعَذَابٍ وَقَعِ﴾

An asker asked for a punishment bound to befall

- Surah al-Ma’ārij, 70:1

When we read this āyah initially, we have no idea what it is talking about. Thereafter we look at the books of history and tafsir (commentaries of Qur’ān) and we find that

this verse was revealed at Ghadir Khumm when Rasulullāh (s) declared Imām Ali (‘a) as his successor and said, *man kuntu mawlāhu fa hādha ‘Aliyyun mawlāhu (whoever considers me to be his master, then this Ali is his master now)*. Then a man came to Rasulullāh (s) and said to him angrily, ‘is this from Allāh or are you appointing him only because he is your cousin and son-in-law?’ And Rasulullāh (s) assured the man it was from Allāh. Then the man looked up to the heavens, because he didn’t believe Rasulullāh (s), and prayed to Allāh, ‘O Allāh, if this is true, then strike me with Your punishment right now!’ And as soon as he said that, a stone fell from the heavens and hit the man on the head and killed him instantly.

This incident and story is the *sabab an-nuzul* for the verse. It tells us the Cause of Revelation. Thereafter we can learn from the verse the importance of Imām Ali (‘a)’s authority and guardianship (*wilāyah*) and realize that he was appointed by Allāh’s orders to succeed Rasulullāh (s).

Imām Ali (‘a) used to say, ‘Ask me (anything) about the Book of Allāh. By Allāh! There is not a single verse which was revealed during night or day, during travel or at home, but that Rasulullāh (s) read it to me and taught me its meanings...’⁶

⁶ Shaykh at-Tusi, *Amāli*.

Lesson 6

'Ilm al-Ghayb

'Ilm al-Ghayb literally means 'Knowledge of the Hidden'. When we say someone has knowledge of the 'Hidden' or the 'Unseen', it could mean knowledge of that which our physical eyes cannot see, such as the angels, the intermediate world where the dead go to ('ālam al-barzakh) and even knowledge of the Next World (ākhirah) and matters related to the Day of Judgement, Paradise (al-Jannah) and Hellfire (an-Nār).

But 'Ilm al-Ghayb could also refer to what is unknown of the past and future, or even present. The past might be knowledge of all the prophets and messengers that were sent and the nations that came and disappeared. The present may be what illness we may be suffering from, what we will earn today, who will die and who will be born today, what the weather will be like exactly, and so on. The future may be when we will die, or when the Imām ('atfs) will return or even when the world will come to an end.

Hidden Knowledge of the Anbiyā and Awsiyā

The Shi'ah Muslims as well as many Sunni Muslims who are not Wahabbi, all believe that the prophets and messengers of Allāh as well as their rightful successors (awsiyā) can also possess hidden knowledge and predict matters to occur in the future. In fact, some saintly individuals (awliyā) may also possess this knowledge through these anbiyā and awsiyā.

Muslims such as the Wahabbi strongly object to this and say it is *shirk* to believe that anyone can have 'Ilm al-Ghayb besides Allāh. To support their arguments, they quote verses of Qur'ān such as:

﴿قُلْ لَا يَعْلَمُ مَنْ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ الْغَيْبَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَمَا يَشْعُرُونَ أَيَّانَ يُبْعَثُونَ﴾

Say, 'No one in the heavens or the earth knows the Unseen except Allāh, and they are not aware when they will be resurrected.'

- Surah al-Naml, 27:65

﴿وَعِنْدَهُ مَفَاتِحُ الْغَيْبِ لَا يَعْلَمُهَا إِلَّا هُوَ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ وَمَا تَسْقُطُ مِنْ وَرَقَةٍ إِلَّا يَعْلَمُهَا وَلَا حَبَّةٍ فِي ظُلُمَاتِ الْأَرْضِ وَلَا رَطْبٍ وَلَا يَابِسٍ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ مُبِينٍ﴾

With Him are the keys of the Unseen; no one knows them except Him. He knows whatever there is in land and sea. No leaf falls without His knowing it, nor is there a

grain in the darkness of the earth, nor anything fresh or withered but it is in a manifest Book.

- Surah al-An'ām, 6:59

﴿وَيَقُولُونَ لَوْلَا أُنزِلَ عَلَيْهِ آيَةٌ مِنْ رَبِّهِ فَقُلْ إِنَّمَا الْغَيْبُ لِلَّهِ فَانْتَظِرُوا إِنِّي مَعَكُمْ مِنَ الْمُنتَظِرِينَ﴾

They say, 'Why has not some sign (i.e. miracle) been sent down to him from his Lord?' Say, '[The knowledge of] the Unseen belongs only to Allāh. So wait. I too am waiting along with you.'

- Surah Yunus, 10:20

﴿إِنَّ اللَّهَ عِنْدَهُ عِلْمُ السَّاعَةِ وَيُنزِلُ الْغَيْثَ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا فِي الْأَرْحَامِ وَمَا تَدْرِي نَفْسٌ مَآذَا تَكْسِبُ غَدًا وَمَا تَدْرِي نَفْسٌ بِأَيِّ أَرْضٍ تَمُوتُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ﴾

Indeed the knowledge of the Hour is with Allāh. He sends down the rain, and He knows what is in the wombs. No soul knows what it will earn tomorrow, and no soul knows in what land it will die. Indeed Allāh is All-knowing, All-aware.

- Surah Luqmān, 31:34

But in contrast to this, we find there are verses of Qur'ān that prove that others as well, may have 'ilm al-Ghayb. For example:

﴿عَالِمُ الْغَيْبِ فَلَا يُظْهِرُ عَلَى غَيْبِهِ أَحَدًا. إِلَّا مَنْ ارْتَضَى مِنْ رَسُولٍ...﴾

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

- Surah al-Jinn, 72:26-27

Or for example:

﴿...وَلَا يُحِيطُونَ بِشَيْءٍ مِنْ عِلْمِهِ إِلَّا بِمَا شَاءَ...﴾

...and they do not comprehend anything of His knowledge except what He wishes...

- Surah al-Baqarah, 2:255

So how do we explain this apparent contradiction?

The answer is very simple: there is no contradiction; the verses that talk of 'ilm al-ghayb belonging to Allāh alone are emphasizing that no one can have hidden knowledge without Allāh's permission and independent of Him. In other words, such

verses are to let us know that soothsayers, astrologers and people who pretend to predict the future out of their own knowledge or through sorcery and magic, or communication with the jinn, should not be believed.

But this does not mean that Allāh cannot or will not give any of His hidden knowledge to those whom He appoints and who represent Him.

In fact, there are numerous examples in the Qur'ān of Allāh sharing His 'ilm al-ghayb with His prophets and messengers:

1. Allāh (s.w.t.) informs Rasulullāh (s) of a future Roman victory over the Persians:

﴿غَلِبَتِ الرُّومُ . فِي أَدْنَى الْأَرْضِ وَهُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ غَلِبِهِمْ سَيَغْلِبُونَ . فِي بضع
سِنِينَ ...﴾

Rome has been vanquished in a nearby territory, but following their defeat they will be victors in a few years.

- Surah al-Ankabut, 30:2-4

2. Allāh (s.w.t.) informs Rasulullāh (s) of a future victory over Makkah:

﴿لَقَدْ صَدَقَ اللَّهُ رَسُولَهُ الرُّؤْيَا بِالْحَقِّ لَتَدْخُلَنَّ الْمَسْجِدَ الْحَرَامَ إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ
آمِنِينَ ...﴾

Certainly Allāh has fulfilled His Messenger's vision in all truth: You will surely enter the Sacred Mosque, God willing, in safety,...

- Surah al-Fath, 48:27

3. Nabi 'Isa ('a) used to inform people of what they would eat in future and what they had hidden in their homes:

﴿... وَأُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا تَأْكُلُونَ وَمَا تَدَّخِرُونَ فِي بُيُوتِكُمْ...﴾

...And I will tell you what you have eaten and what you have stored in your houses...

- Surah Al-i Imrān, 3:49

4. The mother of Nabi Musa ('a) is given hidden knowledge of the future that her son, Nabi Musa ('a) will return to her safely:

﴿وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَىٰ أُمِّ مُوسَىٰ أَنْ أَرْضِعِيهِ فَإِذَا خِفْتِ عَلَيْهِ فَأَلْقِيهِ فِي الْيَمِّ وَلَا
تَخَافِي وَلَا تَحْزَنِي إِنَّا رَادُّوهُ إِلَيْكَ وَجَاعِلُوهُ مِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ﴾

We revealed to Moses' mother, [saying], 'Nurse him; then, when you fear for him, cast him into the river, and do not fear or grieve, for We will restore him to you and make him one of the messengers.'

- Surah al-Qasas, 28:7

5. Allāh (s.w.t.) informs Rasullāh (s) about the hidden history of past prophets:

﴿تِلْكَ مِنْ أَنْبَاءِ الْغَيْبِ نُوحِيهَا إِلَيْكَ...﴾

These are accounts of the Unseen which We reveal to you...

- Surah Hud, 11:49

In the last āyah above, as well as 3:44, 12:102, and other āyāt, the phrase *min anbnā'il ghayb* (*accounts of the Unseen*) is used, which clearly categorize the news of the past as *ghayb* (hidden or unseen) knowledge.

It is therefore very clear that if human beings reveal any hidden knowledge that is from Allāh, it does not mean they are His partners or that it is *shirk*. What is *shirk* is to believe that someone can access '*ilm al-ghayb* on their own, without and even against Allāh's Will and Permission.

'Ilm al-Ghayb in Hadith

We have numerous ahādith from Rasullāh (s) and the Aimmah from the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) in which they have predicted the future or revealed what is hidden in people's minds or even their past. Those who are opposed to the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) and their Shī'ah, argue that this is *shirk*. They also argue that if the Imāms knew the hidden they how did they get martyred? In other words, if Imām Ali ('a) knew he will be struck in the Masjid of Kufa on 19th Ramadān 40 AH, then why did he go to the masjid? If he knew, then it would be like suicide and if he didn't know then why do the Shī'ah say he had hidden knowledge of it? Similarly examples are quoted for Imām Husayn ('a) going to Karbala and the poisoning of the other Aimmah ('a).

There is no doubt that the Aimmah ('a) knew how they would be martyred and Rasullāh (s) had informed them of this from what the archangel Jibrāil ('a) had told him. But the Aimmah ('a) also knew that this was Allāh's Will and because they had surrendered completely to Allāh's Will, they did go to their martyrdom with the intention of dying or taking their own lives but with the intention of surrendering to Allāh and letting His Will be done.

Here is an example of Imām Ali (‘a) predicting his own martyrdom:

It is reported that when people gathered to pay allegiance (bay‘ah) to Amir al-Mu‘minin Imām Ali (‘a), Abd al-Rahmān b. Muljam al-Murādi, may Allāh curse him, also came but Imām Ali (‘a) refused to accept his pledge of allegiance twice to thrice. Finally he allowed him to pledge his allegiance. Then Imām Ali (‘a) said, ‘what prevents the most wretched person of the community from doing his wicked deed now? For I swear by Him in Whose Hand is my life (i.e. I swear by Allāh), you will colour this (with blood) from this’ and he put his hand on his beard and his head.

When Ibn Muljam left, Imām Ali (‘a) recited the following words of poetry:

*Stiffen your chest for death, for indeed death will meet you.
Do not show grief at death, when it arrives in your valley.*

Imām Ali (‘a) called Ibn Muljam back a second time and warned him to be trustworthy and not to be treacherous or break his oath. Ibn Muljam, may Allāh curse him, protested and said to Imām Ali (‘a), ‘I have not seen you do this with anyone except me.’ Then he left and Imām Ali (‘a) said, ‘I want what’s good for him but he wants my death!’⁷

The following is another example of hidden knowledge that Imām Ali (‘a) revealed that he was told of by Rasulullāh (s):

Abd Allāh b. Abbās reports that he was with Imām Ali (‘a) at Dhu Qār, where they were preparing for battle and Imām Ali (‘a) predicted, ‘exactly a thousand men will come from Kufa and pledge allegiance to me.’

Abd Allāh b. Abbās says he became worried that if the number of people that Imām Ali (‘a) had predicted would be more or less then it would prove he was wrong. So he began to count them. After 999 men had come and pledged allegiance, the people stopped. Abd Allāh b. Abbās was now very anxious and began having doubts in his mind.

As he was thinking of this, he saw a man approaching alone. He was wearing a woolen cloak and he had a sword, a shield and some other weapons. He said to Imām Ali (‘a), ‘stretch out your hand so that I may pledge allegiance to you.’

This man was none other than Uways al-Qarani, whom Rasulullāh (s) had blessed and predicted to Imām Ali (‘a) that Uways would die a martyr fighting for the Truth. When Abd Allāh b. Abbās saw this, he was amazed at the accuracy of Imām Ali (‘a)’s prediction.⁸

⁷ Shaykh Mufid, *Kitāb al-Irshād*, p. 6-7

⁸ Shaykh Mufid, *Kitāb al-Irshād*, p. 237-8

There are numerous other examples such as Imām Ali (‘a) informing his close Shi’ah how exactly and where they would be killed. These included Maytham at-Tammār, Kumayl b. Ziyād, Rushayd al-Hijri and Qanbar, the servant of Imām Ali (‘a). Similar examples of predicting the future and revealing hidden knowledge are widely reported from the other Imāms of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) as well.

Lesson 7

Ar-Raj'ah

(The Return of the Dead)

Definition

Ar-Raj'ah means 'The Return'. It refers to a concept in Islām that after the coming of Imām al-Mahdi ('atfs) and before the Day of Judgement, a group of people from the good and evil, will be brought back to life. And this 'Return of the Dead' to the earth is also one of the signs of the end of the world, before the start of the Day of Judgement.

The Sunni Muslims do not believe in the concept of ar-Raj'ah but it is an important belief in the teachings of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a).

Ar-Raj'ah in fact will not be for those who died before the coming of Rasullāh (s). The only people who will be brought back to life will be the very good and pure from the Islāmic Ummah (Nation) and the very evil. The pure will be brought back because of their desire to support Imām al-Mahdi ('atfs) in his mission and also to avenge themselves against the evil. And the evil will be brought back to be paid for their evil in this world before the Judgement in the Hereafter.

Objections to Raj'ah

The non-Shi'ahs have raised objections such as, 'what is the need to punish the evil in this world when Allāh will punish them on the Day of Judgement?' and so on. However, as we have mentioned earlier, ar-Raj'ah is not just to punish the evil in this world before they are punished again in the Hereafter but it also fulfills the desire of every Shi'ah and mu'min who wanted to be with Imām al-Mahdi ('atfs) but died before the coming of the Imām ('atfs).

The Shi'ah therefore stress the importance of believing in ar-Raj'ah and it has been discussed and upheld by great Shi'ah scholars such as Shaykh al-Mufid, Sayyid al-Murtada, 'Allama Majlisi, Shaykh al-Kulayni and Shaykh as-Saduq.

'Allama Majlisi, for example, has written, 'how can a faithful (mu'min) doubt a truth from the pure Imāms when there are numerous traditions (hadith mutawātir) from them concerning this matter, and in fact hundreds of traditions....'⁹

The famous Shi'ah scholar and muhaddith, Shaykh Hurr al-Amili as well as said the ahādith on ar-Raj'ah are too many to even count.¹⁰

⁹ 'Allama Majlisi, *Bihār al-Anwār*, v. 53.

There are two main issues that we need to discuss concerning ar-Raj'ah: first, whether it is possible for such a thing to happen. And second, proof that it will happen from Qur'ān and Hadith.

The Possibility of ar-Raj'ah

Firstly, the fact that Allāh can bring all the dead back to life on the Day of Judgement is sufficient proof that if He wills, He can bring a group of them back to life even before that.

Secondly, ar-Raj'ah has already occurred in previous Nations (Umam pl. of Ummah) and this is confirmed by the Qur'ān. For example:

1. The coming back to life of a group from the Banu Isrāil:

﴿وَإِذْ قُلْتُمْ يَا مُوسَىٰ لَنْ نُؤْمِنَ لَكَ حَتَّىٰ نَرَىٰ اللَّهَ جَهْرَةً فَأَخَذَتْكُمُ الصَّاعِقَةُ
وَأَنْتُمْ تَنْظُرُونَ . ثُمَّ بَعَثْنَاكُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَوْتِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ﴾

*And when you said, 'O Moses, we will not believe you until we see Allāh visibly.' Thereupon a thunderbolt seized you as you looked on. **Then We raised you up after your death** so that you might give thanks.*

- Surah al-Baqarah, 2:55-56

2. The coming back to life of the murdered victim from Banu Isrāil:

﴿وَإِذْ قَتَلْتُمْ نَفْسًا فَادَّارَأْتُمْ فِيهَا وَاللَّهُ مُخْرِجٌ مَّا كُنْتُمْ تَكْتُمُونَ . فَقُلْنَا اضْرِبُوهُ
بِبَعْضِهَا كَذَلِكَ يُخِي اللَّهُ الْمَوْتَىٰ وَيُرِيكُمْ آيَاتِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ﴾

*And when you killed a soul, and accused one another about it - and Allāh was to expose whatever you were concealing - We said, 'Strike him with a piece of it:' **thus does Allāh revive the dead**, and He shows you His signs so that you may apply reason.*

- Surah al-Baqarah, 2:72-73

3. The death of thousands of people and then their being brought back to life again i.e. their raj'ah:

¹⁰ Lectures of Ayatullah Ja'far Subhani, *Ilāhiyāt*, v. 4, p. 290-1.

