

ISLAMIC LAWS FOR BEGINNERS

**Association of Imam
Mahdi (a.s.)**



وَصَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلَيْنَا يَا وَدَّ الْعِصْرُ اَدْرِكُنَا

Ameerul Momineen Ali Ibn Abi Taalib (a. s.) said

الْعِلْمُ مُصْبَاحُ الْعَقْلِ

Knowledge is the lamp of wisdom*

ISLAMIC LAWS



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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى وَبِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ

Preface

This Islamic Laws for Beginners syllabus has been developed by the Association of Imam Mahdi (a.s.) for its religious classes. We have taken great pains to ensure that the syllabus conforms to the Holy Quran, traditions of the Ahle Bait (a.s.) and the books of respected Shiite scholars.

While we have tried our best to make the syllabus as accurate as possible, we will appreciate if our readers come forth with valuable suggestions for the improvement of the same and point unto us our shortcomings.

At the end, we beseech Allah, the Almighty, to hasten the reappearance of Hazrat Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.). May He include us amongst Imam's (a.t.f.s.) most sincere companions. May He grant us success in preparing the ground for Imam's (a.t.f.s.) earliest reappearance.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

وَصَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْكَ يَا وَلِيَّ الْعَصْرِ (عج) أَذْرُكُنَا

Islamic Laws for Beginners

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Lesson 1

Certain principles for a successful life

Co-operating with each other

We live in the house with our parents, brothers, sisters and relatives. Generally there is some work/tasks to be done in every house. If all the work is assigned to one person in the house, the work will not get done on time and will be delayed. Similarly if all the members of the household unite to do the same job, it will lead to a lot of confusion and will spoil the job.

The ideal house is that, wherein every member performs a specific task and the members assist each other in the completion of the task.

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and Hazrat Ali (a.s.) used to help in the house work. At times, they even swept the floor.

To distribute work and to finish the work on time is the secret of a successful life. Everyone will get sufficient time to study, do homework, play, etc.

Once the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) was travelling along with his companions. The group halted at one place. The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) distributed some tasks among various companions. Finally he (s.a.w.a.) said, *'I will undertake the responsibility of*

collecting the firewood for cooking food.’ The companions protested and said to him that he take rest. ‘We will do it.’

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) replied, ‘*While I am with you, I too shall work. I will not sit idle. Allah despises the idle ones.*’

Allah commands us in the Quran:

وَتَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوَى

Co-operate with each other in goodness and piety.

Lesson 2

Etiquette (aadaab) of Eating Food

Food is among the greatest bounties of Allah to man. Therefore, we must always thank Allah for this important bounty. We must also thank our parents and others who prepare the food and serve it to us.

When we sit down to eat along with our parents, brothers, sisters and relatives, we experience a feeling of love and harmony. At the time of eating it is very important that we must remember and don't neglect the aadaab of eating.

We must help our mother in setting the food, plates, etc. on the table. Similarly after completing the meal, we must help our mother in putting all the things back in their place. This way our mother's work will become easy and she will not feel burdened with all the work.

We must wash our hands before and after eating food.

If we are seated on the floor while eating, we must shift the weight of our body on the left side

Before commencing our meals, we must always recite: بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ We must only take food that is placed in front of us, and not in front of others. We must always make place for

other people while eating.

We must not eat in haste, and chew the food properly.

We must never eat a lot. We must never eat to our fill. We must eat until we are still feeling a little hungry and stop eating after that.

We must talk less while eating.

We must never play with our food. We should not mess the tablecloth with food crumbs.

After completing the meal we should thank Allah thus: اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ

We must be careful and never waste food. This is another way of thanking Allah.

Lesson 3

Safeguarding the tongue

One of Allah's greatest bounties is that He has granted us a tongue with the help of which we can put our point across to others. This is the tongue through which we can convert our enemies into friends, and can make enemies out of our friends.

Allah has bestowed us with this tongue, with which we can converse. We must thank Allah profusely for this great bounty by utilising the tongue for speaking good and beneficial talks.

If we are seated in a gathering where many people are speaking, then we must first simply listen to the conversation. If we wish to say something, we must carefully weigh the pros and cons of what we wish to say, and then speak accordingly.

If we have spoken something which is beneficial and has united two disputing persons, or prevented someone from sinning, or exhorted someone to do good, then such a talk is very great near Allah and pleases Him, and that person will be rewarded immensely. However, if we speak something that has created dispute and ill feeling between two persons or insulted someone, then such an act will displease Allah immensely.

If we are not polite in our speech with others and don't respect

others, they in turn will not be polite towards us, thus relations between people will sour.

Then before we speak, we must consider whether our speech will benefit or profit others, else silence is better than speech. This silence will protect us from a lot of difficulties and dangers.

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) declared, *'May Allah have mercy on that person who when he opens his mouth speaks only constructive things and acquires some benefit from his speech, and guards his tongue from evil, thereby protecting himself (from dangers).*

Lesson 4

Deceit is unlawful

Mahmood's watch was not working well. He gave it to a watch repairer. He fixed the watch, but did not do the job very well. However despite that, he charged Mahmood the entire fee for repairing the watch.

As a result, after some time, the watch stopped working and Mahmood had to face a lot of difficulties. He missed his train / bus and was late for school, tuition, etc. All this happened due to the deceit of the watch repairer and not repairing the watch properly.

It is the responsibility of every person that he should sincerely complete the task that has been allocated to him. If that person cannot fulfill the responsibility then he should say so clearly at the very outset instead of deceiving the people around him.

Islam has prohibited deceit. The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) declared: *'One who deceives a Muslim is not a Muslim. A Muslim who deceives other Muslims has defective faith and he will not be included amongst Muslims.'*

Lesson 5

Causing harm to others is prohibited

Just as deceiving others is prohibited, similarly causing harm to others is also prohibited. Causing harm does not simply mean hiding someone's valuable possession or breaking it. It also includes abusing someone, insulting him. All these actions also imply causing harm. In fact, hurting a person's honour and dignity is far worse than robbing his wealth and worldly possessions.

Some times some people block the water or they waste a lot of water. Consequently others are adversely affected. Similarly, at times some people place a big boulder in the middle of the road, throw banana skins on the road, spit chewed paan (which is red in colour) indiscriminately, by which people's clothes and walls of houses are stained. But this is of no concern to the culprits. Some times these people go as far as disposing their garbage or dirty water in the alleys.

All this amounts to causing grievous harm to others, which is strictly forbidden in Islam. Such habits can never be the signs of an Islamic society. In reality, the true Muslim is the one from whose hand and tongue others are safeguarded.

Lesson 6

Fulfilling promises is necessary

It was a very hot day. Our beloved Prophet, Muhammad Mustafa (s.a.w.a.) was seated on a stone under the sunshine. The sun was blazing, and our Prophet (s.a.w.a.) was perspiring profusely. He (s.a.w.a.) used to get up and sit down at times. But strangely, he (s.a.w.a.) never took shelter from the oppressive heat. He (s.a.w.a.) kept gazing fixedly in a particular direction, as if he was anticipating someone's arrival.

Some companions witnessed this spectacle from a distance. They hurried towards the Prophet (s.a.w.a.). After salutations, they inquired from him (s.a.w.a.), 'Why are you seated here in this terrible heat?'

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) replied, *'This morning I promised a man that I would meet him here. He has not turned up as yet and I am waiting for him.'*

The companions suggested, 'Why don't you get away from this heat and wait for the man under the shade.'

The Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said, *'I promised to meet him here at this very place. I will not violate my promise. I will not move from here until he arrives.'*

Our beloved Prophet (s.a.w.a.) used to say, '*A Muslim always fulfills his promise, and never violates it.*' He (s.a.w.a.) also declared, '*Those who always speak the truth, maintain the trust, have good akhlaq and fulfill the promise shall be very close to me in Qiyamat.*'

A Muslim always fulfills his promise. A Muslim never violates his promise.

Lesson 7

Ridiculing others

All the students were seated in the class. Today, the teacher was revising the chapter by questioning the students. The teacher asked Zaid a question. Zaid could not answer. When he did manage to give a reply, it was completely wrong. When some students heard the reply, they were amused and began laughing, ridiculing Zaid at the same time. Zaid was very embarrassed as it is when he blundered with the wrong reply, then the ridiculing of his classmates embarrassed him further. He was dejected and placed his head on the table.

The teacher comforted Zaid. He cheered and soothed him. Then he turned towards the students and remarked, 'If in such a situation, someone else had ridiculed you, how would you have felt. Definitely you would have felt offended, and would have considered it a case of bad akhlaq. Never ridicule others, Allah does not like such people.'

The teacher's advise had a positive impact on the students. They apologised to Zaid and he forgave them.

Then the teacher told them further, 'Always keep the 11th verse of Surah (49) Hujarat in mind.'

‘O you who believe! Let not (one) people laugh at (another) people perchance they may be better than they, nor let women (laugh) at (other) women, perchance they may be better than they; and do not find fault with your own people nor call one another by nicknames; evil is a bad name after faith, and whoever does not turn, these it is that are the unjust.

To ridicule others and to call them with demeaning nicknames is against Islamic culture.