﴿أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ خَرَجُوا مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ وَهُمْ أُلُوفٌ حَذَرَ الْمَوْتِ فَقَالَ لَهُمُ
اللَّهُ مُوتُوا ثُمَّ أَحْيَاهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَذُو فَضْلٍ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا
يَشْكُرُونَ﴾

Have you not regarded those who left their homes in thousands, apprehensive of death, whereupon Allāh said to them, 'Die,' then He revived them? Indeed Allāh is gracious to mankind, but most people do not give thanks.

- Surah al-Baqarah, 2:243

4. The resurrection of Nabi 'Uzair ('a) after he was dead for a hundred years:

﴿أَوْ كَالَّذِي مَرَّ عَلَى قَرْيَةٍ وَهِيَ خَاوِيَةٌ عَلَى عُرُوشِهَا قَالَ أَنَّى يُحْيِي هَذِهِ اللَّهُ
بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا فَأَمَاتَهُ اللَّهُ مِائَةَ عَامٍ ثُمَّ بَعَثَهُ قَالَ كَمْ لَبِثْتَ قَالَ لَبِثْتُ يَوْمًا أَوْ بَعْضَ
يَوْمٍ قَالَ بَلْ لَبِثْتَ مِائَةَ عَامٍ فَانظُرْ إِلَى طَعَامِكَ وَشَرَابِكَ لَمْ يَتَسَنَّهْ وَانظُرْ إِلَى
حِمَارِكَ وَلِنَجْعَلَكَ آيَةً لِلنَّاسِ وَانظُرْ إِلَى الْعِظَامِ كَيْفَ نُنشِزُهَا ثُمَّ نَكْسُوهَا
لَحْمًا فَلَمَّا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُ قَالَ أَعْلَمُ أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ﴾

Or him (that is Nabi Uzair ('a)) who came upon a township as it lay fallen on its trellises. He said, 'How will Allāh revive this after its death?!' So Allāh made him die for a hundred years, then He resurrected him. He said, 'How long have you remained?' Said he, 'I have remained a day or part of a day.' He said, 'Rather, you have remained a hundred years. Now look at your food and drink which have not rotted! Then look at your donkey! [This was done] that We may make you a sign for mankind. And look at the bones, how We arrange them and then clothe them with flesh!' When it became evident to him, he said, 'I know that Allāh has power over all things.'

- Surah al-Baqarah, 2:259

5. The bringing of the dead back to life by Nabi Isa ('a):

﴿وَرَسُولًا إِلَى بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ أَنِّي قَدْ جِئْتُكُمْ بِآيَةٍ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ أَنِّي أَخْلَقُ لَكُمْ
مِنَ الطِّينِ كَهَيْئَةِ الطَّيْرِ فَأَنْفُخُ فِيهِ فَيَكُونُ طَيْرًا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَأُبْرِئُ الْأَكْمَهَ
وَالْأَبْرَصَ وَأُحْيِي الْمَوْتَى بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَأُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا تَأْكُلُونَ وَمَا تَدْخِرُونَ فِي
بُيُوتِكُمْ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً لَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ﴾

*And [he will be] an apostle to the Children of Israel, [and he will declare,] “I have certainly brought you a sign from your Lord: I will create for you out of clay the form of a bird, then I will breathe into it, and it will become a bird by Allāh’s permission. And I heal the blind and the leper **and I revive the dead by Allāh’s permission.** And I will tell you what you have eaten and what you have stored in your houses. There is indeed a sign in that for you, should you be faithful.*

- Surah Al-i Imrān, 3:49

After all these examples, it is impossible to deny that ar-Raj’ah is very much possible and not something illogical to believe in as a Muslim.

Shaykh as-Saduq has reported a hadith from Rasulullāh (s) that he said, ‘Everything that has happened in previous nations will also happen in this nation (Ummah) exactly the same, even to the degree of a sandal strap or an arrow’s feather.’¹¹ And the Sunni scholars have also reported very similar ahādith from Rasulullāh (s).¹²

Those who say it is wrong because it supports the belief in reincarnation have misunderstood the concept of ar-Raj’ah. Those who believe in reincarnation say the soul of a person enters a new body and the person is reborn again. However in the case of ar-Raj’ah, we mean resurrection of the same dead body just like on the Day of Judgement and just like the case of all the examples from the Qur’ān that we have given earlier.

Proof of ar-Raj’ah in Qur’ān and Hadith

The proof of ar-Raj’ah in the Qur’ān is the following verse:

﴿وَيَوْمَ نَحْشُرُ مِنْ كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ فَوْجًا مِمَّنْ يُكَذِّبُ بِآيَاتِنَا فَهُمْ يُوزَعُونَ﴾

*The day We shall resurrect **from every nation a group of those who denied Our signs**, and they shall be held in check.*

- Surah an-Naml, 27:83

Note that this verse says only a group from every nation will be resurrected and not everyone. This cannot be about the Day of Judgement because we know from another verse of the Qur’ān that on the Day of Judgement, everyone will be brought back to life:

﴿وَيَوْمَ نُسَيِّرُ الْجِبَالَ وَتَرَى الْأَرْضَ بَارِزَةً وَحَشَرْنَاَهُمْ فَلَمْ نُغَادِرْ مِنْهُمْ أَحَدًا﴾

¹¹ Shaykh Saduq, *Kamāl ad-Din*, p. 576

¹² *Sahih Bukhārī*, v. 9, Kitāb al-‘Itisām; *Kanz al-‘Ummal*, v. 11.

*The day We shall set the mountains moving and you will see the earth in full view,
We shall resurrect them, **and We will not leave out anyone of them.***

- Surah al-Kahf, 18:47

Of course, one could ask how we know the righteous will also be brought to life during the Raj'ah since the verse 27:83 only mentions the evil i.e. 'a group of those who denied our Signs'? We know that the righteous will also be brought back during the Raj'ah from numerous ahādith.

Imām Ja'far as-Sādiq ('a) said, 'when he (the Mahdi ('atfs)) rises, a faithful (mu'min) will be told in his grave, "O so-and-so, your master has appeared. If you wish to meet with him then rise and if you wish to remain here in God's blessings then remain."¹³

Also from Imām Ja'far as-Sādiq ('a), he said, 'when the time for the rising of the Qāim is at hand, it will rain for the whole of Jamādi al-Akhar and ten more days in Rajab (i.e. 40 days), a rain that people have never witnessed before. From it, Allāh will cause the flesh of the faithful (mu'minin) to grow again in their graves. It is as if I can see them now coming from the direction of Juhayna shaking the dirt off their hair.'¹⁴

And in one hadith from Imām Ja'far as-Sādiq ('a), he said that one of the first people to come back to the earth will be Imām al-Husayn ('a) and he will rule until he grows old.

Imām Muhammad al-Bāqir ('a) said that even Rasullāh (s) and Imām Ali ('a) will return.

In another hadith Imām as-Sādiq ('a) said, 'every true believer (mu'min) who was killed will return and live until he dies a natural death and every true believer who died a natural death will return until he is killed (and attains martyrdom).'15

¹³ Shaykh at-Tusi, *Kitāb al-Ghayba*, 459.

¹⁴ Allama Majlisi, *Bihār al-Anwār*, v. 53.

¹⁵ *Mizān al-Hikmah*, the chapter on ar-Raj'ah.

Fiqh (Laws)

Lesson 1

Salāt al-‘Īd

Salāt al-‘Īd is performed on two occasions: ‘Īd al-Fitr (1st of Shawwāl - the day after the end of the fasting-month of Ramadan) and ‘Īd al-Ad-ha (10th of Dhu al-Hijjah, also known as the Festival of the Sacrifice, ‘Īd al-Qurbān).

Salāt al-‘Īd is wājib when a ma’sum Imām is present but in his absence it is mustahab. It can be performed either in congregation (jamā’ah) or individually (furāda). The time for Salāt al-‘Īd is between sunrise and noon (dhuhr). It is recommended that it should be performed immediately after the rising of the sun.

Method of Performance

It is preferable to perform Salāt al-‘Īd under an open sky. When the sun has risen and people have gathered, instead of reciting the adhān or iqāmah, the muadhdhin must call out ‘*as-Salāh*’ three times (like in Salāt al-Ayāt) and everyone present should rise for the salāh.

Salāt al-‘Īd consists of two rak’ahs. It is like the fajr salāh, except that after the recitation of the two surahs, the first rak’ah has five plus one takbirs, and the second rak’ah has four plus one takbirs. It is recommended that each takbir should be followed by a qunūt.

An easy way to remember how to pray Salāt al-‘Īd is to remember that the first rak’ah has five qunūts but the second rak’ah has only four qunūts. (But remember the qunūts are only recommended. The takbirs are wājib.) During qunūt, it is recommended to recite the following du’a:

اللَّهُمَّ أَهْلَ الْكِبْرِيَاءِ وَالْعِزَّةِ وَأَهْلَ الْجُودِ وَالْجَبْرُوتِ وَأَهْلَ الْعَفْوِ وَالرَّحْمَةِ
 وَأَهْلَ التَّقْوَى وَالْمَغْفِرَةِ أَسْأَلُكَ بِحَقِّ هَذَا الْيَوْمِ الَّذِي جَعَلْتَهُ لِلْمُسْلِمِينَ عِيدًا
 وَلِمُحَمَّدٍ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ ذُخْرًا وَشَرَفًا وَكَرَامَةً وَمَزِيدًا أَنْ تُصَلِّيَ عَلَيَّ
 مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِ مُحَمَّدٍ وَأَنْ تُدْخِلَنِي فِي كُلِّ خَيْرٍ أَدْخَلْتَ فِيهِ مُحَمَّدًا وَآلَ مُحَمَّدٍ
 وَأَنْ تُخْرِجَنِي مِنْ كُلِّ سُوءٍ أَخْرَجْتَ مِنْهُ مُحَمَّدًا وَآلَ مُحَمَّدٍ صَلَوَاتِكَ عَلَيْهِ
 وَعَلَيْهِمْ. اللَّهُمَّ أَنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ خَيْرَ مَا سَأَلْتُكَ بِهِ عِبَادُكَ الصَّالِحُونَ
 وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِمَّا اسْتَعَاذَ مِنْهُ عِبَادُكَ مُخْلِصُونَ

Translation:

O Allāh, Possessor of Majesty and Greatness! And Possessor of Generosity and Might! And Possessor of Pardon and Mercy! And Possessor of Power and Forgiveness! I ask You, for the sake of this day, which You have made an 'Id for the Muslims and for Muhammad, blessings be on him and his family, a treasure, honour, dignity and more; that You bless Muhammad and his family and that You include me in ever good that You have included Muhammad and his family; and that You remove me from every evil that You have removed Muhammad and his family from. Your blessings be on him and on them. O Allāh! I ask You for the best that Your righteous servants ask You for and I seek refuge with You from what Your most sincere servants seek refuge.

Here now are the **step-by-step instructions** for Salāt al-Īd:

1. Stand up for first rak'ah. Make your niyyah and takbirat al-ihram.
2. Recite Surah al-Fātiha and any other surah (Surah al-A'la (87) is recommended).
3. Then perform the first takbir and raise your hands for qunút. Any dua can be recited in qunút but it is recommended to recite the dua given above.
4. Then bring your hands down.
5. Then perform the second takbir and raise your hands for the 2nd qunút.
6. Then bring your hands down.
7. Then perform the third takbir and raise your hands for the 3rd qunút.
8. Continue this until you have performed five qunúts.
9. After the 5th qunút, bring your hands down. Then perform one more takbir and go into rukú'.
10. Continue praying like fajr salāh until you stand up for the 2nd rak'ah.
11. In the 2nd rak'ah, after Surah al-Fātiha, it is recommended to recite Surah ash-Shams (91).
12. Recite the takbirs and qunúts like the first rak'ah but now only four qunúts are performed (instead of five).
13. Then continue and complete the salāh as normal.

After Salāt al-Īd is over, the Imām (prayer-leader) should deliver two sermons. He should pause and sit in the interval between them, just as in Salāt al-Jumu'ah (that you have learnt about in Book 8).

Zakāt al-Fitr

Zakāt al-Fitr or 'Fitra' is wājib alms that has to be paid at the end of the month of fasting. Every bāligh, sane Muslim has to pay the fitra for himself, all his dependants and all his guests who spend the maghrib before 'Id day (i.e. eve of 'Id) at his house. The fitra amount is one *sa'* (about 3 kilos) of one's staple diet (usually wheat or rice), or its equivalent price, for every person in the house. Dependents and guests include infants, children and adults, male or female, Muslim or non-Muslim. However there is no fitra for a child who is not born until after maghrib of the eve of 'Id or for a person who is mentally handicapped or in a coma.

Fitra should be given with the niyyah of *qurbatan ilallāh*, any time from the maghrib of the last day of Ramadan until the noon of 'Id day. If a person is praying Salāt al-'Id, they should give out their fitra first before praying. If a person has to give the fitra in advance, he can give it with the intention of lending the money to a needy person beforehand then count it as fitra when the time comes. If a person fails to pay the fitra before the noon of the day of the 'Id, he/she should still give it after, with the niyyah of *qurbatan ilallāh*.

Fitra is paid to the needy and poor among the Shi'ah Muslims. One should try to verify before paying *fitra* that the person being paid is genuinely poor. The poor person to whom *fitra* is given should not be a known sinner, who openly commits sins and does not pray. A sayyid (descendant of Rasulullāh (s) from Sayyida Fātima az-Zahra ('a) and Imām Ali ('a)) cannot receive fitra from a non-sayyid but a non-sayyid can take the fitra of a sayyid.

It is wājib to give fitra to the needy in our own hometown first and it is recommended to give fitra to our own poor relatives and neighbours first (if they are Shi'ah Ithna Ashari Muslims). If there is no one deserving of fitra in our local community then we can send it to those further away to other cities or countries. When we give the poor and needy Zakāt al-Fitra we don't have to tell them what it is or why we are giving it to them.

Other Recommendations

On 'Id al-Fitr it is recommended that we should repeat the following after the maghrib, isha and fajr salāh that we pray before the 'Id Salah:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ - اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَاللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ
وَلِلَّهِ الْحَمْدُ اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ عَلَيَّ مَا هَدَانَا

Translation: *In the Name of Allāh, the Beneficent, the Merciful. Allāh is greater. Allāh is greater. There is no god except Allāh and Allāh is greater. Allāh is greater and all is praise is for Allāh. Allāh is greater for what He has guided us to.*

For 'Īd al-Ad-ha, after reciting the above, we should also add the following recitation:

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ عَلَى مَا رَزَقَنَا مِنْ بَهِيمَةِ الْأَنْعَامِ وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ عَلَى مَا أَوْلَانَا

Translation: *Allāh is greater for what He has sustained us with from the animals and praise is for Allāh for the favours He has shown us.*

On the day of the two festivals ('Īds) it is also recommended to perform ghusl and to wear new clothes.

For 'Īd al-Fitr, it is recommended to eat something first and then go for the Salāt al-'Īd. But for 'Īd al-Ad-ha, it is recommended to pray Salāt al-'Īd first and then to eat something. **It is harām to fast on either one of these two 'Īds.**

Lesson 2

The Nawāfil

Every Muslim must pray 17 rak'ahs every day. These are the fajr, dhuhr, 'asr, maghrib and 'isha prayers.

In addition to these, there are 34 more rak'ahs that are not wājib but highly recommended to pray every day. These are called the Nawāfil prayers (singular is Nāfila prayer).

Importance of Nawāfil

Islām wants every Muslim to come as close as possible to Allāh by loving Him with all one's heart, mind and body. This can only happen when we worship Allāh, not because we *have to* but because we *want to* and we love Allāh. When we do something wājib, we don't have a choice. We have to do it. We do it only because we are afraid of punishment in the Hereafter. But when we do something mustahab, it is out of choice. So Allāh loves us even more for that act of sincerity.

Of course it doesn't make sense to do something optional (mustahab) and ignore something wājib. For example, it is mustahab to fast every Monday and Thursday of the week. But it does not make sense to do it if we do not fast in Ramadan when it is wājib. Similarly, it is silly to give charity (*sadaqa*) and not give Khums and Zakāh, or to go for Ziyārah and Umra but not go for Hajj, and so on. Unless of course there is a valid reason for such actions. In the same manner, we are encouraged to pray the nawāfil *in addition* to the daily wājib prayers.

Imām Hasan al-Askari ('a) has said, 'The signs of a faithful (*mu'min*) are five: praying fifty-one rak'ahs a day (meaning 17 wājib plus 34 nawāfil), going for the ziyārah of Imām Husayn ('a) on the Day of 'Arba'in (20th Safar), wearing a ring on the right hand (e.g. aqiq ring), a mark of sajdah on the forehead, and reciting the Basmalah ('Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim') loudly in Salāh (for the two surahs during qiyām).'

The Nawāfil Prayers

The Nawāfil Prayers are as follows:

1. 2 rak'ah nāfila *before* praying Fajr Salāh
2. 8 rak'ah nāfila *before* praying Dhuhr Salāh
3. 8 rak'ah nāfila *before* praying 'Asr Salāh
4. 4 rak'ah nāfila *after* praying Maghrib Salāh
5. 1 rak'ah nāfila that is prayed as 2 rak'ah sitting *after* praying 'Isha Salāh, and
6. 11 rak'ah nāfila anytime between midnight and Fajr Salāh

Note that the nāfila of Maghrib and 'Isha is prayed *after* the wājib salāh and not before.

A mustahab salāh can never be more than 2 rak'ah. So when we have to pray 8-rak'ah or 4-rak'ah nāfila, it means we have to pray it in units of two i.e. 2 rak'ah, then another 2 rak'ah, then another 2 rak'ah, and so on.

The 1-rak'ah nāfila after Isha is prayed as 2 rak'ah sitting. Your teacher will demonstrate how to pray whilst sitting.

In each salāh, you can recite any surah you like after Surah al-Fātiha. It is prayed like the Fajr salāh except that your intention will be 'I am praying nāfila of fajr (or dhuhr, etc.) 2 rak'ah mustahab *qurbatan ilallāh*'.

Out of all these nawāfil, there are two that are very special and need to be explained further. These are Salāt al-Ghufayla and Salāt al-Layl (next lesson).

Salāt al-Ghufayla

Salāt al-Ghufayla is a highly recommended (mustahab) salāh that is prayed between Maghrib and 'Isha salāh. And since the nāfila of Maghrib is 4 rak'ah after Maghrib salāh, you can pray two out of the four-rak'ah nāfila as Salāt al-Ghufayla and the other two rak'ahs like a normal salāh.

There are only three things (besides the niyyah of course) that make Salāt al-Ghufayla different from any other 2-rak'ah mustahab salāh and these are:

1. In the first rak'ah after Surah al-Fātiha, instead of reciting a second surah, we recite the following verse (āyah) of the Qur'ān:

﴿وَذَا النُّونِ إِذْ ذَهَبَ مُغَاضِبًا فَظَنَّ أَنْ لَنْ نَقْدِرَ عَلَيْهِ فَنَادَى فِي الظُّلُمَاتِ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ سُبْحَانَكَ إِنِّي كُنْتُ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ. فَاسْتَجَبْنَا لَهُ وَنَجَّيْنَاهُ مِنَ الْغَمِّ وَكَذَلِكَ نُنْجِي الْمُؤْمِنِينَ﴾

And the Man of the Fish, when he left in a rage, thinking that We would not put him to hardship. Then he cried out in the darkness, 'There is no god except You! Glory be to You! I have indeed been among the wrongdoers!' So We answered his prayer and delivered him from the agony; and thus do We deliver the faithful.

- Surah al-Anbiya, 21:87-88

2. In the second rak'ah after Surah al-Fātiha, instead of reciting a second surah, we recite the following verse (āyah) of the Qur'ān:

﴿وَعِنْدَهُ مَفَاتِحُ الْغَيْبِ لَا يَعْلَمُهَا إِلَّا هُوَ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ وَمَا تَسْقُطُ
 مِنْ وَرَقَةٍ إِلَّا يَعْلَمُهَا وَلَا حَبَّةٌ فِي ظُلُمَاتِ الْأَرْضِ وَلَا رَطْبٌ وَلَا يَابِسٌ إِلَّا فِي
 كِتَابٍ مُبِينٍ﴾

With Him are the treasures of the Unseen; no one knows them except Him. He knows whatever there is in land and sea. No leaf falls without His knowing it, nor is there a grain in the darkness of the earth, nor anything fresh or withered but it is in a manifest Book.

- Surah al-An'ām, 6:59

3. In the qunút of the 2nd rak'ah, we recite the following:

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ بِمَفَاتِحِ الْغَيْبِ الَّتِي لَا يَعْلَمُهَا إِلَّا أَنْتَ أَنْ تَصَلِّيَ عَلَيَّ مُحَمَّدٍ
 وَآلِ مُحَمَّدٍ وَأَنْ تَفْعَلَ بِي

[Meaning: O Allāh! I ask you for the sake of the unseen treasures that no one knows except You, that You bless Muhammad and the family of Muhammad and do for me...]

Then we ask Allāh for any wish we may have. Then we recite the following to finish our qunút:

اللَّهُمَّ أَنْتَ وَكَلِيُّ نِعْمَتِي وَالْقَادِرُ عَلَيَّ طَلَبْتِي تَعْلَمُ حَاجَتِي فَأَسْأَلُكَ بِحَقِّ مُحَمَّدٍ
 وَآلِ مُحَمَّدٍ عَلَيْهِ وَالسَّلَامُ لِمَا قَضَيْتَهَا لِي

[Meaning: O Allāh! You are the Guardian of my blessings and have power over what I seek. You know my wish. So I ask you for the sake of Muhammad and the family of Muhammad, peace be on him and on them, when You fulfill it for me.]

The rest of the salāh is the same as any salāh.

Lesson 3

Nawáfil (cont'd)

Salāt al-Layl

The 11-rak'ah midnight nāfila salāh is called Salāt al-Layl or Salāt at-Tahajjud. It is the most important nāfila salāh and is not attached to any wājib salāh. It can be prayed any time between midnight and Fajr time, but it is recommended to pray it just before Fajr time. It usually takes about half an hour to complete. So to pray it, you must wake up half an hour before Fajr time.

There are very many ahādith recommending Salāt al-Layl and even in the Qur'ān, Allāh says:

﴿وَمِنَ اللَّيْلِ فَتَهَجَّدْ بِهِ نَافِلَةً لَّكَ عَسَىٰ أَن يَبْعَثَكَ رَبُّكَ مَقَامًا مَّحْمُودًا﴾

And during a part of the night, pray tahajjud, as a nāfila (extra) for yourself. Maybe your Lord will raise to a position of great glory.

- Surah al-Isra, 17:79

Step-by-Step Salāt al-Layl

1. The first 8 rak'ahs are prayed as usual, in units of 2 rak'ah each. The niyyah will be 'I am praying 2 rak'ah salāt al-layl qurbatan ilallāh'.
2. Then pray 2 more rak'ahs with the niyyah of 'I am praying 2 rak'ah **salāt ash-shaf'** qurbatan ilallāh'. In this salāh, do not recite qunút. This makes it 10 rak'ahs so far.
3. Then pray 1 rak'ah (standing) with the niyyah of 'I am praying 1 rak'ah **salāt al-witr** qurbatan ilallāh'. This is the most important part of salāt al-layl. After reciting Surah al-Fātiha and another surah, perform the qunút and in the qunút, recite the following:

a. First recite:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ الْحَلِيمُ الْكَرِيمُ
لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ الْعَلِيُّ الْعَظِيمُ
سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ رَبِّ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ
وَرَبِّ الْأَرْضِينَ السَّبْعِ
وَمَا فِيهِنَّ وَمَا بَيْنَهُنَّ وَمَا فَوْقَهُنَّ وَمَا تَحْتَهُنَّ

رَبُّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ وَ سَلَامٌ عَلَى الْمُرْسَلِينَ
 وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ
 وَ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَ آلِهِ الطَّاهِرِينَ

- b. Then recite seven times:

هَذَا مَقَامُ الْعَائِدِ بِكَ مِنَ النَّارِ

[This is the position of one who seeks refuge in You from the fire]

- c. Then recite seventy times:

أَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ رَبِّي وَ أَتُوبُ إِلَيْهِ

[I seek forgiveness of Allāh my Lord and I turn to Him]

- d. Then pray for 40 Muslims, either living or dead, and ask Allāh to forgive them. Don't forget your parents, siblings, and family members who have passed away. You can mention their names as follows:

اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِي _____

[O' Allāh, forgive _____ (say their name)]

- e. If you do not have any names of people to mention, you can simply recite:

اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَ الْمُؤْمِنَاتِ

[O Allāh forgive all believers, male and female]

You can even mix the 40 names and mention some by name and some only with the general '*all believers, male and female*' as above.

- f. Then say 300 times:

الْعَفْوِ

[(I ask for Your) pardon]

Then do the takbir, go to rukú' and complete the salāh as normal. It is perfectly ok to hold a book in your hand when reciting these duas in qunút, until you have memorized them. You can also find other duas to recite before and after salāt al-layl as well as the meaning of all the duas, from <http://www.al-islam.org/salatullayl/>

Lesson 4

Zakāh & Khums

Definition and Importance

Just like Salāh and Sawm, Khums and Zakāh are also acts of worship (*'ibādah*) that are wājib on all Muslims. The words 'Khums' literally means 'one-fifth' and the word 'Zakāh' means 'alms'.

Khums is the one-fifth (20%) tax that all bāligh, sane ('āqil) Muslims are required to pay on their annual savings. It is paid only on savings on which khums has not been paid previously and after subtracting all normal expenses.

Zakāh is also an annual tax like Khums that must be paid by every sane and bāligh Muslim but Zakāh is only paid on certain kinds of items such as specific agricultural produce and livestock, and on gold and silver. Zakāh is therefore nowadays usually applicable to specific individuals only, such as farmers.

Remember these are not mere taxes, but acts of worship. Just as Salāh is an act of worship that involves the performance of certain acts and recitations, and sawm involves physical hardship, thirst, and hunger, these two acts can also be seen in terms of their own kind of sacrifice one makes for the pleasure of Allāh and for one's own spiritual growth. A Muslim should hold neither life nor wealth dearer than the pleasure of Allāh. In Salāh and Sawm we sacrifice our time, comfort, desires and life, while with Khums and Zakāh we get the honour of spending our wealth in the way of Allāh. Moreover, these are not voluntary acts of charity but obligatory (*wājib*).

The Qur'ān has emphasized that one cannot hope to gain spiritual perfection and the pleasure of Allāh unless one spends one's wealth for others and gives selflessly:

﴿لَنْ تَنَالُوا الْبِرَّ حَتَّى تُنْفِقُوا مِمَّا تُحِبُّونَ وَمَا تُنْفِقُوا مِنْ شَيْءٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ بِهِ عَلِيمٌ﴾

You will never become truly righteous until you spend from what you love most. And whatever you spend of anything, indeed Allāh knows it.

- Surah Al-i Imrān, 3:92

By paying Zakāh and Khums, we show our concern for the poor and needy. We say to them that we care about them, and that we are good Muslims because we are not greedy and mean. By paying Zakāh and Khums, we are also thanking Allāh for all the things He has given to us and we thank Him by sharing the extra we have with others.

The main differences between Khums and Zakāh is **what** they are payable on and **who** is given.

Khums is given as the right of Prophet Muhammad (s) and his family. It has been mentioned in many ahādith of the Imāms that one who does not pay Khums has stolen a share belonging to Rasulullāh's family. In the next chapter we shall learn more about who is given Khums and how it is distributed during the present age of ghaybah of the Imām (a). Khums plays a very important role in maintaining the Islāmic society, in the propagation (*tabligh*) of Islām and in the independence of the 'Ulama from the influence of governments.

Zakāh means alms but its literal meaning is 'something which purifies'. Both Khums and Zakāh are religious taxes that purify a person from selfishness and greed as well as purify the wealth itself by making those less fortunate share in a portion of it. By paying the religious taxes a person shows his/her belief that wealth is a means and not an end in itself; the ultimate end is to gain the pleasure of Allāh, our Lord.

All wealth, power and possessions belong to Allāh. Allāh entrusts it to us in order to test whether we can act responsibly and with piety. The first and foremost purpose of Khums and Zakāh is to prove our loyalty to our Master (i.e. Allāh). At every moment of our life, our health and well-being are His gifts to us. If Allāh does not give us these things, we have no power and no right to claim them for ourselves. So we should never forget to give thanks to Allāh. Khums and Zakāh are ways of our thanksgiving to Allāh. That is how an act of spending becomes an act of worship.

The second important purpose of Khums and Zakāh is to help the less fortunate in the community and to achieve a relatively just and fair distribution of wealth in society. In an Islāmic society all must live together as one family and share their wealth. Every member of society should have the means to live. If one group lacks it, it is the duty of the others to support them and get them to stand on their own feet.

Zakāh and Khums save the society from the evils of poverty as well as of plenty, where the poor constantly become poorer and the rich always become richer. They ease social tensions, and generate feelings of love between the rich and the poor. Most societies live by one of two extremes. In some societies the government controls all the wealth and no one can be too rich regardless of how hard they work. And in others the rich get richer and keep everything they earn and the poor get poorer because they never get a chance to improve their life situation. Islām uses Khums and Zakāh to help create a balance in society where people can be rich and rewarded for their efforts but the poor are not neglected either.

Zakāh and Khums in Qur'ān

During the time of Rasulullāh (s) most of people's wealth was in the form of agricultural produce, livestock, gold and silver so most of the time people had to pay

Zakāh instead of Khums. Nowadays most peoples' wealth is in the form of salaries, business profits and property. That is why it is more common for people to pay Khums. But it is also useful to keep in mind that Zakāh has a specific meaning (as we have been discussing so far) as well as a general meaning. In the general sense, Zakāh simply means to give alms to others. So it can include the specific Zakāh, general charity (*sadaqa*), the Zakāh given on 'Id day (Zakāt al-Fitr) and even Khums. That is why the term "Zakāh" is mentioned so frequently in the Qur'ān.

One of the āyāt of the Qur'ān that commands us to give Zakāh is:

﴿وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَمَا تُقَدِّمُوا لِأَنفُسِكُمْ مِنْ خَيْرٍ تَجِدُوهُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ﴾

And maintain the prayer (salāh) and give the zakāh. And good that you send ahead for your souls, you shall find it (waiting for you) with Allāh. Indeed Allāh sees best what you do.

- Surah al-Baqarah, 2:110

The verse (āyah) of the Qur'ān that commands us to give Khums is:

﴿وَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّمَا غَنِمْتُمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ فَإِنَّ لِلَّهِ خُمُسَهُ وَلِلرَّسُولِ وَلِذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسَاكِينِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ﴾

Know that whatever thing you may come by, a fifth (khums) of it is for Allāh and the Messenger, for the relatives and the orphans, for the needy and the traveller...

- Surah al-Anfāl, 8:41

There are many ahādith from Rasulullāh (s) and the Imāms ('a) that explain these āyāt of Qur'ān in more detail and teach us what items to pay Khums and Zakāh on and whom to give it to. We shall learn the rules concerning these in the next two lessons.

Lesson 5

Khums (cont'd)

Items on Which Khums is Payable

There can be many things on which a Muslim is required to pay Khums. For example, any riches or treasures he/she finds from the earth, from mines, from diving in the sea, and so forth. For now however, we will only learn about the two most common times when Khums is usually paid:

1. On surplus income
2. When halāl wealth or property is mixed with harām

Surplus Income

Khums is payable on all kinds of earnings including profit from business, salaries and wages. At the end of the year a Muslim first calculates his total income. Then he or she subtracts from this total income all his or her normal expenses as well as any amount of money on which khums was paid in the previous years. Thereafter, whatever savings is left as surplus, one-fifth (20%) of it is given out as khums and the balance 80% is considered to be 'clean money' on which no khums will ever be paid again in the future.

When a person calculates his or her total income at the end of the year for khums, they should add up all their assets like bank balances and cash, as well as new unused items of clothing bought over a year ago, excess unconsumed food that has been kept for the whole year, and all those household items which are considered luxuries and above that person's status. This ensures a person does not 'hide' money in possessions to avoid paying khums.

If a person dies and it is known that they never paid khums, their khums must be calculated and paid out from their legacy before it is distributed to the heirs.

Even if a person has an ongoing debt like a mortgage, they still need to pay khums on their savings. They can however reduce how much khums they pay by paying more towards their mortgage and settling any other ongoing loans and debts *before* the khums becomes due.

Definition of expenses: When we say a person can deduct his or her expenses from their annual savings *before* paying khums, we mean essential expenses such as food, rent, transport, utilities, medical expenses, tuition fees, taxes, debt repayment, wages of employees, and so forth. We don't mean luxurious spending like expensive jewellery, an expensive car that is above a person's standard of living and so on. If a person wishes to incur such expenses (that are above his or her expected status in

society), they must still calculate the value of their expensive purchases in their annual savings.

Similarly, the cost of essential needs does not include the cost incurred for improving a business. Life-insurance premiums cannot be counted as expenses, but is a kind of saving although the premiums paid for other kinds of insurance (house and car for example) can be counted among household expenses.

Lawful (*halāl*) Wealth Mixed with Unlawful (*harām*) Wealth

If a person has earned wealth unlawfully (e.g. by gambling) and it is mixed with his lawful wealth and he or she has no idea how much is lawful and how much is unlawful, this can be 'cleaned' by paying khums once on the whole amount. Thereafter it can be assumed that the remaining 80% is *halāl*.

Unlawful (*harām*) wealth means any wealth acquired by means not permitted in the Shari'ah, or any wealth whose real owner is someone else. Of course it doesn't change the fact that person has still committed a sin by acquiring the wealth unlawfully and they are obligated to repent and undo what they can e.g. return wealth to the rightful owner if stolen or taken unlawfully.

If *harām* wealth is not mixed with *halāl* wealth and a person *knows* the amount that is not his or hers, but does not know the real owner of that amount, he or she should give it as alms to the poor on behalf of its owner. If he knows the owner, but does not know the exact amount of the property that is not his, he or she has to come to an understanding with the owner; otherwise they must refer the case to a *marj'a* or Islāmic judge.

Items on Which Khums in Not Payable

There is no khums on the following items:

1. *Mahr* (dowry), that is *wājib* for a husband to give to his wife at the time of marriage
2. The earning or property of a child who is not *bāligh*
3. Inheritance

How to Keep Track of Your Khums Annually

Calculating khums can be very confusing if you don't have a **Fixed Khums Date**. The first step is to have a fixed date in the year when you will calculate your khums every year. This could be your birthday or the first or last day of any month.