Lesson 8

Good friends

We all have some friends and none amongst us can claim that he does not get along with anyone and therefore has no companions. But, we must keep in mind that our friends and their (akhlaq) behaviour have a significant impact on our lives.

For example take the case of a very hard-working and intelligent boy, who gets very good marks and is an outstanding student. Now this hard-working boy befriends another boy who is always playing and neglects his studies. Definitely over a period of time, the hard-working boy will also become like his careless friend. He will become very playful and ignore his studies. Gradually his marks will deteriorate and he will become weak in his studies.

It is for this reason that Islam emphasises befriending the studious who love (Islamic) knowledge, who are hard working, are honest and sincere and have good akhlaq. He respects the elders. He loves and respects his parents. He honours his teachers.

One should not befriend him who abuses, lies, harasses others, avoids hard-work, does not pray and fails repeatedly in his exams.

We must always remember that a man is known by the company he keeps.

Lesson 9

Respecting parents

Allah has blessed us with numerous bounties, the greatest bounty amongst which is the bounty of the esteemed personality of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and his Ahle Bayt (a.s.). These esteemed personalities have conveyed to us Allah's message, and thus prevented us from treading on the wrong path. After this bounty, the next important bounty is that of our parents.

Just the mention of our parents fills our hearts with immense love for them. Our parents have taken a lot of trouble to educate us with worldly and Islamic knowledge. Allah has firmly planted our love in their hearts. Parents are prepared to tolerate difficulties themselves, but are not prepared to make their children undergo any kind of suffering. They are willing to go hungry, but are not willing to see their children starve. They ensure that their children are adorned with better clothes than them. They sacrifice their sleep and comfort so that their children may live in comfort. They ensure that their children get the best worldly education, and receive religious knowledge and ethical (akhlaq) training so that they may become good humans and perfect Muslims. And the most amazing part is that despite doing all this, they never brag about this to their children.

Islam has instructed us to respond to goodness with goodness, and benevolence with benevolence. Therefore it is obligatory (wajib) that we respond to our parents' kindness and boundless love, by respecting them and being good to them. Allah commands us in the Quran:

وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا

And (do) goodness to your parents.¹

A person asked Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s.): 'What is the meaning of doing good to the parents?'

Imam (a.s.) replied, '*When you meet them and sit next to them, then behave with them in a nice manner. Fulfill their wishes before they ask you. It should never happen that they are forced to seek their necessities from you. When they upset you, you are not permitted to displease them, rather you should pray for them. Remember, never annoy your parents and never raise your voice in their presence, and never walk ahead of them.*'

Those who do good to their parents and observe their rights enjoy an exalted position near Allah. Our beloved Prophet Muhammad Mustafa (s.a.w.a.) declared, '*Those who behave kindly with their parents will find themselves in Paradise just one degree below the ranks of Prophets (a.s.).*'

Those who displease their parents earn the displeasure of Allah, the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a) and Imam (a.s.). Our Prophet (s.a.w.a.)

¹ Surah Bani Israel (17): 23

has warned, *‘One who has troubled his parents has troubled me, and one who has troubled me has troubled Allah, and such a person is accursed.’*

In another place the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said, *‘One who displeases his parents will not be able to even smell the fragrance of Paradise.’*

We thank Allah that He has bestowed us with loving parents, who are one of His greatest bounties. Then it is obligatory (wajib) that we serve them in the best possible manner, never displease them and always pray for them thus:

رَبِّ اَرْحَمْهُمَا كَمَا رَبَّيْتَنِي صَغِيرًا

O my Lord! have compassion on them, as they brought me up (when I was) little.¹

¹ Surah Bani Israel (17): 24

Lesson 10

Respecting the teacher

Man's worth can be gauged from his knowledge and morals (akhlaq), and both these things are gifted to us by our teacher(s). Surely, if it were not for the teacher we would have remained most ignorant and would have remained worthless. Today if we are to read and write a few things, it is only due to the teacher.

We have acquired various kinds of knowledge from different teachers. It is our duty to respect each one of them even if has taught us a few alphabets. But we must reserve maximum respect for that teacher who has enlightened us with the knowledge of Quran and religion since there is no book greater than the Noble Quran and there is no wealth more precious than Islam.

Our beloved Prophet (s.a.w.a.) stated, *'I am the teacher for the people. I teach them religion.'*

Hazrat Ali (a.s.) advised, *'Stand up out of respect for your father and teacher.'*

Imam Zainul Abedeen (a.s.) explains, *'The teacher has some rights upon his students.'*

The student should respect his teacher excessively.

He should listen to his teacher with utmost attention.

His eyes should always be focused on the teacher.

He should be very attentive while learning the lesson.

He should respect the teacher's class.

To revere the teacher is our religious and ethical duty.

Lesson 11

Backbiting and Slandering

Allah proclaims in the 12th verse of Surah Hujarat (49)

O you who believe! avoid most of suspicion, for surely suspicion in some cases is a sin, and do not spy nor let some of you backbite others. Does one of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? But you abhor it; and be careful of (your duty to) Allah, surely Allah is Oft-returning (to mercy), Merciful.

We must especially remember this part of the Quranic verse:

وَلَا تَجَسَّسُوا وَلَا يَغْتَب بَّعْضُكُم بَعْضًا

...and do not spy nor let some of you backbite others.

Similarly Allah declares in Surah Homaza (104), verse 1

وَيْلٌ لِّكُلِّ هُمَزَةٍ لُّمَزَةٍ

Woe to every slanderer, defamer!

Backbiting and slander have been strictly prohibited in Islam. Backbiting means to reveal one's defects behind his back. If those

defects are actually found in that person then it will be backbiting, but if the defects are not found in the person, then it will amount to accusation (tohmat), and this sin has a very painful chastisement. The biggest drawback of backbiting is that it sows seeds of mistrust and suspicion in society. People become busy in seeking out other people's defects, and are blind to their own numerous defects. Instead if people were engrossed in searching their own defects and took concrete steps to rectify the same, this society will soon become clean from all defects.

To seek out defects means to search for the dirt and filth in people. If this continues, over a period of time there will accumulate a lot of dirt and filth and will damage the social framework.

Slandering means to convey one's person's negative remarks to another person. For instance, to tell Person A what evil Person B has spoken about him, and then to convey Person A's comments to Person B. This is so serious that one should not indulge in it even jokingly. Slandering gives rise to disputes and spoils relations among the people.

Lesson 12

Lies

Today the class was supposed to go for picnic. Consequently, the atmosphere in the class was very different and everyone was happy. All the students were waiting eagerly for the teacher's arrival. The teacher was supposed to reveal the programmes arranged in the picnic. By some coincidence, even the monitor had not turned up. Khalid grabbed this opportunity to assume the role of the monitor. He stood behind the teacher's desk and announced, 'Today, I am the monitor. When I tell you rise, you all stand up in respect for the teacher. If anyone creates the slightest of mischief, that student will not go to the picnic.'

All the students became silent and waited for the teacher's arrival. Suddenly, Khalid shouted, 'Everyone stand up!'

All the students rose immediately. However, instead of the teacher, one student entered the class who had arrived late. Khalid laughed and said, 'I was only joking.' The students did not like Khalid's prank.

Again the students settled down and waited patiently for the teacher's arrival. Seeing towards the door, Khalid ordered, 'Stand up!' Everyone stood up. But once again another student entered

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the door.

The students were very upset with Khalid's behaviour. Moreover, he ridiculed them further by laughing at them. Finally Khalid said, 'All of you remain here while I inquire about our teacher's whereabouts and find out the programme for today's picnic.'

After some time Khalid returned. He seemed depressed. His face wore a very dejected expression. He announced in the class, 'Friends! There is bad news!' Everyone got attentive. He continued, 'Apparently today's picnic has been cancelled. We will go for the picnic some other time.'

This news came as a complete shock to the students. They were very disappointed. The class became noisy and everyone started giving his views on this development.

Suddenly, Khalid tidied his shirt and said seriously, 'Everyone rise! Teacher is coming to the class.'

However, this time nobody stood up in respect of the teacher, assuming that Khalid must be lying again.

However, this time when the door opened, it was the teacher who actually walked in. Apparently, he had been standing quietly behind the door and had overheard everything including Khalid's lies. The teacher turned towards Khalid and scolded him, 'Who told you that the picnic was cancelled? Why did you lie to everyone?' Khalid was ashamed and could not reply.

Then the teacher turned towards the class and announced, 'Children, proceed to the ground and line up. The bus is waiting

for us, we will proceed to the picnic' All the children were excited. They formed a queue and began entering the bus. When Khalid was about to enter the bus, the teacher stopped him and said, 'I cannot allow you to enter the bus, as you will not be joining us for the picnic. You have lied.' Khalid started weeping and apologized profusely to his teacher.

The teacher said, 'If the other students allow you to come, you can join.' The children unanimously said, 'Khalid lied to us and humiliated us. We do not want him to accompany us at the picnic.'

All the children went to the picnic and Khalid kept standing very dejected. By telling lies, Khalid lost his respect and could not go to the picnic.

Children, this was the punishment of this world. But Allah has ordained a severe punishment for lying in the hereafter.

The Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said, '*A true muslim with true faith never resorts to lies.*'

Lesson 13

Maintaining Relations (sila-e-rahem) (Good behaviour with relatives)

All of us have relatives viz. brothers, sisters, uncles, aunts, grandfathers, grandmothers, etc. In some cases all of them reside together in a single house. While in some cases they live separately at a distance from each other. Some of these relatives live in different places within the same city. While some live in different places across several cities spread over various countries. No matter where they reside, there is one thing that is common is that all these people with us are our relatives. Some of them are closely related to us, while in some cases they are distant relatives, however, they are related to us in some way or the other.

Since they are our relatives, it is necessary that we treat them kindly with love and affection. We must always be prepared to help them in prosperity as well as in adversity. We must always support them, encourage them, and befriend them in their loneliness. This is our moral, religious and human responsibility.

We should frequently visit them, inquire about their health, write letters to them, and present them with gifts. If anyone of them is unwell, then we must visit them. If they are poor then we must assist them financially. We must participate in wedding

ceremonies and other important engagements. Actually all this is our religious duty.

Allah forbid, if anyone of them meets with an accident then we must visit him in the hospital. Or Allah forbid, if one of them expires, then we must participate in the funeral and burial. We should offer our sincere condolences. All these are also a part of our religious and moral responsibility.

Allah has commanded us to maintain relations and has prohibited us from severing relations under any circumstance. Allah loves that man who maintains good relations. One's age increases by maintaining relations and one's age decreases by severing relations. We can maintain relations even by exchanging salaam, and by inquiring about one's health, by calling them through the telephone or by e-mail.

Our beloved Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said: *'Join relations even if it is by exchanging salaam'*.

Lesson 14

Etiquette (aadaab) of Meeting

When we wake up in the morning, we see our parents, our brothers and other members of our household. When we leave our house for school in the morning, we meet some of our friends on the way. We meet our neighbours and also meet some elderly people. Then what should we do when we see all these people? We must say ‘Salaam’ to them. Islamic way of greeting a believer is to shake hands with them. There is much reward (thawaab) in shaking hands with a believing brother. Abu Ubaydah says that: once I travelled along with Imam Sadiq (a.s.). We stopped at a place for rest. When Imam (a.s.) returned after resting, he came to shake my hand. Then he said,

“When believers shake hands, sins will begin to fall from them like leaves fall from a tree in autumn.”

The reward of shaking hands with your brothers, friends and neighbours is that the sins of both the people shaking each others’ hands will be forgiven.

We should try to greet our friends, smile at them and shake their hands every time we meet them. Allah becomes happy for a person who meets others with a smile, salaam and handshake. The

traditions from our sixth Imam (a.s.) says that when the person who loves his brother, sits with him and shakes his hand, Allah will cover them both with blessings.

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) never removed his hands first when shaking hands. The person who does not remove his hand first while shaking hands gets more reward than the one who releases the hold earlier.

We should meet others with a smile, greet them nicely and shake their hands.

Lesson 15

Purity (tahaarat)

Islam lays a lot of emphasis on cleanliness and purity (tahaarat). In fact, cleanliness and purity are considered as a part of faith (eemaan) in a tradition.

We can find in traditions that our beloved Prophet (s.a.w.a.) used to himself sweep the house.

It has been commanded that we keep our houses clean from all dirt, dust, cobwebs, etc.

It is emphasised that we must wash our hands before and after meals.

It is obligatory to perform wuzu before namaaz

It is recommended to have hair-cut regularly.

It is emphasised to apply scent (itr).

We see that cleanliness has been emphasised at every stage. Especially in namaaz it is necessary that our clothes are pure and clean. This is because in namaaz we stand in Allah's presence, and it is necessary that we present ourselves before Allah in the best possible manner.

We must keep our houses, lanes and neighborhood clean. It is not

good to dispose off the dirt and garbage and dirty water that accumulates in our houses in our neighborhood. This makes our surrounding dirty and polluted. We should not unnecessarily spoil our books by scribbling on them. All these are the signs of a good Muslim.

We must always remember that we are lovers of Ahle Bayt (a.s.), for whom Allah revealed ‘Ayate Tatheer’. Then we must try to be like the Ahle Bayt (a.s.) and keep ourselves clean and pure, both from the inside as well as outside.

In order to be clean and pure, it is necessary that we keep our bodies and clothes away from dirt and filth. We should trim the nails of our hands and feet regularly, and not let them grow. If we don’t trim our nails, then a lot of dirt accumulates under them. If our bodies and nails are not clean, then this dirt may soil our clothes. Allah does not like dirt and filth.

Our beloved Prophet (s.a.w.a.) used to bathe, wash his (s.a.w.a.) hair, apply oil and comb the hair. He (s.a.w.a.) used to wear clean clothes and apply scent (itr).

That is why even we must keep our bodies, houses, clothes, schools, books and notebooks clean.

Allah, His Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and the people love those who are clean and tidy and others too like them.

Lesson 16

Impurities (Najaasaat)

In Islam certain things are considered to be impure (najis). We have been commanded to keep away from these impure things. We must keep all our useful things from such najaasaat. Mentioned below are a few of these najaasaat:

Urine

Urine is impure (najis) among the najaasaat. After urinating, it is obligatory to purify the place of urination with water. If the urine falls on our body, clothes, or some vessel, it is obligatory to purify it. Else it will be najis.

Stool

Stool is also najis. It must be purified with water just like urine.

Blood

Blood is najis. It must be purified with water

Corpse

Corpse of a human as well as some animal is considered najis. However, dead fish is not najis.

Dog and Pig

Dogs and Pigs are najis. One must keep away from them. If their body comes in contact with our body/clothes and they are wet, the person coming in contact with them will also become najis. Then it is necessary to purify the point of contact.

We cannot consume najis things. It is strictly forbidden to eat najis food or drink najis water/beverages.

We can not pray namaaz with najis clothes. Our bodies too must not be najis.

We must keep ourselves pure from impurities at all times.

Lesson 17

Purification (Tahaarat) - Part 1

Water

All things are considered to be pure (paak) unless we have evidence to prove its najaasat. When we are sure about its najaasat then it is obligatory to make it paak before we wish to use it.

Water is that bounty of Allah which can purify almost everything. Water itself is paak and also makes other things paak.

Water is among Allah's greatest bounties to man. Water is one of the most important parts of life of everything. We must value this invaluable bounty and should not waste it. Very often we tend to waste this precious bounty. For example, while washing up, we waste a lot of water – we talk while the water continues to flow in the wash basin and we don't seem to care. Even while brushing the teeth and performing wuzu we waste a lot of water. If we pay attention we will find that we waste more water than we use, due to which many people are deprived of water. If we use water as per our needs, then a lot of other people can avail of water. Therefore, we must never waste water, which is a precious bounty gifted by Allah to mankind.

At night it is mustahab to drink water while sitting.

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We must drink water slowly, and not in haste. We must not waste the excess water.

While drinking water we must remember the thirst of Imam Hussain (a.s.) and curse his killers.

Lesson 18

Purification (Tahaarat) - Part 2

Wuzu

In order to pray namaaz it is obligatory to perform wuzu. It is very important that we perform wuzu correctly; else our namaaz will not be accepted, even if we have prayed it most sincerely with all mustahabbaat and waajibaat.

We must perform wuzu in the sequence mentioned below:

Intention (neeyat)

Intention at heart is sufficient and pronouncing by tongue is not essential. Intention must be done in the following manner: ‘I am performing wuzu مُرَبَّةً إِلَى اللَّهِ’

Face

We must first wash our face with water.

Right hand

After washing the face, we must wash our right hand with water. We must wash our hand from the elbow to the tips of the fingers.

Left hand

After washing the right hand in the above-mentioned manner, we must likewise wash our left hand.

Masah (wiping) of the head

After washing the left hand, we must do masah of the head with the moisture of the right hand.

Masah (wipe) of right foot

After the masah of the head, we must do the masah of the right foot with the moisture of the right hand from the tip of the right foot to the ankle.

Masah (wipe) of left foot

After the masah of the right foot, we must do the masah of the left foot with the moisture of the left hand.

Apart from namaaz, wuzu is obligatory if one wishes to touch the Quranic verses, names of Allah, the Prophets (a.s.) and the Holy Imams (a.s.).

Lesson 19

Purification (Tahaarat) – Part 3

Nullification of Wuzu

Certain actions nullify wuzu. On the occurrence of any of the following actions, wuzu is nullified and will have to be performed again if one wishes to pray namaaz.

Passing of gas

Passing of gas nullifies wuzu. If one passes gas while performing namaaz, wuzu is nullified, thereby nullifying namaaz. Wuzu and namaaz both will have to be performed once again.

Passing of urine and stool

Passing of urine and stool nullifies wuzu. Therefore, if urine/stool is passed, wuzu and namaaz will have to be performed again.

Sleep

Sleep also nullifies wuzu. But that sleep nullifies wuzu after which one can neither see nor hear anything.

Lesson 20

Importance of Namaz

It was the land of Siffeen. There was an intense battle. Soldiers of Islam were fighting the enemies with great vigour and force. In the midst of this intense battle, Hazrat Ali (a.s.) the leader of the Islamic army looked towards the sky and kept the sword into the sheath. He dismounted from his horse, laid down the prayer mat for the afternoon prayers. A person asked surprisingly, O Ali, Namaz in this intense fighting? (You are going to pray namaz?). Hazrat Ali (a.s.) told that person, *'All this fighting is for establishing namaz'*.