It is also helpful to maintain a spreadsheet or document where you can keep track of how much savings you had the previous year and what the 'clean money' balance is for you this year.

Thereafter you simply need to update your spreadsheet every year. On your khums date, check the balance in all your bank accounts and how much cash you have; subtract the clean money from previous years; also subtract any immediate expenses for this month such as your mortgage payment or rent, your telephone, water, electricity bills, school fees that you need to pay before your next pay check, outstanding amount on your credit card that still needs to be paid, and so on.

Thereafter, calculate your new net savings (total savings minus expenses) for this year. Divide it by 5 (20%). One-fifth is khums and the remaining 80% should be added to the clean money for next year.

Here is a sample spreadsheet to give you an idea:

A Sample Spreadsheet of How to Maintain Your Khums Year-by-Year

A	B	C	D	E	F
1	Total Balances for This Year	Amount	Conversion Rate (to local currency)	In Local Currency	
2	Bank Account 1			2000.00	
3	Bank Account 2			1000.00	
4	Cash in Hand			50.00	
5	Retirement Savings Account			1200.00	
6	Foreign Currency	200.00	1.5	300.00	
7	Total Savings this year			4,550.00	In Local Currency
8					
9	<u>Deductions</u>				
10	Home Mortgage (or rent)			1,000.00	
11	University fees and expenses (books, other equipment)			750.00	
12	Home and Car Insurance			200.00	
13	Home Utilities (tel, water, electricity, heating)			200.00	
14	Government taxes			500.00	
15	Other immediate expenses (household, cellphone, food, gas)			200.00	
16	Credit Card Outstanding Bill			50.00	
17	Clean Khums Money balance (b/f from previous years)			1,500.00	
18	Total Expenses			4,400.00	
19					
20					
21	Net Savings (on which Khums has to be paid)		(E7 - E18)	150.00	
22					
23	Khums (20%) for This Year =		(E21 / 5)	30.00	
24	New Clean Khums Money Balance for Next Year (c/f)		(E17 + (E21 - E23))	1,620.00	
25					
26					
27					
28	Where Khums was Paid This Year				
29	<u>Islamic Institution Paid To</u>	<u>Amount Paid</u>	<u>Date Paid</u>	<u>Rcvd Marja Receipt (Y/N)</u>	
30		30.00			

Whom to Give Khums & How It is Distributed

Khums is divided into two equal parts. One part is the share of the living Imām and is called *Sahm al-Imām*. The other part is the share of the poor and needy *Sādāt* – the descendants of Rasulullāh (s) from Imām Ali (‘a) and Sayyida Fātima (‘a) on whom alms (*sadaqa*) is *harām*. This second part is called *Sahm as-Sādāt*.

During the *ghayba* of Imām al-Mahdi (‘atfs), we give the *Sahm al-Imām* to our *Marj’a* because he represents the Imām (hence he is called *Naib al-Imām*) and we trust he would know best how to spend the money for a cause that the Imām (‘atfs) would be pleased with.

If we know of a worthy cause such as the building of a masjid or helping an orphanage or some *tabligh* work or humanitarian cause, we can ask our *Marj’a* for permission to give our share of *Sahm al-Imām* to that project. Usually he would allow it after verifying its details.

Sometimes organizations and institutions working on a project like building a masjid will ask your *Marj’a* for permission to collect *Khums* for their project. The *Marj’a* will give them a written permission (called an *ljāza*) to collect *khums* to a maximum fixed amount and for a fixed period of time. You can then choose to give them your annual *khums* after they show you the written permission and you are satisfied that it is from your *Marj’a*. But you must insist that the organization still gets you an official receipt from the *Marj’a* (for your records and to ensure that what you have given is accounted for).

For *Sahm as-Sādāt* as well, you give it to the *Marj’a* and he distributes it to the poor *Sādāt*. A poor *Sayyid* is one who lacks the means for one year’s respectable living (in accordance to his or her status and the society they live in). *Sahm as-Sādāt* can also be given to poor orphans from Rasulullāh (s)’s descendants. To qualify to receive *khums*, a poor *Sayyid* must be a Shi’ah Ithna Ashari and someone who prays and does not commit sins openly.

As a necessary precaution, each *sayyid* should be given only that amount which will suffice for one year’s expenses (according to his status) and no more.

It is necessary to verify whether a person is really a *sayyid* or not before giving him a part of the *khums*. The claim to be *sayyid* is not enough: either two trustworthy (‘*adil*) persons should attest to it, or he should be well known among people to be a *sayyid*.

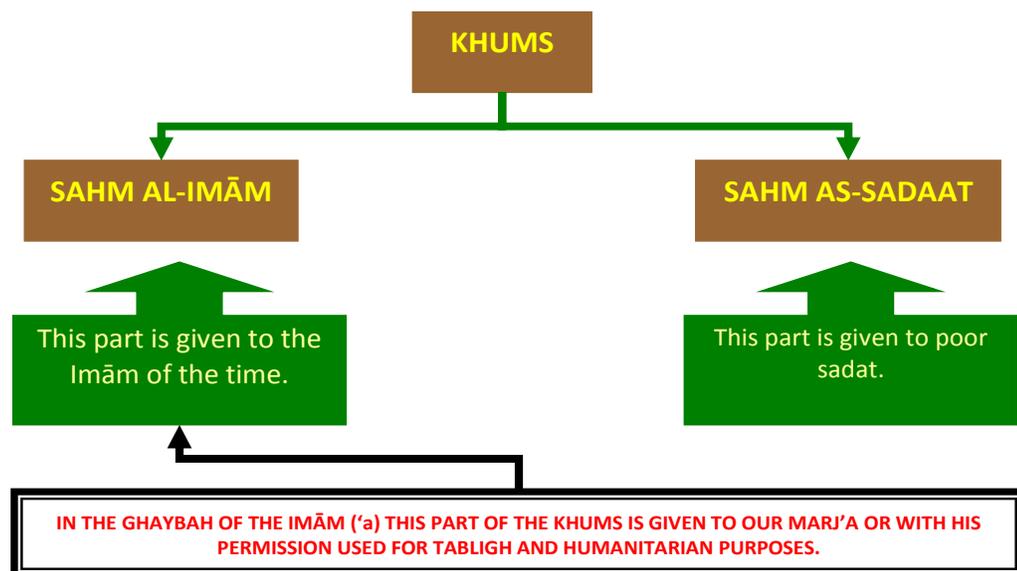
If there are needy *sayyids* in one’s own locality, it is preferable to pay them first. However, if there are not enough deserving persons in one’s locality, one can also distribute the *khums* in other localities or give it to the *Marj’a* who will distribute it appropriately. Either way, it is best to ask your *marj’a* before giving *khums* to anyone or any project.

So in summary:

- a) You can give the Khums money directly to your Marj'a (or the Marja's *wakil* (deputy) - someone with written authorization to collect Khums on behalf of him), or
- b) You can give the khums money towards a humanitarian cause or tabligh project for which the permission of your Marj'a has been taken and you have verified the Ijāza, or
- c) You can request for your own Ijāza for a cause or project where you would like the Khums to be spent.

Remember: Khums is not your money. It belongs to the Imām and the poor Sādāt. So even when you give it to the Marj'a or ask for an ijāza, you cannot insist on where it is to be used or spent. You can only request. And the Marj'a does not have to give you an Ijāza to your liking.

And finally, the fact that most marāj'i will give you permission to spend your khums in the deserving cause that you believe in, shows that those who accuse the maraj'i of 'making money' or that taqlid is 'only about khums' are simply false allegations aimed at reducing the importance of the institution of marja'iyah. Our marāj'i live the simplest of lives. When we ask for their permission (ijāza) on where to spend the khums that is due on us, it is simply because we believe they are the most learned in religious matters and therefore closest in understanding to where the living Imām ('atfs) would have permitted the Islāmic dues to be spent.



Lesson 6

Zakāh

Zakāh, like Khums, is a wājib tax on every sane (‘āqil), bāligh Muslim. But unlike Khums, Zakāh is wājib on specific items only. And whereas Khums is 20% of one’s surplus income, Zakāh varies depending on the specific item and the quantity that is accumulated for a whole year.

Items on which Zakāh is Wājib

Zakāh is wājib on nine items. If a person has any of these items beyond a certain quantity for over a year, then they must give zakāh for each item that they have (or its equivalent value):



1. Wheat



2. Barley



3. Dates



4. Grapes or Raisins (Dried Grapes)

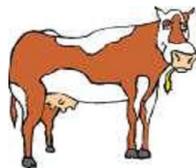


5. Camels

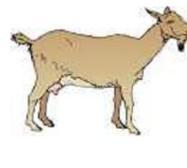


6. Gold coins

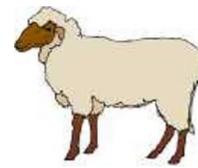
7. Silver coins



8. Cattle (Cows and Buffalos)



9. Sheep and Goats



As an example, if a person has 850 kgs of wheat, barley, dates or raisins, at the end of the year, they must pay zakāh equal to 5%-10% depending on how the crops were watered (with rain, irrigation, etc.). If a person has 70 kgs of gold, then their zakāh would be 2.5% of the total value. If zakāh has been paid once on a quantity, it does not have to be paid every year again. The percentage will vary depending on the quantity of gold. And the same for silver – the zakāh varies depending on the quantity.

For the animals as well, it depends on the type and quantity of animals. For example, if a person has up to 5 camels, the zakāh is one sheep (or its cost). If a person has up to 10 camels, the zakāh is 2 sheep, and so on. If a farmer has 40 sheep or goats, the

zakāh will be one sheep or its value. For a detailed breakdown of the zakāh applicable, see the risāla of your marj'a. You will find the risāla of Ayatullah as-Sistāni at <http://www.al-islam.org/laws/>.

Zakāh is not wājib on one's earnings, salaries, etc. but it is recommended for a business person to pay zakāh on their business capital and on the profits he or she gains from his or her business for the blessing and to increase one's wealth. If a person chooses to do this, they would pay 2.5% as zakāh.

The Distribution of Zakāh

The following āyah of Qur'ān tells us whom to give zakāh (which is called *sadaqāt* in the āyah):

﴿ إِنَّمَا الصَّدَقَاتُ لِلْفُقَرَاءِ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَالْعَامِلِينَ عَلَيْهَا وَالْمُؤَلَّفَةِ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَفِي الرِّقَابِ
وَالْغَارِمِينَ وَفِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ فَرِيضَةً مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴾

Sadaqāt are only for the poor and the need, and those employed to collect them, and those whose hearts are to be reconciled, and for [the freedom of] the slaves and the debtors, and in the way of Allāh, and for the traveller. [This is] an obligation from Allāh, and Allāh is All-knowing, All-wise.

- Surah at-Tawbah, 9:60

Zakāh can therefore be distributed to any of the following eight groups:

1. Fuqara. The needy. A needy person is one who is unable to meet his or her annual expenditure, in relation to his status.
2. Masākin. The poor. A poor person is one who lives even below the level of the needy.
3. 'Amileen. The salary of those who are employed to collect zakāh on behalf of the Islāmic government i.e. the tax collectors.
4. Mu'alafat al-Qulub. Those non-Muslims whom Rasulullāh (s) or the Imām or his representative thinks advisable to help from zakāh so as to gain their sympathy for Islām and Muslims.
5. Riqāb. To free those who have been slaves. (This is no longer applicable in our time.)
6. Ghārimeen. Those in debt. To help pay off their debts if they are having difficulty repaying them.
7. Fi Sabilillāh. To help in religious matters and anything that can be considered as a cause of Allāh e.g. building a masjid or a school, improving roads in a Muslim land, helping Muslims at war (jihād) when they are attacked and need to fight to defend themselves and their country, etc.

8. Ibn as-Sabeel. A traveller who has run out of money and does not have the means to return home (even if he is a rich man in his own country).

In all the cases above, the recipient of zakāh must be a Shi'ah Ithna Ashari Muslim who is not a reputed sinner and who is not a dependent of the person paying the zakāh.

The zakāh of a non-sayyid should not be given to sayyids unless they are in dire need and what they have been given from khums (*sahm as-sādāt*) is not sufficient for them. But the zakāh of a Sayyid can be given to help a non-sayyid.

When the Imām is present, zakāh should be given to him. During the ghayba of the Imām if a person cannot find anyone deserving to receive the zakāh, they may give it to the deputy (nāib) of the Imām i.e. the marj'a they follow or to persons appointed by the marj'a as his agents (*wukala*) for this purpose.

Fitra – Another Form of Zakāh

Besides the main form of Zakāh (called Zakāt al-Māl), there is also a specific Zakāh that is paid every year on the 1st of Shawwal (the day of 'Id al-Fitr). It is alms that is given at the end of the month of Ramadan to help the poor. This zakāh is also wājib on every bāligh, sane Muslim and is called Zakāt al-Fitr or simply Fitra. And it has been explained in Lesson 1 (under Salāt al-'Id).

Lesson 7

Gender-Specific (for boys)

This lesson is a revision from Book 8 (Fiqh Lessons 6 and 7). Students are encouraged to ask questions and seek clarification on issues related to these topics.

Istibra

The method of performing Istibra after urinating was taught in Book 7 and Book 8. If you're still not sure how and why it is done, discuss it in class. The method is given here briefly.

Method of Performing Istibra

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

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

Signs of Bulugh

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

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

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

Once a boy is bāligh, all the matters of wājib and harām in Islām apply to him, as they do to all sane adult Muslims. For example, Salāh five times a day, Sawm in the month

of Ramadan, Khums and Zakāh if he has earnings, Hajj, matters related to Tahārah and Najāsah, and so forth. A bāligh boy should therefore make an intention of the marj'a he will refer to in any fiqh issue that he needs advice and guidance on i.e. he should make an intention for taqlid.

Personal Hygiene - Removal of Pubic Hair

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

Janābah

When semen comes out from the body of a man, voluntarily or involuntarily, due to a halāl or harām act, the man is said to be *junub* or in the state of janābah. Janābah is a state of being ritually impure and one cannot pray or fast until Ghusl al-Janābah is done with a wājib niyyah.

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

If the time before *qadā* for salāh is very little, tayammum should be performed followed by the wājib salāh and thereafter ghusl should be done.

Janābah and Sawm

Making oneself junub breaks one's fast unless one becomes junub unintentional i.e. whilst asleep. Remaining in the state of janābah also breaks a fast and a person who is in the state of junub must perform ghusl of janābah before the time of Fajr (when the fast starts).

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

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

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

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

If a man deliberately delays the ghusl to the extent that there is no time left for it but it is not yet the time for adhān, he should do tayammum instead and his fast will be valid. Although, he would have committed a sin and should ask Allāh for forgiveness and he should also perform ghusl and pray (before the qadā of fajr salāh) even if the time of adhān has occurred.

What is Harām in the State of Janābah

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

What is Makruh in State of Janābah

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

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

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:

﴿وَلُوطًا 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 أَنْهَامُ 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 فَأَنْظُرْ 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 عَالِيَهَا سَافِلَهَا وَأَمْطَرْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ حِجَارَةً مِنْ
سِجِّيلٍ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِلْمُتَوَسِّمِينَ﴾

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:

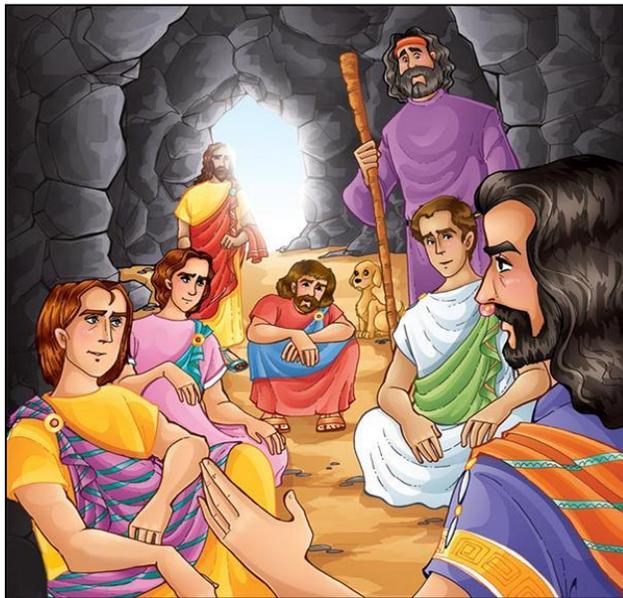
﴿سَيَقُولُونَ ثَلَاثَةٌ رَابِعُهُمْ كَلْبُهُمْ وَيَقُولُونَ خَمْسَةٌ سَادِسُهُمْ كَلْبُهُمْ رَجْمًا بِالْغَيْبِ
وَيَقُولُونَ سَبْعَةٌ وَتَأْمِنُهُمْ كَلْبُهُمْ قُلْ رَبِّي أَعْلَمُ بِعَدَّتِهِمْ مَا يَعْلَمُهُمْ إِلَّا قَلِيلٌ فَلَا تُمَارِ
فِيهِمْ إِلَّا مِرَاءً ظَاهِرًا وَلَا تَسْتَنَفِتْ فِيهِمْ مِنْهُمْ 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 again 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 أَيْقَاظًا 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 Ridwān & ‘Aam al-Wufūd

The Treaty of Hdaybiyya & the Pledge of Ridwān

In the year 5 AH Rasulullāh (s) received a command from Allāh to declare the annual pilgrimage to Makkah (Hajj) as an obligatory act in Islām. In the following year Rasulullāh (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.

Rasulullāh (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 Rasulullāh (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 Rasulullāh (s) to Makkah.

Rasulullāh (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, Rasulullāh (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 Rasulullāh (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, Rasulullāh (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. Rasulullāh (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. Rasulullāh (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 Hudaibiyya 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 Makkan 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 عَنْكُمْ شَيْئًا وَضَاقَتْ عَلَيْكُمْ الْأَرْضُ بِمَا رَحُبَتْ ثُمَّ وَكَلْتُمُ مَدْبِرِينَ﴾

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 Hārun was to Musa, except that there is no Nabi after me.'

In other words, just as Nabi Musa ('a) had left his brother Nabi Hārun ('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 & Masjid ad-Dirār

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 Masjid of Rasulullāh (s), they asked to pray and Rasulullāh (s) allowed them to pray in a corner of the Masjid. 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 عِيسَى 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 Rasullāh (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 Rasullāh (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, Rasullāh (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 Rasullāh (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.

Rasullāh (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 Rasullāh (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 Rasullāh (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 Rasullāh (s) that they no longer wished to engage in Mubāhala. Rasullāh (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 ... وَكَيْخِلْفُنَّ إِنَّ أَرْضَنَا
إِلَّا الْحُسْنَىٰ 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 Rasulullāh (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 Rasulullāh (s). When he born, Rasulullāh (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 Rasulullāh (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 Rasulullāh (s) and then rush home and tell his mother what he had learnt from Rasulullāh (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 Rasulullāh (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 Rasulullāh (s). The Banu Umayya and ‘Aisha bt. Abu Bakr, the wife of Rasulullāh (s) (who used to hate Imām Ali (‘a) very much), all came out to protest that because Uthmān had not been buried next to Rasulullāh (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 Rasulullāh (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.

Rasulullāh (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 Rasulullāh (s) relates that Imām Hasan (‘a) once came to the people and greeted them with salām but this companion of Rasulullāh (s) did not recognize Imām Hasan (‘a). When Imām Hasan (‘a) left, the companion of Rasulullāh (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 Rasullullāh (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:

إني 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); Qāsim, 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.

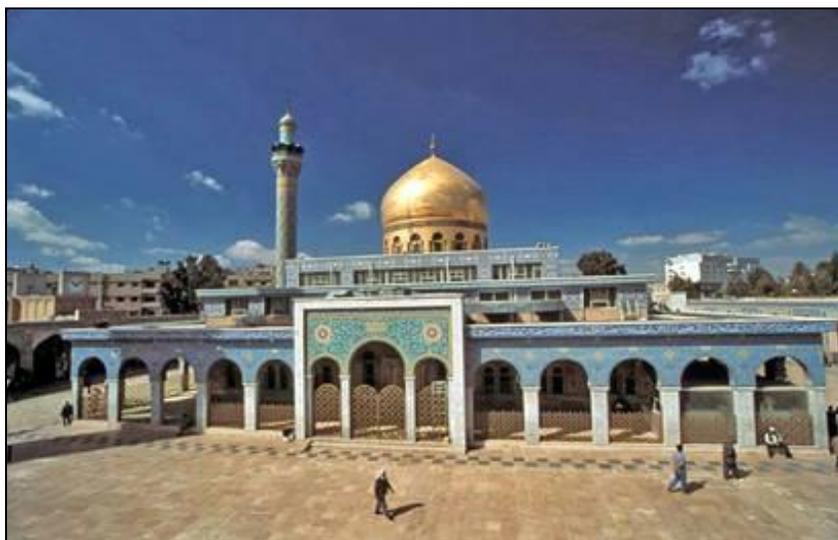
Our fourth Imām, Ali Zayn al-Abidin (‘a) called her, ‘*ālīma ghayr mu’alīma*’ (‘A scholar without a tutor’). Imām Husayn (‘a) respected and valued his sister’s piety so much that when he was leaving her for the last time to go to the battlefield, he said to his sister Zaynab (‘a), ‘do not forget me in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

AKHLAQ

(Ethics)

Lesson 1

Husn adh-Dhan & Su'u adh-Dhan

The Arabic word 'dhan' can mean 'to think', 'to believe', 'to suppose' and even 'to suspect'. The Arabic word 'husn' means 'good' and 'su'u' means 'bad.'

Therefore *Husn adh-Dhan* means to think positively and well of others. And *Su'u adh-Dhan* – which is the opposite – means to be suspicious of others and to always think negatively of them.

Islām teaches us always to give people the benefit of the doubt. This means if a fellow Muslim says or does something and it can be interpreted positively or negatively we should always suppose that they meant well and they were trying to be good and not bad.

A lot of times we hate people or stop talking to them only because of something they did or said and we assume they meant harm but in fact it is only a suspicion and we have no proof and we just jumped to that conclusion.

In the Qur'ān, Allāh says:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اجْتَنِبُوا كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الظَّنِّ إِنَّ بَعْضَ الظَّنِّ إِثْمٌ...﴾

O you who have faith! Avoid much suspicion (dhan). Indeed some suspicions (dhan) are sins.

- Surah al-Hujurāt, 49:12

Rasulullāh (s) said, 'Do not be suspicious of others. Suspicion is a form of lying.'

And Imām Ali ('a) has said, 'If someone says something to you that can mean a good or bad thing, always assume the good' i.e. give them the benefit of the doubt.

Nabi Isa ('a) once said to the people, 'O slaves of evil! How come you blame others only on suspicion but you never blame yourselves even though you are sure' i.e. you are certain of the wrong you have done but never blame yourself and others you blame easily though you have no certain proof.

We usually suspect and blame others because we only judge them by their actions while we are not aware of their intentions. But we don't blame ourselves because we know our intentions and we justify our actions to ourselves.

Allāh is the only rightful judge as He sees everything and is aware of everyone's real intention. We have no right to judge other people whether they are Muslims or not. The only exception is the judge in an Islāmic court who passes judgement based on known and certain evidence in order to uphold law and order in an Islāmic country.

Our fourth Imām, Imām Ali Zayn al-‘Abideen (‘a) taught that we should always think that a person younger than us is better than us because he has had less time than us to do bad deeds. And we should always think that a person older than us is better than us as he has had more time to do good deeds. And we should always think of a person the same age as us that he is better than us, because we do not know what else he has done but we know exactly what good and bad we have done.

On the converse, if others think bad of us, we should leave the matter to Allāh to judge and if others think good of us, we must strive to become better and pray to Allāh not to let pride enter our hearts.

Imām Ali (‘a) said, ‘If someone thinks well and good of you then make what he thinks come true!’

An Anecdote on the Vice of Su’u adh-Dhan (Suspicion)

There was a farmer who owned a guard dog. He had trained the dog from its first day and looked after it very well.

Many times the farmer and his wife used to work together in the farm near their house. On such days, they would leave their young son at home with the dog.

One day, when the farmer and his wife were returning to their home, they saw the dog at the gate. They saw that the dog’s mouth was stained with blood.



The farmer thought that the dog had killed his son, so he started to hit the dog with his spade. He hit the dog so much that the dog died.



When the farmer’s wife ran to the house, she saw that their son was alive and there was a dead snake nearby. When the farmer came in and saw the dead snake, he realized his mistake. The dog had actually saved his son’s life. The blood on the dog’s mouth was that of the snake. But now it was too late to do anything for the faithful dog. The farmer made the mistake of suspecting the dog.

This anecdote is very simple but it teaches us how easily we can be so unjust and cruel to others when we assume things and suspect others without proof.

Practical Examples of Husn adh-Dhan and Su’u adh-Dhan

Supposing you see a Muslim man with a girl who is a non-mahram to him, what should you assume? If you assume that they are on a date or are of loose morals, then you have already shattered his reputation in your eyes and passed judgement

on him without proof. If you then tell others about your suspicion, you have committed *tuhmah* (false accusation) that is worse than even backbiting (*ghibah*) because *ghibah* is when we reveal the bad about a person that is true whereas *tuhmah* is when we accuse someone of something that may be untrue.

Now if our suspicion is false, we will have to account for it on the Day of Judgement before Allāh. And even if it is true, Allāh will hold us against it for revealing the fault of a person when He was hiding it. Allāh covers our faults all the time and takes pride in His being ‘Sattār al-‘Uyub’ (the Concealer of Faults). Who then are we to reveal what Allāh conceals? So in the example above, we should think of a positive reason for the Muslim’s action and assume he is not doing anything harām. Can you think of a reason?

In hadith we are told to think of seventy different excuses in defence of our Muslim brother or sister before even thinking of suspecting him.

Of course it is different if a person regularly commits sins openly in public and without care for Allāh’s commands. Such a person is called a *fāsiq*. But even then we should not spread his mischief to others otherwise we become his ambassadors in helping him spread his habit of sin in the society.

Here is another example: Supposing you see a person stand up in the masjid and donate thousands of dollars for a charitable cause, what should you think of him?

Su’u adh-Dhan would be to think he is showing off and wants to be praised for his generosity. Husn adh-Dhan would be to think that he is sincere and he wants to set an example so as to encourage others to follow his act of generosity.

In conclusion, always give others the benefit of doubt. Even if you know for sure that they have done something wrong, do not tell others. If Allāh can keep our secrets, we should also try and keep the secrets of others. If we really want to do something about our suspicion then we should try and approach the person privately and speak to them about it. And if we are convinced they acted wrongly then we should think of practising *al-amr bil ma’ruf* and *an-nahi ‘anil munkar* by persuading him or her that what he or she is doing is wrong. Or we could speak to someone who we think can help him or her as well.

Husn adh-Dhan with Allāh

Besides thinking well of people, we should also always think well of Allāh. When we hear of a natural disaster and calamity, we should not rush to ask: Why did Allāh do this or allow this? There may be a good reason or wisdom behind it that will only become apparent many years later.

Similarly, we should not always suspect that Allāh is only waiting to punish us. Instead we should do our best to keep away from harām and along with that, we

should have a positive opinion (*husn adh-dhan*) that Allāh will protect us and save us from Hellfire and in the end, He will admit us in Jannah.

Our eighth Imām, Imām Ali b. Musa ar-Rida ('a) has said, 'Have a good opinion of Allāh because Allāh says, 'I am to my faithful (*mu'min*) servant what he thinks of Me. If (he thinks) good then (I am) good (to him) and if bad then bad.'

In other words, a person who commits evil loses hope in Allāh's mercy and expects to be punished, and so he is punished. Losing hope in Allāh's mercy and infinite kindness is also a kind of punishment. As long as a person is not evil, they will always hope in Allāh's mercy and He will never disappoint a person who has hope and good expectations of Him.

Rasulullāh (s) said, 'I saw a man from my nation (ummah) on the sirāt (bridge to Jannah) shaking and quivering like a palm leave on a day of strong winds. Then his *husn ad-dhan* about Allāh came and it rescued him and stopped the shaking.'

And Rasulullāh (s) also said, 'Do not die except with *husn adh-dhan* about Allāh. For *husn adh-dhan* in Allāh is the price of Jannah.'

And in the Qur'ān, Allāh describes the hypocrites (*munāfiqin*) and polytheists (*mushrikin*) as those who have a bad opinion about Allāh:

﴿وَيُعَذِّبُ الْمُنَافِقِينَ وَالْمُنَافِقَاتِ وَالْمُشْرِكِينَ وَالْمُشْرِكَاتِ الظَّالِمِينَ بِاللَّهِ ظَنًّا
السَّوْءِ...﴾

That He (Allāh) may punish the hypocrites, men and women, and the polytheists, men and women, who entertain a bad opinion (dhan) of Allāh....

- Surah al-Fat-h, 48:6

Lesson 2

Tolerance (Hilm) & Humility (Tawádu)

Tolerance (al-Hilm)

Tolerance means being very patient. Like for example when others do wrong to us and we have every right to get angry or take revenge but instead we bear patience and forgive them. In Arabic this is called *Hilm*. And one who practices hilm or has this quality is called *halim* (female: *halimah*).

Hilm is one of the qualities of Allāh because despite the sins we commit and despite our deserving to be punished, Allāh keeps giving us more time to repent and He continues to hide our faults from others. Imām al-Hujjah al-Mahdi ('atfs) in the Du'a al-Iftitāh that we recite every night in the month of Ramadan, teaches us to say:

اللَّهُمَّ إِنَّ عَفْوَكَ عَنْ ذَنْبِي وَتَجَاوُزَكَ عَنْ خَطِيئَتِي وَصَفْحَكَ عَنْ ظُلْمِي وَسِتْرَكَ
عَلَى قَبِيحِ عَمَلِي وَحِلْمَكَ عَنْ كَثِيرِ جُرْمِي عِنْدَمَا كَانَ مِنْ خَطِيئِي وَعَمْدِي
أَطْمَعَنِي فِي أَنْ أَسْأَلَكَ مَا لَا أَسْتَوْجِبُهُ مِنْكَ

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ عَلَى حِلْمِهِ بَعْدَ عِلْمِهِ وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ عَلَى عَفْوِهِ بَعْدَ قُدْرَتِهِ وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ عَلَى
طُولِ أَنْاتِهِ فِي غَضَبِهِ وَهُوَ قَادِرٌ عَلَى مَا يُرِيدُ

*O Allāh, Your pardon for my sins and Your overlooking my mistakes, and Your lenient view of my disorderly conduct, and Your cover up of my foul actions, and Your **tolerance (hilm)** despite my many transgressions committed wilfully or negligently, all tempt me to ask You for that which I do not deserve from You...*

*All praise be to Allāh for His **tolerance (hilm)** despite of His knowledge (of my sins); and all praise be to Allāh for His amnesty despite His being All-powerful (to punish); and all praise be to Allāh for the respite He allows even when His wrath is deserved and He is able to do what He wills....*

Hilm is therefore more than just being patient. It is to be forbearing and tolerant. It is to be very compassionate and forgiving so that you are always ready to overlook the

mistakes of others and to excuse them. Allāh praises Nabi Ibrāhim (‘a) for this quality and mentions in the Qur’ān:

﴿إِنَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ لَحَلِيمًا أَوَّاهٌ مُنِيبٌ﴾

*Ibrāhim was indeed most **forbearing (halim)**, tender-hearted, [and] often turning [to Allāh in supplication].*

- Surah Hud, 11:75

Our second Imām, Imām Hasan (‘a) was asked about *hilm*. He said, ‘It is to swallow anger and control the self.’

And Imām Ali (‘a) said, ‘There is no *hilm* like patience and silence.’

Hilm is therefore to forgive someone when you are able to punish him and you have the right to take revenge. That is why Imām Ali (‘a) has also said, ‘*hilm* puts out the flames of anger, while taking revenge fuels the fire.’

We can only know how much *hilm* we have when others make us angry and how we react or how stressed we become. The wise Luqman (‘a) (who some believe was a Nabi) once said, ‘One who is *halim* is not known except (how he behaves) when angry.’

Finally, remember that what makes people *halim* or *halimah* is knowledge. The more ignorant we are, the more easily we get emotional and angry because our minds and egos use us to vent and take revenge and we have no control over ourselves. Conversely, as we increase in knowledge, we become more humble and we recognize human nature; and as we get angry, we notice the rise of anger in our minds and body and we are able to control it through patience and praying to Allāh constantly.

Allāh describes Himself as ‘All-knowing, All-forbearing’ (*‘alimun halim*) in Surah an-Nisā, 4:12. And Imām Ali (‘a) has said, ‘*‘ilm* (knowledge) is the root of *hilm*. And *hilm* is the adornment of *‘ilm*.’

Humility (at-Tawādu)

Along with forbearance and tolerance (*hilm*) goes the quality of humility (*tawādu*). Humility is the opposite of being proud and boasting. When we talk of *tawādu* as a positive quality we don’t mean to disgrace ourselves or allow others to make fun of us and humiliate us. What we mean is not to be too proud to worship Allāh and not to be too proud to help Allāh’s creation.

A person with *tawādu* does not feel it is below his or her dignity to help even with a humble task or to work in a job that is seen to be humble. If we work in a profession that is *harām* like working in bar or a casino or any place of sin, that is a disgrace and

humiliation. But if we work hard to earn a halāl livelihood, it doesn't matter whether we are a doctor or a janitor. What matters is that we are not begging from others and we place our trust in Allāh.

Similarly when we are in the masjid, if we have *tawādu*, we will not feel ashamed to pick up any litter we see on the ground or to serve others with tea, and so on. Or if we are in a public park and it is time for salāh, we will not feel ashamed to pray to our Lord and Creator. The opposite of *tawādu* is pride where we feel ashamed of worshipping or serving Allāh because we feel others will laugh at us or we care more about our image and prestige than what Allāh expects from us.

Rasulullāh (s) described *tawādu* as the main ingredient that brings 'sweetness' to worship. In other words when we pray with humility (*tawādu*), it has a unique pleasure and 'sweetness' that only people who are humble can appreciate. That is why people who are humble are often seen to pray for long periods with prolonged ruku' and sujud in their salāh. And the more they humble themselves before Allāh, the more honourable Allāh makes them in the eyes of His creation. Sometimes due to *tawādu* a person reaches a status that even the angels of Allāh admire.

Imām Ja'far as-Sādiq ('a) said, '*Tawādu* is to sit in a crowd without expecting special recognition; to do salām to everyone you meet instead of expecting others to greet you only; and to give up your right to others even though you have a greater right than them.'