This incident highlights the importance of namaz. We cannot forsake namaz under any condition. The noble Quran has time and again reminded this point.

أَقِمُّوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ

Establish namaz and pay the poor-rate (Zakat).

Our beloved Prophet, Hazrat Muhammad Mustafa (s.a.w.a.) declared, *'Namaz is the pillar of religion.'*

Just like any structure is in need of a pillar for survival, religion is need of namaz for survival.

Some Benefits of namaz

Quran asserts:

إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ تَنْهَى عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ

Surely prayer keeps (one) away from indecency and evil.¹

Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said, *'If there is a stream flowing in front of one's house in which he bathes five times a day, then will there be any dirt left on his body?'* The companions replied in the negative.

Then the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said, *'Similarly if one prays namaz five times a day, his sins will wash away and he will become purified.'*

In another place, the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said, *'(Only) if the namaz of a person is accepted his all other actions will be accepted. But if namaz is rejected, all other actions will be rejected.'*

He (s.a.w.a.) also said, *'A common sinner will be subject to squeeze in the grave (fishaar) only once. But the one who forsakes namaz will be squeezed in the grave again and again.'*

Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s.) warned, *'One who considers his namaz lightly he will be deprived of our intercession (shafa'at) in Qiyamat.'*

¹ Surah Ankaboot (29): 45

Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.) declared,

‘The very first thing about which the people will be questioned in Qiyamat will be namaz.’

Obligatory Prayers

There are five obligatory (wajib) prayers daily.

Namaz-e-Fajr 2 rakats

Namaz-e-Zohr 4 rakats

Namaz-e-Asr 4 rakats

Namaz-e-Maghrib 3 rakats

Namaz-e-Esha 4 rakats

Namaz-e-Jum’aa (Friday Prayers)

Some jurists (maraj’e) have deemed it as obligatory (wajib).

Namaz-e-Aayaat

This is the namaz that has to be prayed at the time of solar/lunar eclipse, earthquake, intense storm/hurricane.

Namaz for the obligatory Tawaf of the holy Ka’aba

Namaz after performing tawaaf of Holy Ka’aba. This namaz is obligatory and is called Namaz-e-tawaf.

Namaz of Oath

Namaz which becomes obligatory due to a pledge/oath. For

instance, if a person takes a pledge to perform 2 rakat namaz after successfully completing some work, then it becomes obligatory upon him to perform namaz on fulfillment of his work.

Namaz-e-Mayyit

It is obligatory to offer this namaz for every deceased Muslim.

Qadha Namaz of father

It obligatory on the eldest son to pray the qaza namaz of his deceased father.

Basic conditions for namaz

There are some basic conditions that have to be fulfilled which are called preliminaries of namaz. These are:

Purity

Purity is of two types: External and internal

External tahaarat pertains to the body and clothes and pertains to wuzu, ghushl, tayammum and cleanliness.

Internal tahaarat pertains to true faith and sincere intention.

Timings

Allah has determined a time period for every namaz. We must pray each namaz in its pre-determined period. From this we learn the lesson of performing all actions according to its time. This will ensure that we don't waste our time in doing useless things.

Timings for the daily wajib namaz

Namaz-e-Subh: From Subhe Sadiq (approximately one hour twenty minutes before sunrise) till sunrise.

Namaz-e-Zohrain: Between noon and sunset. (Asr Time: Time of Asr prayer begins just after performing Zohr prayer.)

Namaz-e-Maghrebain: 10-15 minutes after sunset till midnight.

We must always try to pray namaz on time. Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) prays namaz on time and he likes to see his Shias pray namaz on time.

Clothing

It is obligatory upon every male to cover his private parts while praying namaz. Regardless of the fact whether anyone is observing him or not, the male must conceal the portion between his navel and knees.

As far as women are concerned, they must cover the entire body, regardless of whether anyone is observing them, even if he is a mehram (son, father). However, she can leave her face, palms and feet uncovered.

Moreover, it is necessary that the dress should be pure, clean and legal (i.e. it should not be usurped and its use should be permitted).

It should not be made of the skin of a corpse.

It should not be made from the parts of those animals whose flesh is forbidden.

For men, it is forbidden to wear clothes made of pure silk and pure gold. Even if there is only a golden strand, it is forbidden to pray namaz in such a dress. Men are not permitted to wear golden ornaments like chains and rings during prayers. However, women can wear golden ornaments and clothes made of pure silk during prayers.

Men are not permitted to wear ornaments of pure gold and clothes of pure silk even apart from prayers. It is forbidden.

Place of namaz

The place where one is praying namaz should not be usurped. It is not permissible to pray namaz at that place. The place should not be in movement. The place of prostration should be pure.

Qibla

It is obligatory that we face the direction of the Holy Ka'ba while praying namaz. We must ensure that our face and chest are in the direction of the Holy Ka'ba.

Allah's pious creatures turn towards their Lord in their actions. They are always focussed towards His satisfaction in all their affairs.

Azaan (Call for prayer)

The muezzin's call for prayer is an invitation to the Muslims to hasten towards namaz. It reminds Muslims engaged in worldly affairs and calls them towards prayer.

By announcing – Allaho Akbar, the muezzin declares that there is none greater than Allah. There is no action superior, than prayer for Allah. Time of prayers has arrived, leave all worldly affairs and come for prayer. Call for prayer is an Islamic sign. It is also a sign that Muslim live in this locality and they have their connection with Allah.

The call for prayer is as follows:

اللهُ أَكْبَرُ - اللهُ أَكْبَرُ - اللهُ أَكْبَرُ - اللهُ أَكْبَرُ

Allah is so great that His greatness can never be expressed.

أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللهُ - أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللهُ

I bear witness that there is no god other than Allah.

أَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا رَسُولُ اللهِ - أَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا رَسُولُ

الله

I bear witness that (Hazrat) Muhammad (Mustafa (s.a.w.a.)) is Allah's messenger

أَشْهَدُ أَنَّ أَمِيرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَإِمَامَ الْمُتَّقِينَ عَلِيًّا وَلِيُّ اللهِ

أَشْهَدُ أَنَّ أَمِيرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَإِمَامَ الْمُتَّقِينَ عَلِيًّا وَلِيُّ اللهِ

I bear witness that the Commander of the Faithful and the Imam of the Pious (Hazrat Ali (a.s.)) is Allah's wali.

حَيَّ عَلَى الصَّلَاةِ - حَيَّ عَلَى الصَّلَاةِ

Hasten towards prayer (namaz)

حَيَّ عَلَى الْفَلَاحِ - حَيَّ عَلَى الْفَلَاحِ

Hasten towards success

حَيَّ عَلَى خَيْرِ الْعَمَلِ - حَيَّ عَلَى خَيْرِ الْعَمَلِ

Hasten towards the best of deeds

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ - اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ

Allah is so great that His greatness can never be expressed.

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ - لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ

There is no god except Allah

Note: Azaan is mustahab and not wajib

Iqamat (Establishing of namaz)

While Azaan is the call towards namaz, 'Iqamat' indicates the establishing of namaz. Namaz actually commences only after the Iqamat is recited.

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ - اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ

Allah is so great that His greatness can never be expressed.

أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ - أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ

I bear witness that there is no god other than Allah.

أَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ - أَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا رَسُولُ
اللَّهُ

I bear witness that (Hazrat) Muhammad (Mustafa (s.a.w.a.)) is Allah's messenger

أَشْهَدُ أَنَّ أَمِيرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَامَامَ الْمُتَّقِينَ عَلِيًّا وَلِيُّ اللَّهِ
أَشْهَدُ أَنَّ أَمِيرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَامَامَ الْمُتَّقِينَ عَلِيًّا وَلِيُّ اللَّهِ

I bear witness that the Commander of the Faithful and the Imam of the Pious (Hazrat Ali (a.s.)) is Allah's wali.

حَيَّ عَلَى الصَّلَاةِ - حَيَّ عَلَى الصَّلَاةِ

Hasten towards prayer (namaz)

حَيَّ عَلَى الْفَلَاحِ - حَيَّ عَلَى الْفَلَاحِ

Hasten towards success

حَيِّ عَلَى خَيْرِ الْعَمَلِ – حَيِّ عَلَى خَيْرِ الْعَمَلِ

Hasten towards the best of deeds

قَدْ قَامَتِ الصَّلَاةُ – قَدْ قَامَتِ الصَّلَاةُ

Surely namaz is established

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ – اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ

Allah is so great that His greatness can never be expressed.