Imām Ali ('a) described *tawādu* as 'the fruit of knowledge'. In other words it is like *hilm* as well. The more knowledgeable a person is in religion and about Allāh, the less materialistic they will be, and the more humble and forbearing they will become. And when you see someone who is greedy for the world or who is intolerant, always judging others, never forgiving others, always ready to take revenge and fight for his rights and even take the rights of others, proud and boastful, wanting praise and recognition, these are all signs of ignorance and a lack of true knowledge and wisdom.

As a person becomes more humble, they pay less attention to the faults of others and they concentrate on their own faults. They become more concerned with what Allāh thinks of them and how to become better so that Allāh is more pleased with them.

Imām Ali ('a) has said, 'Blessed is one who is so occupied with his own faults that he does not notice the faults of others.'

Remember: *Tawādu* is only for the sake of Allāh. As we said earlier, it does not mean to humiliate ourselves before others, especially when we want some worldly gain.

For example, Imām Ali ('a) has said, 'One who respects a rich person and humbles himself before him only because of his richness, loses one-third of his religion.'

And other traditions (*ahādith*) also tell us that a person who bows before a rich man only because of his wealth, will find his faith (*imān*) melting away like salt dissolves in water.

So even when a true believer (*mu'min*) is humble before others, it is only before other true believers (*mu'min*). A believer regards others as being better than himself or herself because of their piety and faith and not because of how rich or influential they are.

Pride (at-Takabbur), the Opposite of at-Tawādu

Takabbur is defined as pride or arrogance. It is also called *Kibr*.

The sign of a person who is arrogant (*mutakabbir*) is that he or she is also boastful. Allāh dislikes people who are proud or who boast and He says in the Qur'ān:

﴿وَلَا تُصَعِّرْ خَدَّكَ لِلنَّاسِ وَلَا تَمْشِ فِي الْأَرْضِ مَرَحًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ كُلَّ مُخْتَالٍ فَخُورٍ﴾

And do not turn your face away from people in contempt, nor go about in the land with pride; surely Allāh does not love any arrogant boaster.

- Surah Luqman, 31:18

Pride destroys a person and the best example of this is Shaytān who refused to obey Allāh because he thought he was better than Nabi Adam (‘a). When Allāh commanded all the angels to bow before Adam, Iblis (Shaytān) said: “I am better than he (Adam), You created me of fire and him of clay.” For this display of pride he was thrown out of the heavens and cursed forever.

If we read the Qur'ān carefully we will see that it explains that the reason why people do not believe in Allāh and the Day of Judgement, or the reason why some people don't pray and as well disobey Allāh, is all because of *takabbur*. *Kibr* or *takabbur* is therefore a primary cause of taking people to the fire of Hell.

This is perhaps why Rasulullāh (s) said a person who has even an atom of pride in his heart would never enter Jannah.

As part of our efforts to have *tawādu* and keep away from *kibr*, we should live simple lives. We should try and avoid talking about ourselves and how good we are, or dressing up just to show off, and so on.

When we have an opportunity to do good like praying *salāt al-layl* or fasting a *mustahab* fast or helping someone in need or donating some money in charity, we should do our best to keep it a secret from others. This will prevent us from believing or thinking we are better than others.

How do you think a person with *kibr* would talk about the following events, compared to a person with *tawādu*?

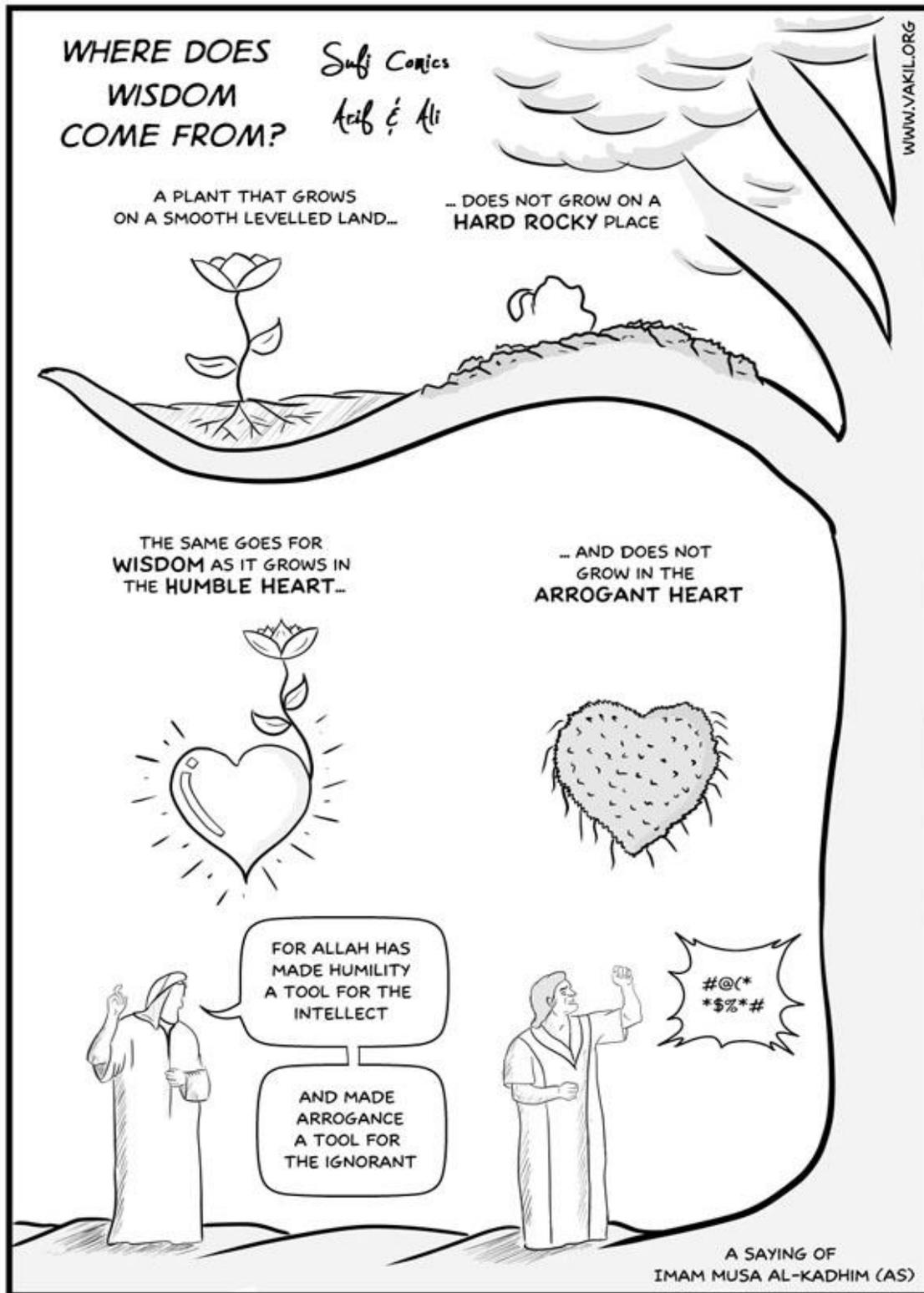
- Coming first in a test or examination
- Reciting du'a in the masjid in front of a large crowd or giving a speech in public
- Winning a medal at a sports event.
- Winning over their friend in a game or sport
- Talking about their ancestors if they were famous

When we accomplish something good, Shaytān whispers to our *nafs* (egos) that we are great, and that we are better than the rest. And this continues until we actually believe it and starting behaving as if we are better than others.

Takabbur enters our hearts very secretly; it tries to hide from us, and takes over our thoughts quietly. That is why Rasulullāh (s) once said, 'Pride enters your heart like a black ant crawling under a rock in a dark night.'

The first thing that we should do when we achieve something good is to thank Allāh. Just by saying 'Alhamdulillah', we acknowledge that in reality we are not capable of doing anything good. Whatever good we achieve is actually from Allāh. And we thank Allāh that He did a good act through us and used us for that deed.

Most of our ad'iya (plural of du'a) teach us to thank Allāh and to realize that whatever blessings and good qualities we have are all from Allāh. He is the Giver and it is He who inspires us to do good and therefore it is only He who is deserving of praise.



Lesson 3

Contentment vs. Greed

Contentment means to be satisfied with what we have and not to constantly want more or even want what others have. It is ok to work hard to gain more blessings of Allāh but not with a sense of unhappiness and dissatisfaction or with a constant greed for more and more without ever feeling we have enough.

Contentment is called *Ridā* or *Qanā'ah* in Arabic. And greed, which is the opposite, is called *Hirs* in Arabic.

Contentment (ar-Ridā wa al-Qanā'ah)

Imām Ali ('a) has said, 'Blessed is one who remembers the Resurrection, works for the Accounting (of Judgement Day), is content with little, and is pleased with Allāh (i.e. His Decree for him).'

And Imām Ali ('a) also said, 'The most thankful (to Allāh) of people is the most content.' This means when we are satisfied with what Allāh has blessed us with – materially or in our bodies – we show gratefulness to Allāh. But when we are never satisfied no matter how much Allāh blesses us with, we are being ungrateful and always demanding more.

We need to realize that if we give in to greed, it will never be enough, no matter how much we get. The secret to being wealthy and financially independent is being content. Imām Ali ('a) once said, 'Contentment is not found until greed is given up.' And he also said, 'One who is not satisfied with little in this world will never be happy or benefit from having more.'

In the end, we will only stop being greedy when we have conviction (*yaqin*) and trust in Allāh that He will always give us more when we need it; and that we don't have to hoard for the future. That is why Imām Ali ('a) said, '*Ridā* (contentment) is the fruit of *yaqin* (conviction).'

Imām Ali ('a) taught us a great way to practice *ridā* and *qanā'ah*. Instead of wanting Allāh to agree with what we want, we can learn to surrender to Allāh and ask Him to give us what **He** wants and what **He** thinks is best for us. Hence Imām Ali ('a) said, 'If what you want will not happen, then want what *will* happen.'

People often commit sins because they can't get what they want lawfully so they even commit *harām* just to get what they want. This is the result of not being content with what one has. Imām as-Sādiq ('a) taught, 'The foundation of obedience to Allāh is to be content with what Allāh does, in whatever a person likes or dislikes.'

And Imām al-Hasan ('a) asked, 'How can a true believer (*mu'min*) be a *mu'min* when he is displeased with what Allāh has decreed for him?'

Greed (al-Hirs)

Greed is the desire to possess more than what we need. It results in humiliation and weakness and leads to other vices. It shows a weak faith and a lack of trust (*tawakkul*) in Allāh (that He will provide in future). It makes people miserly and insensitive to the suffering of others. Greed is what drives people to usury (*ribā*), gambling, bribery and cheating others. It is the main cause why some humans exploit others, why most wars are fought and why humans hurt and destroy the environment and waste natural resources.

One of the reasons Islām asks us to give khums and zakāh is to help us reduce our greed for wealth and attachment to it.

Imām Ali ('a) said, 'Greed (*hirs*) reduces the value of a human being but does not increase his sustenance (*rizq*).' And he said 'One who is greedy has no shame.'

When Imām Ali ('a) was asked, 'what form of disgrace is the most humiliating?' he replied, 'Greed for the world.'

And Imām Ja'far as-Sādiq ('a) said, 'How bad it is for a *mu'min* to have a desire that humiliates him.'

One who is greedy is a prisoner of disgrace and humiliation because he or she cannot break its shackles as long as he or she remains greedy. In other words greed and humiliation are always together. You cannot be greedy and not humiliate yourself.

Imām as-Sādiq ('a) said that Amir al-Mu'minin (Imām Ali), blessings be on him, used to say, 'Son of Adam! If you want from the world what will suffice you than even the least in it will suffice you. And if you want what will not suffice you than even everything in it will not suffice you.' This shows that greed has no limit.

Imām Ali ('a) was asked, 'what is *hirs*?' He said, 'It is to seek less by giving up more.' What he meant was that one who is greedy seeks wealth or pleasure but gives up his self-respect. And he seeks the world (less) by giving up the hereafter and jannah (more).

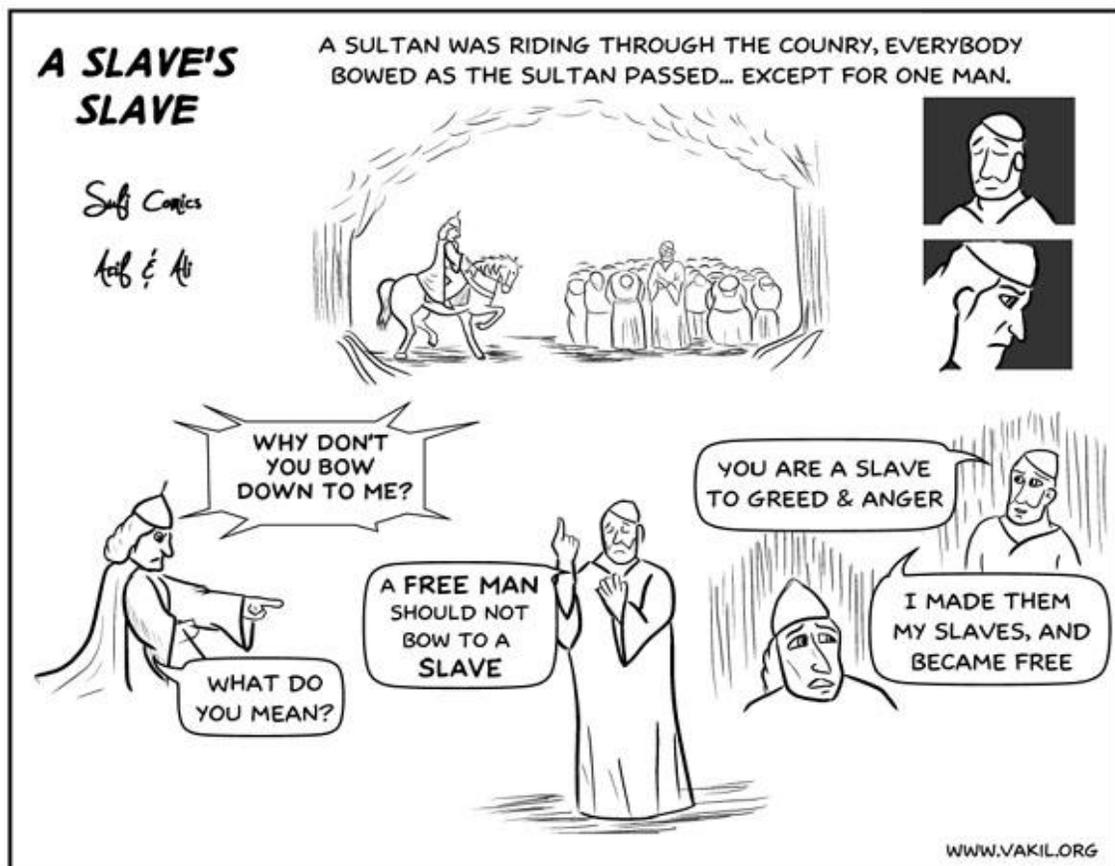
How to Cure Greed

Imām as-Sādiq ('a) said to his companion Abu Basir: 'when you feel greed for the world, remember death and your loneliness in the grave. Remember how, in the grave... the worms and insects will eat your flesh and how you will be cut off from

the world. This will encourage you to work for the hereafter and keep you away from the greed of most things in the world.'

And another way to treat greed and to stop it is to share what you have with others who need it and never to hoard things in the house or bank. It is all right to keep some for 'a rainy day' but in moderation. We should give away to others most of what is surplus and not needed by us.

And finally, the only type of greed that Islām *does* encourage is greed for knowledge. Rasulullāh (s) has said, 'Two greedy persons are never satisfied; those greedy for knowledge and those greedy for wealth.' As Muslims, we should always be greedy for knowledge as it helps us get closer to Allāh and prepares us for the next world, which is our permanent home.



Lesson 4

Bravery vs. Cowardice

In Arabic, bravery is called *Shujā'ah* and cowardice, which is the opposite, is called *Jubn*.

Sometimes we can see bravery vs. cowardice easily. For example, when a strong or bigger person oppresses or beats up a smaller or weaker person we know the bigger person is a coward. And sometimes we see a person who is smaller or appears weaker but instead of running away, he stands and defends himself and we know he is brave and courageous.

This tells us that cowardice is to pick on others when we have an unfair advantage over them and to run away when we don't think we can win. And bravery is not necessarily to win a fight but to be able to stand for the truth and for what is right.

In order to be brave, a person must truly believe in what they stand for and also must have true faith and conviction that Allāh is watching and able to help him or her.

That is why a Muslim fears no one except Allāh, whether it is in saying the truth or fighting in a battle. Allāh describes such brave Muslims in the Qur'ān by saying:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَنْ يَرْتَدَّ مِنْكُمْ عَنْ دِينِهِ فَسَوْفَ يَأْتِي اللَّهَ بِقَوْمٍ يُحِبُّهُمْ
وَيُحِبُّونَهُ أَذِلَّةٍ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَعِزَّةٍ عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ يُجَاهِدُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَلَا
يَخَافُونَ لَوْمَةَ لَائِمٍ ...﴾

*O you who have faith! Should any of you desert his religion, Allāh will soon bring a people whom He loves and who love Him, [who will be] humble towards the faithful, stern towards the faithless, waging jihād in the way of Allāh, **not fearing the blame of any blamer...***

- Surah al-Māidah, 5:54

Furthermore, Allāh emphasizes that fear and cowardice is from Shaytān. Meaning it is the result of a weak faith. We have no reason to flee and run away if we are convinced that the greatest Power in the universe (i.e. Allāh) is with us. Hence Allāh says:

﴿إِنَّمَا ذَلِكَ الشَّيْطَانُ يُخَوِّفُ أَوْلِيَاءَهُ فَلَا تَخَافُوهُمْ وَخَافُونِي إِن كُنتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ﴾

That is Shaytān, frightening his friends, therefore do not fear them, but fear Me, if you are believers.

- Surah Al-i Imrān, 3:175

In the past there were people who were tested with fear, and others tried frightening them, but they stood firm because of their trust (*tawakkul*) in Allāh. Allāh quotes their words in the Qur'ān as well:

﴿الَّذِينَ قَالَ لَهُمُ النَّاسُ إِنَّ النَّاسَ قَدْ جَمَعُوا لَكُمْ فَاخْشَوْهُمْ فَزَادَهُمْ إِيمَانًا وَقَالُوا
حَسْبُنَا اللَّهُ وَنِعْمَ الْوَكِيلُ﴾

Those to whom the people said, 'All the people have gathered against you; so fear them.' That only increased them in faith, and they said, 'Allāh is sufficient for us, and He is the most excellent One to trust.'

- Surah Al-i Imrān, 3:173

Tawakkul in Allāh therefore frees a person from the shackles of fear and cowardice and makes him or her brave. It's not about physical strength or advantage. Take for example how bravely Sayyida Zaynab ('a) spoke in the court of Yazid. Yazid was the caliph with a court full of his ambassadors, military commanders and supporters. Sayyida Zaynab ('a) was brought in as a prisoner tied in ropes. But her trust in Allāh was so great that her physical circumstances didn't matter. She was still able to show courage and bravery because of her trust in Allāh.

A person may, for example, fear dying. But *tawakkul* that Allāh is in control of life and death, and that we came from Him and we return to Him, removes that fear.

That is why when Allāh describes His 'friends' (*awliyā*) in the Qur'ān, He says:

﴿أَلَا إِنَّ أَوْلِيَاءَ اللَّهِ لَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ﴾

Look! The friends of Allāh will indeed have no fear nor will they grieve.

- Surah Yunus, 10:62

Why is it important for us to be brave and not to be cowardly? It is because when we are cowardly, we will never stand up for the truth. We will always be filled with fear: fear of losing our wealth, fear of losing our name and prestige, fear of losing our lives, and so on. Bravery allows us to take sides with the truth instead of 'sitting on the fence'. In fact, it is impossible to separate truth and bravery just as it is impossible to separate falsehood and cowardice.

Imām Ali ('a) has said, 'If qualities were segregated, then truth would be with bravery and cowardice with lying.'

To be brave does not mean to have *no* fear. A person can have fear as a natural human reaction. But to be brave means to remain steadfast because of knowing that

the cause we stand for is greater than our lives and therefore not to run away. Bravery makes us realize that it is worth sacrificing our lives for the truth and enduring pain for it. Running away from death is pointless because sooner or later we all must die. We might as well die for a noble cause in exchange for eternal bliss. Or in the words of Imām Ali (‘a), ‘bravery is to be patient for a moment.’

The wise Luqman (‘a) said, ‘The brave one is only known during battle.’ This can have many meanings. One of course is the literal meaning that the one who does not flee in battle and stands firmly holding his ground is brave. But another meaning could refer to the ‘battle’ against our *nafs* (ego) – what is called *Jihād al-Akbar* (the Greater Jihād). A coward gives in to temptation and falls for sin. The brave one is known because he or she does not flee during the ‘battle’ against their desires. They continue ‘fighting’ with patience and prayer until they overcome the ‘enemy’ within. It is they who are truly brave and courageous in spirit. That is perhaps why Rasullāh (s) once said, ‘Brave is not he who can throw another man to the ground. Rather brave is he who can overcome his own desires.’

Lesson 5

Hubb ad-Dunya

The term *hubb ad-dunya* literally means ‘love of the world’. When Islām condemns ‘love of the world’ it is not in the sense of enjoying Allāh’s blessings such as food, getting married, earning a living, having a nice home, travelling, and so on. These are all good and in fact recommended in Islām. But what Islām means by ‘love of the world’ is being completely taken in by the pleasures of the world and making the life of the world our main focus, goal and aim in life. For example, it would be wrong if our goal in life were only to make as much money as possible, in any way possible. Or for example, we would be guilty of ‘love of the world’ if we are constantly focused on physical pleasures only and how to get more of it day and night. Obsession with the world is wrong because it makes us forget Allāh and the hereafter (our real life).

Being completely immersed with the material world only while forgetting the hereafter and all spiritual matters is also called materialism. We will discuss the evils of materialism in more detail in Book 11 inshā Allāh.

Imām Ali (‘a) has said the world is the abode (i.e. ‘home’) of the hypocrites (*munafiqin*) and not the abode of the pious. Therefore we should take from it only what is necessary and not collect and hoard as if it is our permanent place of stay.

As we have mentioned earlier, the life of the world in itself is not evil. It is in fact very good and necessary because it is the best place to earn Jannah. That is why in some *ahādith* the world is called ‘the farmland of the hereafter’. We plant seeds of good deeds here and we reap the crops of *thawāb* in the hereafter. Without the world we couldn’t make it to Jannah. So we must see this life as a blessing and our youth, health and energy as precious commodities and raw material that can be used to build our place in Jannah. Instead of wasting time and being distracted with just playing games all day, watching TV, surfing on the internet and chatting with friends, we should race against time because we don’t know how much time we have left before we die. The harder we work for the hereafter, the more successful we will be after death and the easier our transition to Paradise (Jannah).

How do we work for the hereafter while we live in this world? Working for the hereafter involves serving Allāh and serving Allāh’s creatures. Serving Allāh is by obeying Him, not sinning, praying, fasting, reciting the Qur’ān and constant remembrance of Allāh on our lips and in our hearts. Serving Allāh’s creatures is by helping the poor and needy, volunteering for humanitarian activities, giving others our money and time (e.g. through teaching at the madrasah), obedience to parents, kindness to others especially the old, weak and even animals, birds and all of Allāh’s creatures. Looking after the environment, recycling, not being wasteful with water, and even working hard to earn a *halāl* living so that we don’t have to depend on others to look after our families and ourselves. All these are also ways of serving Allāh’s creation and working for the hereafter. Whether we are occupied with

servicing Allāh or His creation, we are constantly purifying our souls and readying them to be able to live in Jannah.

Each day has 24 hours. Think of every day as being worth 24 precious diamonds that you can either earn or throw away. Imagine each diamond is worth a million dollars. When you waste a whole day, you have just thrown 24 million dollars in the trash. You may get more tomorrow but you'll never get what you lost today ever again.

In one hadith we are taught that the love of the world (i.e. materialism) is like drinking seawater. The more you drink, the thirstier it makes you until it kills you.

The world enslaves those who are enamoured by it. That is why Imām Ali ('a) used to ask, 'is there no free person to give up this world?' Because only those who are not slaves of worldly pleasures are truly free.

Imām Ali ('a) described the world as a 'left-over bone of a pig in the hand of leper' and also as 'the sneeze of a goat'. In one hadith, it is said the world has less value to Allāh than the wing of a fly. If Allāh thought the world was great and special, He would never give it to the hypocrites and disbelievers, and the faithful would never suffer in it.

The faithful (*mu'minin*) are told to bear patience in the world because according to Rasullāh (s), 'the world is a prison for the faithful' and therefore a faithful Muslim should not expect luxury and comfort in a prison. A *mu'min* sees the world as a very temporary place, like a shadow that extends for a few hours and then shrinks and disappears.

A faithful (*mu'min*) is never overly occupied with what he or she possesses in the world, whether it be the home, car, clothes, business, gadgets, sports, games or even a hobby. It is not wrong - and in fact even recommended - to enjoy the blessings of Allāh in this world. But we must never forget that in the end, we are just 'travellers' who have stopped at an 'inn' for a few decades before we move on to the next world. A *mu'min* or *mu'mina* therefore spends his or her precious time and money to find ways to make himself or herself better, to please Allāh, and to purchase and build his or her permanent place in Jannah.

Imām Ali ('a) warns us not to be fooled by the world because it is 'like a snake whose skin is soft to touch on the outside but is full of poison'. It is also like a shadow because it seems permanent when it is extending. But when it starts shrinking, it soon vanishes without warning. Furthermore, just like a shadow, when you run after the world, it will run away from you. But when you run away from it, it will run after you. Once the world and its pleasures attract you and you become occupied and interested in it or fall in love with it, it will disappoint you and let you down.

Remember: The *halāl* we enjoy in this world still requires accounting (*hisāb*) on the Day of Judgement and the *harām* in this world of course leads to punishment (*'iqāb* or *'adhāb*) on the Day of Judgement.

In summary, the world and the hereafter are like the two ends of a seesaw. Or like the east and the west. You cannot rise in one without falling in the other and you cannot get closer to one without getting further from the other. It is impossible. But when we say 'the world' we must distinguish the 'good world' that is used as a farmland to sow good deeds that will grow and thrive in the next world vs. the 'bad world' that is only lived for the sake of enjoyment and that stops the growth of the soul, gives us the illusion of permanence and makes us forgetful of death.

This lesson ends here. What follows are āyāt of Qur'ān and ahādith on the world (as in 'worldliness and materialism') to elaborate what we have discussed so far. If time permits your teacher will quote some of these āyāt and ahādith. He or she may also assign some of ahādith to you as homework or a project to write an essay on. It is important that you express your understanding of what 'love for the world' means to you so that your teacher can correct it if your understanding is wrong.

Qur'ān and Hadith on Hubb ad-Dunya (Love of the World)

Qur'ān

﴿أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ اشْتَرُوا الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا بِالْآخِرَةِ فَلَا يُخَفَّفُ عَنْهُمْ الْعَذَابُ وَلَا هُمْ يُنصَرُونَ﴾

They are the ones who bought the life of this world for the Hereafter; so their punishment shall not be lightened, nor will they be helped.

- Surah al-Baqarah, 2:86

﴿زُيِّنَ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا وَيَسْخَرُونَ مِنَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا فَوْقَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَاللَّهُ يَرْزُقُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ﴾

Worldly life has been glamorized for the faithless, and they ridicule the faithful. But those who are Godconscious shall be above them on the Day of Resurrection, and Allāh provides for whomever He wishes without any reckoning.

- Surah al-Baqarah, 2:212

﴿...مِنْكُمْ مَنْ يُرِيدُ الدُّنْيَا وَمِنْكُمْ مَنْ يُرِيدُ الْآخِرَةَ...﴾

...Some of you desire this world, and some of you desire the Hereafter...

- Surah Aal-i Imrān, 3:152

﴿وَذَرِ الَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا دِينَهُمْ لَعِبًا وَلَهْوًا وَعَرَّتْهُمْ الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا...﴾

Leave alone those who take their religion for play and diversion and whom the life of this world has deceived...

- Surah al-An'am, 6:70

﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ لَا يَرْجُونَ لِقَاءَنَا وَرَضُوا بِالْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَاطْمَأَنُّوا بِهَا وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنْ آيَاتِنَا غَافِلُونَ أُولَئِكَ مَا وَاهَمُهُمُ النَّارُ بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ﴾

Indeed those who do not expect to meet Us and who are pleased with the life of this world and satisfied with it, and those who are oblivious of Our signs - it is they whose refuge shall be the Fire because of what they used to earn.

- Surah Yunus, 10:7-8

﴿وَمَا هَذِهِ الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا لَهُوٌّ وَلَعِبٌ وَإِنَّ الدَّارَ الْآخِرَةَ لَهِيَ الْحَيَوَانُ لَوْ كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ﴾

The life of this world is nothing but diversion and play, but the abode of the Hereafter is indeed Life, had they known!

- Surah al-Ankabut, 29:64

﴿يَا قَوْمِ إِنَّمَا هَذِهِ الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا مَتَاعٌ وَإِنَّ الْآخِرَةَ هِيَ دَارُ الْقَرَارِ﴾

O my people! This life of the world is only a [passing] enjoyment, and indeed the Hereafter is the abiding home.

- Surah al-Ghāfir, 40:39

﴿مَنْ كَانَ يُرِيدُ حَرْثَ الْآخِرَةِ نَزِدْ لَهُ فِي حَرْثِهِ وَمَنْ كَانَ يُرِيدُ حَرْثَ الدُّنْيَا نُؤْتِهِ مِنْهَا وَمَا لَهُ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنْ نَصِيبٍ﴾

Whoever desires the harvest of the Hereafter, We will increase for him his harvest, and whoever desires the harvest of the world, We will give it to him, but he will have no share in the Hereafter.

- Surah ash-Shura, 42:20

﴿فَأَمَّا مَنْ طَغَىٰ وَآثَرَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا فَإِنَّ الْجَحِيمَ هِيَ الْمَأْوَىٰ﴾

As for him who was rebellious and preferred the life of this world, his refuge will indeed be hell.

- Surah an-Nāzi'āt, 79:37-39

﴿بَلْ تُوَثِّرُونَ الْهَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةَ خَيْرٌ وَأَبْقَى﴾

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

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

Hadith

1. Rasulullāh (s) said, 'Be the children of the hereafter and do not be the children of this world.'
2. Rasulullāh (s) said, 'The world is the faithful (*mu'min*)'s prison and the faithless (*kāfir*)'s paradise.'
3. Rasulullāh (s), 'The most amazing thing is how a person who is convinced of the everlasting life is busy striving for this vain life!'
4. Imām Ali ('a) said, 'The bitterness of the world is the sweetness of the hereafter and the sweetness of the world is the bitterness of the hereafter.'
5. Imām Ali ('a) said, 'The world is like poison. Only the one who doesn't know it will eat it.' And also, 'The world is a trap. Only one who doesn't know it will fall into it.'
6. Imām Ali ('a), 'One whose concern for the world is great, so will be his sorrow and grief.'
7. Imām Ali ('a), 'Beware that you are not cheated out of the permanent abode (of the hereafter).'
8. Imām Ali ('a), 'Strive against yourself and work for the hereafter as hard as you can.'
9. Imām Ali ('a), 'You are a creature of the hereafter so work for it. You were not created for the world so abstain from it.'
10. Imām Ali ('a), 'How can a person work for the hereafter when he is busy with (running after) the world?'
11. Imām Zayn al-Abidin ('a), 'The life of this world is like a slumber while the hereafter is like waking up from sleep.'
12. Imām Ja'far as-Sādiq ('a) asked, 'If you are certain the world is temporary, then why all this greed and eagerness for it?!'

Don't Confuse the Praiseworthy World with Materialism or Love for Worldly Pleasure

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Sufi Comics
Acif & Ali

IS THE WORLD AN EVIL PLACE?

A MAN COMPLAINED TO IMAM ALI (A):
" THE WORLD ... "

"... IS AN EVIL PLACE!"

IT DECEIVES MAN

IT'S A PLACE OF CRIMES

AND FULL OF DISHONESTY

YOU MAY BE DECEIVED BY THE WORLD...

... BUT THE WORLD DOESN'T DECEIVE ANYONE

YOU MAY HAVE COMMITTED A CRIME...

... BUT THE WORLD DOESN'T COMMIT A CRIME AGAINST YOU

YOU MAYBE DISHONEST...

... BUT THE WORLD IS HONEST WITH WHOSEVER DEALS WITH IT HONESTLY

IMAM ALI (A) CONTINUED:
THE WORLD IS A ...

... PLACE OF WORSHIP FOR THE FRIENDS OF GOD

... PLACE OF PRAYER FOR THE ANGELS OF GOD

... A TRADING PLACE FOR THE LOVERS OF GOD

The comic strip is enclosed in a rectangular frame. At the top left, the text 'WWW.VAKIL.ORG' is written vertically. Below it, 'Sufi Comics' and 'Acif & Ali' are written in a stylized font. The main title 'IS THE WORLD AN EVIL PLACE?' is in large, bold letters. The central panel features a black background with a white globe and the text 'A MAN COMPLAINED TO IMAM ALI (A): "/>

Lesson 6

The Evils of Alcohol and Drugs

An addiction is a habit that a person finds hard to give up. Most human beings have some form of addiction or the other, such as tea, coffee, smoking, internet, food, sleep, shopping, and so on. The most perfect human beings are those who are not addicted to anything or anyone besides Allāh.

So in general, any kind of addiction is not good and we should always strive not to have a 'habit' that we are enslaved to and that we cannot shake off. In particular, there are some forms of addictions that are harām even if they are not a habit and even if a person indulges in them once in a while only. These include alcohol, drugs, gambling and pornography. The evils of gambling and betting were discussed in Book 8 and the evils of pornography will be taught in Book 10.

In some non-Islāmic societies when drug or alcohol "abuse" is condemned, they only mean it is wrong to be addicted to them or to overuse them. Keep in mind that in Islām, not only is drug and alcohol "abuse" wrong, but even their "use" is harām. Meaning it is harām to even try a drop, regardless of whether you get addicted or not or whether you get intoxicated or not.

Islām forbids human beings from using any substance that causes them to lose control of their minds and become irrational or behave like animals. This is not only humiliating and degrading for the human being but also detrimental to society and causes domestic violence, family break-ups, fatalities on roads, depression, addictions, crime, and in general utterly ruins a human being's life.