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ

There is no god except Allah

Note: Like Azaan, Iqamat is mustahab and not wajib

Method of praying namaz

i) Niyyat (Intention)

The first step in praying namaz involves making the niyyat (intention). We pray namaz to gain proximity towards Allah, and this is reflected in our niyyat. For instance, if we want to pray Namaz-e-Fajr, then we must do niyyat as follows – ‘I am praying Namaz-e-Fajr/Namaz-e-Subh to gain proximity to Allah.

ii) Takbiratul Ehram

Immediately after completing the niyyat, we must say – Allaho Akbar

iii) Standing Position (Qiyam)

After reciting the Takbir, one must stand upright. A person must stand in Qiyam and cannot sit down, unless there is some problem (old age, injury, etc). The person must place his hands upon the upper portion of his thighs.

iv) The Recitation (Qira'at and Zikr)

After reciting the Takbir, one must commence reciting the zikr. For the zikr, one must first recite Surah Hamd followed by any other Surah (like Surah Tauheed, Surah Kauthar). One must do likewise in the second rak'at. In the third and fourth rak'ats one should recite only Surah Hamd (and not the other Surah). Instead of the Surah Hamd, if one wants, he can recite this Tasbeeh –

سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَاللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ

Glorified is Allah, and All praise is (only) for Allah, and there is no God except Allah and Allah is the Greatest.

It is sufficient to recite this Tasbeeh once, but it is better to recite it thrice.

v) Ruku

After completing zikr in Qiyam, one must do ruku. Ruku means to

stoop in front of Allah (out of awe). In ruku, one bends in such a way that his hands rest on his knees. Then one must recite the following zikr

سُبْحَانَ رَبِّيَ الْعَظِيمِ وَبِحَمْدِهِ

Glorified is My Lord who is Exalted and Pure (from all kinds of defects) and we praise Him

vi) Sajdah

After performing ruku one must stand upright, then recite

سَمِعَ اللَّهُ لِمَنْ حَمِدَهُ

Allah hears the one who praises Him

Then one must go down in prostration (sajdah). While we are in prostration we must ensure that seven parts of our body are resting on the ground viz. our forehead, both palms, both knees and the big toe of both our feet. We should then recite

سُبْحَانَ رَبِّيَ الْأَعْلَى وَبِحَمْدِهِ

Glorified is My Lord who is the Highest and Pure (from all kinds of defects) and we praise Him.

vii) Qunoot

After completing the zikr in the qiyam of the second rakat and before going to the ruku, we recite the Qunoot. In Qunoot, we raise

our palms at face level and recite a dua. The best dua is to pray for the safety of Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.)

اللَّهُمَّ كُنْ لَوْلِيِّكَ الْحُجَّةِ ابْنِ الْحَسَنِ صَلَواتِكَ عَلَيْهِ وَعَلَى
 آبَائِهِ فِي هَذِهِ السَّاعَةِ وَفِي كُلِّ سَاعَةٍ وَلِيًّا وَحَافِظًا وَقَائِدًا وَ
 نَاصِرًا وَ دَلِيلًا وَ عَيْنًا حَتَّى تُسْكِنَهُ أَرْضَكَ طَوْعًا وَ تَبَتِّعَهُ
 فِيهَا طَوِيلًا.

O Allah! Be for Your representative, the Hujjat (proof) son of al-Hasan, Your blessings be on him and his forefathers, in this hour and in every hour, a Guardian, a Protector, a Leader, a Helper, a Proof and an Eye until You make him live on the earth in obedience (to You) and cause him to live in it for a long time.

However, any other short dua can also be recited.

viii) Tashahhud

After completing the second sajdah of the second rakat, we perform the tashhud. Tashahhud is performed once again in the last rakat of three-rakat namaz (Maghrib) as well as a four-rakat namaz (Zohr, Asr, Esha). In Tashhahud, we are seated with our palms placed on the upper portion of our thighs. We should then recite:

أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ
 مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِ
 مُحَمَّدٍ.

I bear witness that there is no God except Allah and that there is no partner for Him. And I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and His messenger. O Allah! Send blessings on Muhammad and his progeny.

ix) Salaam

After completing the Tashhahud in the last rakat of the namaz, we must recite the salaam, which will mark the completion of the namaz. In salaam we recite:

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ أَيُّهَا نَبِيُّ وَرَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ وَبَرَكَاتُهُ
 السَّلَامُ عَلَيْنَا وَعَلَى عِبَادِ اللَّهِ الصَّالِحِينَ
 السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ وَبَرَكَاتُهُ

Salutations upon you O Prophet! and (also) Allah's Mercy and His bounties.

Salutations upon us and upon the virtuous servants of Allah.

Salutations upon you and Allah's mercy and His bounties.

After completion it is recommended to recite Allah-o-Akbar three times.

x) Proper Order (Tarteeb)

It is crucial that we pray namaz in the sequence (tarteeb) specified above, else our namaz will become batil. For instance, if after Takbiratul Ehram we go directly into ruku, or we recite Tashahhud in the first rakat or we do sajdah before ruku, then our namaz is batil and it will have to be prayed once again correctly.

xi) Continuity (Mawaalaat)

It is equally crucial that we pray namaz by maintaining continuity. For instance, immediately after reciting Takbiratul Ehram we must begin reciting Surah Hamd and then recite the other Surah. We cannot take a short break between reciting takbir and Surah Hamd. This will make namaz batil and we will have to pray it once again with continuity. All actions of prayers must be performed in succession maintaining continuity.

May Allah give us Taufeeq to pray Namaz regularly in the correct manner.

Congregational Prayers (Namaz-e-Jama'at)

The first congregational prayer was prayed in the holy city of Mecca. The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) led the prayers while Hazrat Ali (a.s.) prayed behind him (s.a.w.a.). When Hazrat Abu Talib (a.s.) witnessed this, he ordered his son, Ja'far (e-Tayyar), 'Go and

join these people.’ Then Ja’far also prayed behind the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and prayed along with Hazrat Ali (a.s.).

It is mustahab to pray wajib namaz in congregation. It has more reward than praying namaz alone.

Praying namaz in congregation teaches us the important lesson of unity. It also teaches us the lesson of living together and introducing a sense of order and regulation in our lives.

On the Day of Ashoora, Imam Husain (a.s.) prayed congregational prayers with his companions. This shows us the importance of Namaz-e-Jama’at.

We must try our best to pray namaz in jama’at.

Lesson 21

Fasting (Sawm)

Fasting is one of the greatest forms of Allah's worship. Allah befriends those who fast and bestows the fasting one with excellent rewards.

Fasting in the blessed month of Ramazan is obligatory (wajib). The fast commences from dawn (subhe sadiq) till Maghrib (sunset). In this duration, the fasting one should refrain from all those actions that invalidate the fast.

Intention (niyyah) is necessary for fasting just like in the case of namaz. The fasting person must intend thus: 'I am observing my obligatory fasts for the sake of Allah.' This intention implies that the worshipper is not fasting for anyone else, except Allah.

Imam Jafar Sadiq (a.s.) asserted, '*Fasting is not simply abstinence from eating and drinking. In addition to that, fasting involves protecting the eyes, ears and tongue from all prohibited actions.*'

It is better for those children to fast on whom fasting is not compulsory, before maturity. If they cannot fast for the entire day, they should fast for as long as possible. For instance, they can eat sehri with their parents and continue fasting till 3-4 p.m. in the evening. The benefit of this will be that when they become baligh,

fasting will not be very difficult for them. Moreover, Allah will reward them for the fasting, (even if it is incomplete).

There are certain actions that are prohibited on the fasting person:

1. Eating and drinking (no matter how little).
2. To vomit intentionally.
3. To inhale smoke or dust inside the throat.
4. To attribute falsehood to Allah, His Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and the Imams (a.s.), etc.

If a person is baligh but does not fast in the month of Ramazan-al-Mubarak, without any valid reason (old age, sickness, travel), he is performing a prohibited (haraam) act. For every fast he skips, he will have to fast for 60 days, as kaffara of one fast.

Lesson 22

Khums and Zakaat

Islam is a perfect religion, and addresses all the needs of humanity. Islamic laws have been framed taking into consideration several aspects of the human society. It is for this reason that Islam introduced 'Khums and Zakaat' so as to address the economic needs of the Islamic society. If Muslims pay their 'Khums and Zakaat' regularly and sincerely, there will not be a single Muslim suffering from poverty and destitution.

Paying Zakaat is obligatory on the following:

1. Wheat
2. Barley
3. Dates
4. Dried grapes (kishmish)
5. Gold
6. Silver
7. Camels
8. Cows
9. Goats and sheep

Details about when zakaat becomes obligatory and the quantity of

zakaat, are mentioned in the ‘Tauzihul Masaa’il’.

Zakaat can be expended on the following things:

Constructing hospitals, schools, colleges, mosques, religious schools (madressa), roads, bridges, parks, agricultural institutions, organising marriages of poor people, paying off the dues of the indebted, financial problems of those who are travelling, etc.

From this we get an idea of how important a role zakaat plays in the social development of the Islamic society.

Khums

Muslims make a profit from trade, service, business, etc. After deducting their annual (permissible) expenses, it is obligatory upon them to pay 20% of the balance amount as ‘Khums.’

Khums is the right of Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.). In his occultation, he (a.t.f.s.) has commanded us to refer to the Mujtahideen and surrender the khums amount to them.

One half of Khums is expended to fulfill the needs of the destitute and deprived Saadaat The other half is utilised for various other purposes like the propagation of Islam, for the education of Muslims, to fulfill the needs of those who are busy in propagating religion, for publishing and distribution of religious books. But regardless of the purpose for which Khums is expended, consent of the Mujtahid is necessary.

We should give Khums and strengthen the cause of Islam. It is our responsibility that we should not allow the religious activities to be weakened.

Lesson 23

Hajj and Jihad

Hajj

Those to whom Allah has granted the capability, both physical and financial, and have the capacity to perform the customs of Hajj, must perform Hajj at least once in a lifetime, as it is obligatory upon them. If a Muslim has the capacity to perform Hajj, but fails to do so, and dies in such a condition will not die on Islam.

In order to perform Hajj, one has to undertake journey to Mecca. From the 9th-12th Zilhajj, the person has to perform specific a'maal in specific places. One has to perform Umra before Hajj. Before going for Hajj or after completing it, one must visit the graves of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.), Janabe Fatima Zahra (s.a.), Imam Hasan-e-Mujtaba (a.s.), Imam Zainul Abedeen (a.s.), Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.) and Imam Ja'far-e-Sadiq (a.s.). It is only by performing these Ziaraat does one's Hajj become complete as belief in prophethood and Imamate is an integral part of the belief in Tauheed, and visitation of the graves of the Holy Prophet (s.a.) and Imams (a.s.) is the minimum requirement of this belief.

Jihad

Allah declares in Surah Tauba (9) verse 111:

Surely Allah has bought of the believers their persons and their property for this, that they shall have the garden; they fight in Allah's way, so they slay and are slain; a promise which is binding on Him in the Taurat and the Injeel and the Quran; and who is more faithful to his covenant than Allah? Rejoice therefore in the pledge which you have made; and that is the mighty achievement.

Jehad refers to struggle in Allah's way. The best form of struggle is to struggle against our own sinful desires. We can resist the temptation to sin and can exhort ourselves to perform good, and in this manner we can defeat Shaitaan's army and we can perform the important task of Jehad with ownself.

Lesson 24

Exhortation towards goodness and prohibition from evil

Amr bil Ma'roof means to invite people towards goodness.

Nahy anil Munkar means to prohibit people from committing evil.

It is every Muslim's duty that when he sees someone performing some evil he must prohibit him from continuing that action. Similarly when he sees someone neglecting an obligatory act, he must invite him towards that action.

It was a very hot day. Hazrat Ali (a.s.) was returning to his house. When he had reached his house, he heard a woman crying. Imam (a.s.) stepped out of his house in that heat and asked the woman why she was crying.

The woman replied: 'O my Master! My husband is harassing me. He has driven me out of the house. He wants to beat me and finally kill me. Please help me.'

Although Hazrat Ali (a.s.) was very tired and it was extremely hot, he decided to help that lady. He said to himself, *'I will do Amr bil Ma'roof and Nahy anil Munkar and shall never turn away from these actions. At this moment, it is necessary for me to help this*

woman and prevent her husband from doing evils and sins.’

Imam (a.s.) went to that woman’s house, while she stood at a distance so that her husband would not see her. Imam (a.s.) knocked on the door. A youth opened the door, and from the look on his face, it was apparent that he was very furious.’

Imam (a.s.) asked the youth (husband) about his condition. Then in a very gentle tone, Imam (a.s.) asked him: *‘Why are you harassing your wife? Why have you driven her out of the house, while it is so hot outside? Fear Allah, take care of your wife. If you are displeased with her for her disobedience, then forgive her.’*

The husband did not recognise Hazrat Ali (a.s.) and said haughtily, ‘It is none of your business. It is my personal matter. I will kill this lady.’

Hazrat Ali (a.s.) heard his talks and kept repeating لا إله إلا الله

When the youth saw the lady he rushed at her so as to strike her. But Imam (a.s.) intervened. Imam (a.s.) once again exhorted him and tried to instill Allah’s fear in his heart. But this did not have any effect on the youth. He remained adamant and did not change his stand.

When Imam (a.s.) saw this, he changed his tone. He warned the youth, *‘Until now I have been trying to explain to you in a pleasant manner, but I see that your rudeness and ill-temper is only increasing.’*

Then Imam (a.s.) said to him firmly, *‘Fear Allah. Behave nicely with your wife. Do not desert a helpless woman like this.’*

At that moment, there were several passersby gathered there who recognised Imam (a.s.) and started saluting him,

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا أَمِيرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ، السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا أَمِيرَ

الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

When the youth realised that he is in front of Hazrat Ali (a.s.). He was taken aback. He was very ashamed at his arrogant behaviour. Immediately he apologised to Imam (a.s.).

Imam (a.s.) turned towards the lady and said, '*Go to your house. Respect your husband. Don't enrage him. Always listen to him and obey him.*'

Due to Amr bil Ma'roof and Nahy anil Munkar, a family was thus saved from breaking up.

Lesson 25

Tawalla and Tabarra

Tawalla means to love Allah, the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and his Ahle Bayt (a.s.) and to befriend their Shias. One must always love them from the depths of his heart.

Tabarra means to despise the enemies of Allah, the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and his Ahle Bayt (a.s.), and not to have an iota of love for them in their hearts.

Lesson 26

Loving Orphans

Imam Ali (a.s.) was very kind to children, especially to orphans. If he ever saw an orphan crying, he would stop whatever he was doing, bend down, give the child his salam, wipe away the child's tears, put his hand on the child's shoulder and say, "My child, why are you crying? Has someone hurt you? Come, let me take you to my house."

Ali (a.s.) would take the child home and treat him better than any father. He would bring the child sweets, breads and honey, and put them in the child's mouth himself. Imam Ali (a.s.) used to tell his followers to love and be kind to orphans of martyrs killed in the path of Allah. "They have lost their loving fathers", he used to say, "So cheer them up and look after them just like a father."

"Their fathers were martyred in Jihad and for the sake of Islam, and they have the rights on you. Make their souls pleased with you by cheering up their children and looking after them."

Imam Ali (a.s.) was always attentive to orphans, especially to those of the martyrs. He used to visit them and sit and chat and play with them. He used to take care of their education and training. He would strive to solve their difficulties and always

offered them guidance and advice. He would bring them gifts and, if they were poor, he would respectfully provide their expenses.

Imam Ali (a.s.) was so kind to orphans and laid so much stress on them in his teaching that one of his companions said: “How I wish that I too were a young orphan so that I would receive such kindness and love from Imam Ali (a.s.)”

“Love and be kind to orphans.”

Questions and Exercise:

1. What did Imam Ali (a.s.) tell his followers about children, especially orphans?
2. What did Imam Ali’s (a.s.) companions say about his treatment of orphans?
3. If Imam Ali (a.s.) saw a young orphan; what would he do?

Complete the following sentences:

1. Imam Ali (a.s.) was very kind to
2. Imam Ali (a.s.) would bend down and give the child his.....
3. He would take home and treat him better than
4. Imam Ali (a.s.) was continually telling his followers to love and be kind to.....

Lesson 27

The Guests Of Imam Hasan (a.s.)

Imam Hasan (a.s.) was a friend of the poor and was kind to them. One day, he was going along the road when he saw some poor people sitting on the ground eating their food which was a few pieces of dry bread.

When they saw him they requested him, “Come on! Join us. Eat with us! Don’t be shy!”

Imam Hasan (a.s.) dismounted from his horse and sat down to eat with them on the ground.

“O brothers...” he said after a while, “I accepted your invitation. Now I beg you to be my guests and come to my house.”

They accepted his invitation and Imam Hasan (a.s.) went to his house. “I have very important guests”, he told his household. “Provide them with the best food.”

The guests came to his house and Imam Hasan (a.s.) catered for them with great respect and they became very happy.

Imam Hasan (a.s.) was very kind to the poor. He used to help them. Several times during his life he gave half of all his possessions to the poor.

“Imam Hasan (a.s.) was a friend to the poor and very kind to them”

Questions:

1. Who were the people who were Imam Hasan (a.s.)’s guests?
2. What kind of food did Imam Hasan (a.s.) provide for them?
3. How did Imam Hasan (a.s.) behave with the poor and needy?
4. How do you behave with the poor and needy?
5. What do we learn from this lesson?
6. How do we follow Imam Hasan (a.s.)?
7. Is it not our duty to defend the trampled rights of the poor?
8. How do we defend their rights?

Complete these sentences:

1. Imam Hasan (a.s.) was.....to the poor.
2. Imam Hasan (a.s.) dismounted from his..... and sat down beside them on.....
3. He told his household: “I have....., provide the best..... for them.
4. Imam Hasan (a.s.) catered for them with.....

Lesson 28

The Child Who Does Good Deeds

Ahmad is a very good boy. He doesn't trouble anyone and is a friend to his brothers and sisters and is kind to them.

He helps his sister Zainab, who is in class one, to learn her lessons well.

In his spare time, he helps his classmates to prepare for their lessons.

Ahmad is kind and gentle with all the children. His heart wants all of them to learn their lessons well.

If one of his friends finds himself in need of pen or paper, Ahmed gives him.

Since Ahmad is a kind boy who does good deeds, everyone likes him, and he is valued and respected by all.