Alcohol

By 'alcohol' we mean all forms of intoxicants such as beers, spirits, wines and so on, regardless of whether their effect is strong or weak, immediate or delayed, a drop or in large quantity, pure or diluted.

Allāh forbids alcohol as an intoxicant in the Qur'ān:

﴿يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْخَمْرِ وَالْمَيْسِرِ قُلْ فِيهِمَا إِثْمٌ كَبِيرٌ وَمَنَافِعُ لِلنَّاسِ وَإِثْمُهُمَا أَكْبَرُ مِن نَّفْعِهِمَا...﴾

They ask you concerning wine and gambling. Say, 'There is a great sin in both of them, and some profits for the people, but their sinfulness outweighs their profit...'

- Surah al-Baqarah 2:219

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنَّمَا الْخَمْرُ وَالْمَيْسِرُ وَالْأَنْصَابُ وَالْأَزْلَامُ رِجْسٌ مِّنْ عَمَلِ
الشَّيْطَانِ فَاجْتَنِبُوهُ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ﴾

O you who have faith! Indeed wine, gambling, idols and the divining arrows (a form of gambling) are uncleannesses from Shaytan's work, so avoid them, so that you may be successful.

- Surah al-Māidah, 5:90

Imām Ja'far as-Sādiq ('a) was asked that if a person takes alcohol in a small quantity so that it doesn't intoxicate him or her, is it permissible? And he said, 'absolutely not'. Anything that intoxicates in large quantities is harām even in small quantities. In other words even tasting a drop of alcohol is harām and a major sin in Islām.

Imām as-Sādiq ('a) was also asked what if a person dilutes alcohol with water and he still forbade it because in addition to being *najis al-'ayn*, alcohol is also harām in itself. And a harām thing does not become halāl by mixing with water. Therefore 'fear Allāh and do not drink it,' said the Imām.

Imām Ali ('a) once said that if he knew a drop of wine fell into a well and the water of the well was used to water the earth and then grass grew from that earth and an animal ate the grass, he would still not eat the meat of that animal. In other words he wanted to show us the lasting effect of alcohol.

Even children whose fathers and mothers take alcohol before they are born show signs of its harmful effect. If a pregnant woman takes alcohol her child may be born with FAS (Fetal Alcohol Syndrome). Even a drop of alcohol can permanently harm the development of a child in the womb.

Imām Muhammad al-Bāqir ('a) warned that a person who drinks alcohol will be raised on the Day of Judgement with a darkened face with his or her tongue hanging out, with saliva dripping on his or her chest and with extreme thirst. He or she will scream 'Thirst! Thirst!' until he or she enters the fire of Hell and drinks from its filth and dirt.

Rasulullāh ('a) cursed ten types of people who have anything to do with wine:

1. The person who plants and cultivates grapes (or any such fruit) with the intention of producing wine.
2. The person who crushes the grapes.
3. The person who transports the wine.
4. The person who takes delivery of the wine from the supplier.
5. The person who sells the wine.
6. The person who buys the wine.
7. The person who serves the wine.

8. The person who drinks the wine.
9. The person who sits at the same table with the person drinking the wine.
10. The person who uses the income that is earned by (making or selling) wine.

In other words, anyone who has anything to do with alcohol is cursed by Rasullāh (s) even if it is just advertising it, creating a TV or computer ad, wearing a T-shirt that advertises alcohol, and so on.

One of the necessities of religion is to consider alcohol to be harām. If a Muslim considers alcohol to be halāl then he or she becomes faithless (i.e. a *kāfir*).

Imām as-Sādiq (‘a) also said that if a person drinks even a drop of alcohol and then does not repent, he or she would intensely regret this at the time that his or her soul is leaving the body. And the Imām (‘a) also said that Rasullāh (s) said ‘Cursed and cursed again is the one who sits at a table where wine is being served.’

So even when we go out with non-Muslim friends from work, it is important that we do not sit with them if they are drinking alcohol. We should avoid any restaurant that has a bar, sells alcohol or even permits people to bring their own alcohol.

If you buy anything with alcohol or someone gives you a gift with alcohol (e.g. chocolates or cake with rum), you cannot even give it to a non-Muslim. You must throw it in the trash.

If a Muslim restaurant owner allows alcohol in his or her restaurant, we should not eat there or trust their meat is halāl even if they say so.

Rasullāh (s) said, ‘One who believes in Allāh and the Last Day should not even sit at the table where wine is kept.’ And Imām Ja’far as-Sādiq (‘a) said, ‘Do not sit with drunks because when the curse of Allāh descends on them it engulfs everyone, including the people in the company of the drunks.’

A man called Ibn Abi Yazūr told Imām Ja’far as-Sādiq (‘a), ‘I suffer from a disease. When the pain intensifies I drink some wine and the pain subsides.’ Imām Ja’far as-Sādiq (‘a) said to him, ‘Do not drink it. It is harām; it is nothing but shaytān who is making you believe this helps.’ The next time Ibn Abi Yazūr was in intense pain, he remembered the words of the Imām and did not drink wine. And sure enough after a while, the pain disappeared.

In a similar incident, a woman called Umm Khalid said to Imām Ja’far as-Sādiq (‘a) that doctors had told her that if she adds some alcohol into her bread it would cure the pain in her heart. Imām as-Sādiq (‘a) asked her what she plans to do and she said, ‘You are my Imām. I will only do what you command me. And on the Day of Judgement I will say to Allāh, “I did what Ja’far b. Muhammad as-Sādiq ordered me to do”.’

What a sincere Shi'ah she was! The Imām was proud of her and told her, 'Do not even take a drop of it as medicine otherwise you will intensely regret it when your soul leaves your body.'

We have many *ahādith* to show that even if a person who drinks alcohol prays and fasts and believes in Allāh, at the time of dying they will deny Allāh and lose their faith and thus die faithless and become one of the people of Hellfire.

In an Islāmic government and under Islāmic law, the punishment (*hudūd*) for drinking alcohol is eighty lashes the first time, 160 lashes the second time, 240 lashes the third time. If a person drinks alcohol a fourth time on purpose and without any genuine reason then the punishment is death.

Imām Ja'far as-Sādiq ('a) also advised Muslims never to give their daughters in marriage to a person who drinks alcohol. And he said, 'If a person who drinks alcohol falls ill do not visit him. And if he dies do not attend his funeral.'

By adopting this attitude we fulfill our duty of *an-nahi 'anil munkar*. A drunk should never be trusted or believed in and no one should deal with them or do any business with them even when they are sober. Muslims should not maintain relations with those who consume alcohol so that they have no influence on them or their families and society. Alcohol generally leads to shamelessness and immodesty and influences others as well to lose their chastity and moral values.

Finally, Imām Ja'far as-Sādiq ('a) explained why alcohol is so condemned in Islām. He said, 'Alcohol is the root of all evils and sins. A person who drinks alcohol loses his sanity. At the time he is drunk, he does not know Allāh, does not fear committing any sin, respects the rights of no one and does not stop from committing evil openly. The spirit of piety and faith departs from him and only the impure and vicious spirit, which is far off from the Mercy of Allāh, remains in his body. Allāh, His angels, His prophets and the true believers curse such a man, and his daily prayers are not accepted for forty days....'

Drugs

In this lesson, by 'drugs' we do not mean medicines. We mean intoxicants that are taken to alter a person's state of mind. Sometimes such harmful drugs are called narcotics. They are addictive and besides inducing stupour and reducing pain, they alter a person's mood and behaviour (just like alcohol).

Everyone has heard of narcotics such as opium, heroin, cocaine, marijuana, and so on. But there are innumerable types of drugs that exist in very many forms including plants, liquids, powders, and so on. And those who deal in them use so many jargons and names for them that it would be impossible to list them all. Sometimes painkillers are taken in larger quantities or stronger doses just to give the same effect as narcotics, and in such usages they would also be classified as harām drugs.

In particular drugs are common at high schools, colleges and universities and among the homeless and those who roam the streets in the night. Those who sell and deal in drugs are always looking for new and fresh 'customers' because it is very profitable for them and they love the idea of more people being addicted to drugs. Young people are very easy to prey upon because of their lack of experience in life. Drugs are also very addictive and anyone who makes the mistake of even 'just trying' to use drugs soon finds it very hard to break the habit and will constantly go back for more.

It is therefore very important that you keep away from friends who may be using and dealing with drugs. Never give in to any pressure to even try once. When you find yourself in such a situation, stand up and walk out immediately even if such 'friends' laugh at you, call you names or tease you for being a coward. You will always be glad and thankful you walked out.

If you know of anyone with a drug problem, do not try and help them on your own or even get close to them as friends even if you feel sorry for them. They need professional help and you put yourself in danger by becoming close friends with them. Also beware of being lured into drugs on the internet through chat sites and 'nice' or very friendly strangers you meet online. If a stranger offers you anything to eat or drink, never accept it even if it looks like ordinary candy, chocolate, etc.

A young person addicted to drugs will start off by losing interest in studies and soon after will also have no ambitions for a career and lose interest in life in general. When they have no money to purchase drugs they will turn to theft and crime to get the means to buy drugs. Death from an overdose is common. Drugs also expose people to serious illnesses and diseases because of the exchange of contaminated needles and apparatus.

It is important to know that many of the drug addicts you see roaming in the downtown streets of large cities were once active, healthy and good young people just like you. They had career ambitions and wanted to succeed in life and even had loving parents, siblings and families. But as they became victims of drug use, they eventually found no place or person who could help them and even their own families had to finally let go of them and give up.

Many of the homeless you see on the streets and in the alleyways abuse drugs. But they did not turn to drugs because they were poor and homeless – they became poor and homeless because of their addiction to drugs through the influence of bad friends.

A person who risks using drugs not only risks ruining their life in this world but destroys their *ākhirah* (hereafter) forever. And that is why, even after you start college or university, it is so important that your friends are from the Muslim community and that you continue visiting the masjid regularly and be part of a youth group at your local masjid.

And as teenagers or youth, there are always times when you will feel bored, lonely, confused, misunderstood and even feel your parents don't understand you. Whatever the issue you face is, talk to an elder or your teacher. But never turn to alcohol or drugs because it will ruin your world and your hereafter and you *will* regret it when it's too late.

Not only is drug use absolutely harām in Islām but a person who sells or passes on drugs to others is punishable by death in Islām. This is because he or she destroys another life and it is as if he or she has killed the other person. Drug dealers prey on innocent lives for the sake of money. They must always be punished in the most severe of manners with no tolerance.

Lesson 7

Vandalism & Mischief

The Arabic word for mischief is 'Fitna' or 'Fasād'. And one who causes mischief is called a *fāsīd* (female: *fāsīdah*).

Fasād can take many forms. It can be physical where a person destroys property, kills innocent people, commits arson, and harms others just 'for fun' or out of anger, being drunk, etc. This leads to a lot of confused reactions in the society that in turn leads to mischief and disunity.

Allāh condemns this kind of mischief in various places in the Qur'ān. For example:

﴿وَإِذَا تَوَلَّى سَعَى فِي الْأَرْضِ لِيُفْسِدَ فِيهَا وَيُهْلِكَ الْحَرْثَ وَالنَّسْلَ وَاللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ
الْفُسَادَ﴾

And if he (the fāsīd) were to gain authority, he would try to cause mischief in the land, and to ruin the crop and the cattle, and Allāh does not like mischief.

- Surah al-Baqarah, 2:205

Mischief can also be verbal where a person spreads rumours about others, creates lies and causes fights between people just to create disunity and to weaken the society. Sometimes people cause mischief without even knowing that they are doing so. They think they are doing good and fighting for truth and justice when in fact they are the mischief-makers. Allāh mentions them as well in the Qur'ān:

﴿وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ لَا تُفْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ قَالُوا إِنَّمَا نَحْنُ مُصْلِحُونَ أَلَا إِنَّهُمْ هُمُ
الْمُفْسِدُونَ وَلَكِنْ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ﴾

When they are told, 'Do not cause mischief on the earth,' they say, 'We are only reformers!' Indeed! They are themselves the agents of mischief, but they are not aware.

- Surah al-Baqarah, 2:11-12

Such mischief makers may be nations and countries that see themselves as 'superpowers' or may even be individuals in a Muslim community who have a habit of gossiping and they believe their habit is 'harmless' when it in fact causes marriages to break up, families to break ties, people to fight, and so on.

Mischief can also be non-physical and non-verbal. When a person commits sins in public or tells others about their own sinful habits, it also spreads mischief. That is why it is harām to even confess one's sins to another human being.

For example, when a girl goes out dressed indecently and walks around the shopping malls without a care, she encourages the spread of mischief. When a young man drinks alcohol in public, plays harām music loudly in his car or dresses and behaves like irreligious 'celebrities', all these apparently 'no-harm-done' and 'personal' actions also spread a form of corruption in society.

Mischief spreads faster when we live in a society where everyone 'minds his or her own business' and *al-amr bil ma'ruf* and *an-nahi 'anil munkar* is not practised. A society is like a group of travellers in one ship. If one person starts digging a hole in his room in the ship, everyone would try and stop him. The travellers won't say 'it's not my business' because they know they will eventually sink with him. In the same manner, when we allow corruption and sin to permeate society, it eventually catches up with us.

Sinning openly in public is mischief because it makes the sin appear small and light in the eyes of others and they begin to think 'maybe it's not so serious' and 'others do it, why can't I?' If the first person had not started doing it, no one else would have dared to do the same. So when we become the trendsetters of sin and mischief, we also become the cause of others sinning and in this manner we spread mischief and corruption in society. And on the Day of Judgement, we would have to bear a share of the burden of everyone else that sinned because of us.

What is most important to remember about mischief is that it is inexcusable even if the end seems noble. The end does not justify the means. And when we try and harm others through mischief, in the end it will always backfire and we will harm ourselves.

An Anecdote on the Consequences of Mischief

During the time of Rasullāh (s) there was a Muslim who loved reciting the following āyah all the time:

﴿إِنْ أَحْسَنْتُمْ أَحْسَنْتُمْ لِأَنْفُسِكُمْ وَإِنْ أَسَأْتُمْ فَلَهَا﴾

If you do good, you will do good to your [own] souls, and if you do evil, it will be [evil] for them (i.e. your souls).

- Surah al-Isrā, 17:7

A Jewish woman who used to hear him wanted to prove him wrong, so as to show that the Qur'ān was wrong. One day, she prepared some sweets mixed with poison and sent them to him.

On the day that he received them it so happened that he was going out of town, so he took the sweets with him on his journey. On the way he met two men who were returning home from a long journey. They looked tired and hungry.

The man remembered the sweets he had and thought that the two men would like them. So he gave them the sweets not knowing that they were poisoned.

No sooner had the two men eaten the sweets that they collapsed and died.

When the news of their death reached Madina, the man was arrested and brought before Rasulullāh (s). The man told his story and the Jewish woman who had given him the sweets was also brought to the court.

When the woman saw the two dead bodies, she was stunned, because it so happened that the two dead travellers were her two sons returning from a long journey.

She admitted her evil intention to Rasulullāh (s) and all the people present. The poison she had mixed in the sweets to kill the Muslim had instead killed her own two sons.

The moral of the story is that we reap what we sow. Sometimes we reap in the next world and often we reap here in this world even before we reap more in the next world. If we take part in the spread of mischief and evil, it will come back to us. Always do to others what you wish done to yourself. The whole universe operates on this principle: **As you do, so shall be done to you.**

Imām Ali ('a) said, 'One who lights the fire of mischief, will be its fuel (on the Day of Judgement).'

And Rasulullāh (s) said, 'My nation (ummah) will be covered with mischief after me like pieces of the dark night. A man will rise in the morning a believer and retire at the end of the day a disbeliever and some will sleep a believer and wake up a disbeliever. For a small price, people will sell their religion for the world.'

This hadith means that mischief will be so widespread that except for the very pious, people will take part in the mischief and corruption in society. They will sell their faith only because they fear displeasing a friend or relative or because of running after desires and widespread sin in society. Morals and spiritual values will no longer be treated as valuable or even meaningful qualities to possess or live by.

And sometimes we may not be mischief-makers but others around us will try and use us to support them by speaking or acting in their favour. To prevent this, Imām Ali ('a) advised us: 'During mischief, be like a baby camel who can neither be milked nor rode on its back.'

In other words don't let people use you to spread sin and corruption in society. When people use you to get what they want (that is sinful or take advantage of their relationship to you), they 'ride on your back' or they 'milk you'. But if you don't put yourself out for people to use and take advantage of then you don't become a part of their mischief.

Another way in which a believer keeps away from mischief is by not hanging out in public for no reason. In hadith we are told that a *mu'min* never leaves his or her home except to earn a lawful livelihood or to go to the masjid to worship Allāh or to help others or to purchase something that his or her family needs or to visit a fellow believer. In other words a *mu'min* only goes out of the home **for a purpose** and not only for the sake of 'hanging out'. Imām Ali ('a) warned his companion Harith al-Hamdāni to beware of sitting or hanging around the marketplaces (today's shopping malls) because these are the places where shayātin (devils) hang out and 'the sources of mischief.'

We can also keep away from mischief by increasing our knowledge of Islām and becoming more Godconscious (*mutaqqi*).

Rasulullāh (s) also said, 'There shall come mischiefs when a man will rise a believer and sleep a disbeliever, except one whose (heart) is kept alive by Allāh through knowledge.'

And Imām Ali ('a) said, 'Know that for one who is Godwary (*muttaqi*), Allāh will make a way out for him from mischiefs and (provide him) a light from darkness.'