Above all, Allah also loves him and will give him a beautiful reward. Allah loves those who do good deeds and in the Holy Quran, He tells us:

“Surely Allah loves the doers of good”¹

¹ Surah Baqarah (2), Verse 195

Questions:

1. Why does everyone like Ahmad?
2. Does Allah love Ahmad?
3. When Allah loves a person, what does he do?
4. What must we do if we want people to like us?
5. What does Allah tell us in the Holy Quran about those who do beautiful deeds?
6. How do you help your mother and father?

Complete the following sentences:

1. Ahmad is.....to his sister and is to her.
2. He.....his sister to learn her lesson well.
3. Because Ahmad is a Boy who.... Everyone....him
4. Above all Allah..... him and will give him.....
5. Allah tells us in the Holy Quran.....

Lesson 29

Being Kind to Animals

One day Imam Hasan (a.s.) was busy eating when a dog came and stood in front of him, gazing at him. Imam Hasan (a.s.) put a mouthful of food in his own mouth and then threw some in front of the dog. The dog ate it. Wagged his tail in thanks, barked, and again lifted his head to gaze at Imam Hasan (a.s.)

Imam Hasan (a.s.) threw another mouthful of food in front of the dog. A man was passing by came forward and said. “It’s not right that this dog stands in front of you and stops you eating in peace. With your permission I will beat it and drive it away.”

“No, no, don’t do that”, Imam Hasan (a.s.) told him,

“Allah has created this animal and loves it. It is hungry and I am ashamed before Allah to eat His food and His blessings and without giving anything to this creature that is His creation. After all, it is hungry and is looking at me.”

Questions:

1. How did Imam Hasan (a.s.), give food to the dog?
2. Have you ever given food to animals?

3. How did that dog say “Thank you”?
4. Why did that man want to make the dog go away?

Lesson 30

The Child Who Doesn't Trouble Anyone

Hamid is a very good boy. He doesn't trouble anyone. He doesn't throw stones at people's doors and windows. He doesn't draw pictures on doors and walls or write on them.

Hamid knows that to trouble people is bad and sinful. He knows that to cause someone distress is a sin, and until it is compensated and the victim becomes content, Allah will not forgive it. When Hamid is playing he is careful not to trouble his neighbors, and not to make them unhappy with a lot of noise, nor disturb their leisure and sleep. Hamid knows that Allah doesn't like those who trouble their neighbours. Since Hamid is such a thoughtful boy who doesn't trouble anyone, everyone likes him, and Allah also loves him.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) tells us:

“A person who troubles his neighbours will not go to paradise.”

Questions:

1. What has the Holy Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) told us about neighbours?
2. When Hamid is playing, how does he take care not to

trouble his neighbours?

3. What things does Hamid take care not to do?

4. Why does Allah love Hamid?

Complete these sentences:

a. Hamid knows that to trouble people is and.....

b. He knows that to cause someone.....is a sin.

c. Until it is compensated and the victim becomes....Allah won't.....it.

d. Because Hamid is a boy, Allah loves him.

Lesson 31

Seeking Allah's Pleasure By Generosity

One of the former Companions of the Prophet (s.a.w.a) was seriously ill. Imam Husain (a.s.) went to visit him. He saw that the man was in extreme discomfort. He was sighing and groaning.

Imam Husain (a.s.) became very upset. *“Brother...”* he said, *“Why are you so distressed? Tell me, so that I can do something about it.”*

“I am in debt,” said the sick man, “and I have nothing with which to pay my debts. I am afraid that I will die while still in debt.”

“My dear brother” Imam Husain (a.s.) told him, *“Don’t be upset. I will stand security for all your debts.”*

“O,” said the sick Muslim, “I don’t want to be in debt when I die, and I am afraid that I will die before you can pay my debts.”

“Don’t be distressed.” Imam Husain (a.s.) told him, *“I have faith that I can clear all your debts before you pass away.”*

Imam Husain (a.s.) took his leave and immediately went and took his money and went and paid the man’s debts. After he had paid them all, he went and informed the man about it, which made the man very happy. Allah too, was very pleased by his kindness and

generosity.

Our Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) tells us:

“Whoever pleases a believer has pleased me, and whoever pleases me has pleased Allah.”

Think and Answer:

1. When one of your friends is sick, do you go and visit him?
2. What did Imam Husain (a.s.) ask the sick Muslim? What was the man's reply?
3. Are you in debt to anyone? Don't you think that you ought to repay it as soon as possible?
4. How did Imam Husain (a.s.) cure the man's unhappiness?
5. Have you pleased a Muslim today? How?
6. What has our Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) told us about pleasing a believer?

Lesson 32

Seeking Permission

Our Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) was sitting one day with his companions and they were talking together. A person came in without asking permission and didn't even offer his salam. *"Why didn't you say salam?"* questioned the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.). *"Why didn't you ask permission to come in?!"* *"Go back. Ask our permission and greet us with your salam before you come in,"*

Regarding salam, the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) has told us:

"O Muslims! You will not enter Paradise unless you are kind to each other, and unless you warmly say salam to each other whenever you meet."

"Always say salam in a loud voice and reply in the same way."

"God loves most the person who says salaam first and gives him better rewards and blessing." "First give your salam, then say whatever you have to say."

Do you know his name?

Perhaps he is one of your friends. He works hard to learn Islamic manners and puts them into practice. He greets others warmly with

his salaam, saying,” Salamun’alaykum”, and he returns his salam smilingly to whoever says salam to him. Whenever he sees one of his friends he becomes happy and, with a smile, he shakes hands, says his salam when asked about himself he says “Alhamdulillah, I am well.” He enters the house, he greets his parents and all household with his salam, and he says good bye whenever he goes out. He thanks whoever is kind to him, and if he can, he repays that person’s kindness with kindness. Whenever he enters a gathering, he says his salam in a clear voice and sits wherever it is appropriate. He never put his fingers in his nose in front of anyone, nor spits, nor stretches his legs. He never interrupts anyone and never speaks too much. He never gets upset without a reason, and always speaks nicely and politely. When he sneezes he puts his hand over his mouth and nose, and afterward says, “Alhamdulillah”. Do you know this boy? Do you know his name? His name is Nasir. His behavior is very good and Allah loves him for it and will give him a beautiful reward. Good people also like him and respect him. Do you like him?

Lesson 33

A True Shiah

Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (a.s.) once said to one of his companions:

“O Jabir! It is not enough that a person says, “I am Shiah and I love the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and the Prophet’s family and the Imams (a.s.)”. By Allah, a Shiah is the one who is perfectly pious and obedient to Allah’s commands. Anyone else is not a Shiah no matter how much they say they love Ali (a.s.) and no matter what they call themselves.”

“O Jabir! Our Shias are known by these signs:

- (a) *They are truthful, trustworthy and loyal;*
- (b) *They always remember Allah;*
- (c) *They offer their prayers, observe fasts, and recite the Quran;*
- (d) *They act nicely towards their parents;*
- (e) *They help their neighbours, take care of orphans and say nothing but good of people;*
- (f) *They are worthy of people’s trust and confidence.”*

Jabir was listening attentively. When the Imam (a.s.) finished, he said: “O son of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.), among the Muslims there are very few who possess these qualities.”

The Imam (a.s.) replied:

“Allah forbid you imagine that just to claim to love us is enough to be a Shiah. No not at all. A person who says, “I love Ali (a.s.) but doesn’t follow the actions of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.), his claim will be of no use.”

“O Jabir! Our real friends and shias are obedient to the commands of Allah, and everyone who is disobedient to Allah is our enemy.” “O Jabir! Always be pious and chaste, and perform good deeds so as to enjoy the blessing of the Paradise. Know that the best and most honorable before Allah are the pious and the chaste.”

Questions

1. What type of person is a Shiah?
2. To be a Shiah, is it enough to simply claim that you love Ali (a.s.)?
3. Who are the best and most honourable persons in the sight of Allah?
4. What must we do to become perfect human beings and enjoy the blessings of Paradise?
5. Which of the signs of a Shiah do you have? Which are the ones you do not have?

Lesson 34

Household chores

Mahmud was writing the following essay:

My name is Mahmud. I have two sisters, Zainab and Fatimah. They both go to school. In all, there are six of us in our family, and we have divided the household chores between us. Father does the shopping and the other jobs outside the house. I help my father. I buy bread, milk, vegetables and fruits.

My sisters help mother with the housework and they keep the house clean and tidy. Fatima does some chores and Zainab does others.

In our house, we all have special jobs to do. We all know our duties and carry them out, and it is not very often that we have to be reminded. In these chores, we all help one another. Only my little younger brother, Reza, doesn't have a job to do, and he is only ten months old. My mother says that Reza's only jobs are crying, drinking milk, sleeping and laughing. She says that we will find a job for him when he is older.

My father believes that each member of the family must accept some chore and do it regularly because housework is a way of learning through experience. He believes that a person who

doesn't work doesn't learn anything.

My father tells us that the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) has said:

“Allah doesn't like the people who put their responsibilities on the shoulders of others, and will not let share His loving kindness. A good Muslim is the one who is helpful around the house.”

Besides doing our own tasks, we also help one another. One day I came home and found that my father was sweeping the courtyard with a broom. “Father!” I asked: “Why are you sweeping?” My father replied: “Do you not see that your mother is very busy? We must help her. We are the followers of Imam Ali (a.s.) and we must follow him. Imam Ali (a.s.) always used to help his wife in the household work and sometimes he used to sweep the house too.”

Really, I can honestly say that we never have any arguments in our house. If ever I have a disagreement with my sisters, we either settle it with smiles or we take the matter to my mother or we wait until father comes home and one of them always settles it for us. When my father comes home from work, he sits down and talks to us about our lessons. He looks at our school books and guides us.

Later, when we are all free, we go to the little library we have and we study the books that father has bought for us. Father studies one of his books and even little Reza goes with us to the library, but instead of reading a book, sometimes he tears the book that mother is reading. I thank Allah that I have such good parents and sisters, and I try my best to do what is expected of me and help

more in the household chores.

Mahmud handed over the essay to his English teacher. When he got it back, the teacher had written: “Mahmud! You have written clearly and well. This is the best essay and you have received top marks. I enjoyed reading your essay and I thank the Almighty Allah that I have such a good student. You too must be grateful to the Almighty Allah that you have such understanding parents. How good it would be if all families helped one another and worked together the way you all do, and if all boys were friendly and helpful the way you are. Well done!”

Questions:

1. What has the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) told us about working and helping around the house?
2. What has he said about putting our responsibilities on the shoulders of others?
3. Do you give more help to others or are you helped more by them?
4. Do you have quarrels with your brothers and sisters? How are they settled?
5. Does your family share the household chores? What is your job?
6. Do you have a library in your house? Who provided the books?
7. What did the teacher write regarding Mahmud’s essay? Why did he tell him to be grateful to the Almighty Allah?

Lesson 35

Etiquette of Fasting

One of the great acts of worship in Islam is observing sawm (fasting). Allah loves those who observe sawm, and bestows on them a good reward.

Observing sawm means abstaining from eating, drinking, and some other things. In the month of Ramadan, Muslims observe sawm everyday from the morning until the sunset, when they eat again. After the sawm each day, the first meal that we eat in the evening is called iftar.

When observing sawm we must first of all have niyyah (intention). This means that we decide to observe sawm in obedience to the command of Allah.

Allah has made observing the sawm a wajib act for Muslims so that:

- ♦ We remember Allah.
- ♦ We know ourselves better.
- ♦ We become more able to control our desires.
- ♦ We remember the Hereafter. We get ready to do good deeds.

- ♦ We store righteous acts for our future life.
- ♦ We gain experience of hunger and thirst and so remember the poor and sympathize with them and help them. We become healthier.
- ♦ We may move ahead towards our desired goal of perfection.

Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (a.s.) has said:

“A person who merely abstains from eating and drinking will not always be counted as one who is observing sawm.”

This means that when you observe sawm, your ears, eyes, tongue, etc. must also be observing sawm and must not perform and must commit no sin. Only then will your sawm be accepted by the Almighty Allah.

When you are observing sawm you must behave better than on other days. You must keep your tongue from idle and useless speech. Don't tell lies. Don't make fun of anyone. Don't quarrel and argue. Don't give way to jealousy. Abstain from speaking ill of others and from fault-finding. Be more kind than usual to people and make their life comfortable.

- ♦ For young men and women who are baligh (mature), it is wajib to observe sawm during the month of Ramadan, unless it is harmful for them.
- ♦ Children eat a little with their families shortly before the sawm begins, and then don't eat anything until noon, or

until as long as they can. In this way they share in the rewards of the sawm with the rest of their family-members.

- ◆ People who eat when they are supposed to observe sawm, commit a sin. They must observe the sawm for the number of days they have not observed the sawm without any proper Islamic reason; and additionally they must also observe sawm for 60 days or feed 60 poor people for each day on which they broke their sawm.
- ◆ Entertaining a guest for iftar is one of the best deeds to perform in the month of Ramadan, the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) has told us: “Whoever invites a person observing sawm for iftar, his sins will be forgiven and the Almighty Allah would bestow on him goodness and blessings.”

Some of the Prophet’s (s.a.w.a.) Companions used to say: “O Messenger of Allah, we all are not able to do this” and the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) would reply: “If not, then feed a person observing sawm even half a date, or offer him a glass of water.”

Questions:

- 1) What is the aim in observing the sawm?
- 2) What must be our niyyah when we wish to observe sawm?
- 3) For what kind of deeds do we get ready by observing sawm?
- 4) Why does observing the sawm make us think about the poor and the hungry? What does it make us do?

- 5) What things must we abstain from to observe the sawm properly?
- 6) If a person breaks his sawm without any Islamic reason, or doesn't observe sawm when he is supposed to, how does he make up for this major sin?
- 7) How does observing the sawm free us of our bad desires?
- 8) In what season does the month of Ramadan fall this year? How old will you be then? Is the sawm wajib for you? For who many days have you already observed the sawm? Did you control your behaviour to perfect your sawm?

Lesson 36

Cleanliness and Environmental Sanitation

Last summer I went to the village of my uncle. When I arrived I was amazed at the cleanliness I found there. I said to my cousin: “What has happened? Your village has really changed.” “Yes” he answered.

“You are right, the village has changed. It’s about three years since you were last here, and at that time our village was in a terrible state, and all the lanes were dirty and full of garbage. But since then our village has really changed. Three years ago an Aalim (religious scholar) came to our village and began to guide us. He took a few months for setting down and then he gave a lecture to the people about the village conditions. He said something like this:

O people, the religion of Islam is the religion of cleanliness. Cleanliness is a part of our religion. Body and clothes, house and street, public bath and mosque, all must be clean. O brothers, O sisters, must your environment be so dirty? Do you not know that our Prophet (s.a.w.a.) has told us not to leave rubbish and sweepings outside the door because this is the hiding place of tiny creatures that cannot be seen but are harmful!?”

Then he said: “Why do you dirty the streets and the gutters? Dirty air and dirty water causes diseases. Air and water belongs to all of you. You all have the right to benefit from them and live in good health. No one has the right to pollute the air or water. To pollute the public air or water is a terrible act of injustice; and Allah does not like the unjust and He punishes them.

He continued: ‘O villagers, I have a programme for cleaning the village. Cooperate with me in making our village clean, tidy and beautiful.’

Then my cousin continued: “The people of the village accepted his proposal and promised their support and cooperation. As a result, the next day we all came out of our houses, the Aalim before all of us, and we started the work of cleaning the streets and making them tidy. When we finished, the Aalim thanked us and we thanked him for his guidance.”

And from that day on, everybody promised not to throw rubbish and dirt on the street, but to take it to a place out of the town and cover it with earth, and to use it after a few months as fertilizer.

Another night the ‘Aalim spoke to us about trees. He said: “Do you know that the plantation of trees is very worthwhile and highly recommended in Islam? Trees purify the air and give fruits, shadow and have many other benefits. The Prophet (s.a.w.a.) has said: *‘If you have a sapling in your hand and you are ready to plant it, and you realize that the time of your death has come, go ahead and plant it, for Allah loves cultivation on earth and plantation of trees.’* The Prophet (s.a.w.a.) has also said: *‘When a*

person plants a tree that gives forth fruits, he will be rewarded for each of those fruits.”

The Aalim continued: “You all know how hard Imam Ali (a.s.) and the other Imams (a.s.) worked for farming and plantation of trees? Therefore, I have an idea of lining our village stream with trees, and making the village really beautiful. If you promise to cooperate, tomorrow we will begin,”

Everyone gave their approval and some good people even donated some saplings. Next morning, we began and with cheerful zeal the people of the village lined the stream with saplings. When we completed the work, the Aalim advised every one, especially the children, to keep an eye on the trees and protect them. He said: “These trees belong to you all. No one has the right to damage them. Make sure that no one breaks their branches, and be careful that they are not damaged by animals.”

My cousin added: “Since then, as we knew that the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) loves the plantation of trees, we have planted trees everywhere. Wherever there was any vacant ground, we planted a tree. And the result, as you can see, is that our village is full of lush green trees and fruits.”

“And that’s not all. With the ‘Aalim’s guidance and the full cooperation of the people of the village, we now have a clean public bath, a beautiful mosque, a library and clinic, and all the children in the village are clean, healthy and better educated.”

When my cousin finished, I said to him: “I congratulate the Aalim and all of you. I wish everyone would take a lesson for perfection

of one's life conforming to Islamic standards from the people of this village.”

Questions

1. What do you do with the household garbage? Where does it go? Is there a better way of getting rid of it?
2. What do you say to someone who dumps rubbish on the street? Which saying of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) can you mention to him?
3. How can you keep your street and your area neat and tidy?
4. Can you think of a way of keeping your classroom neat and tidy?
5. What has Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) told us about plantation of trees?
6. How do you protect public trees?

Lesson 37

Islamic Manners

Greetings

Islam enjoins on its followers to maintain good will, brotherhood, love, to ask about each other's health, to help one another and to remove all evils among them.

We shall explain what the Islamic Shari'ah (law) has taught about good manners, to greet one another, to create love and fraternity. Whoever greets his fellow beings breaks his own pride (Pride is a bad habit which leads one to Hell). Whoever replies to greetings exalts him and considers him better than himself and both are amply rewarded

Our Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) has explained:

“There is no better gift a Muslim can present to his brother than wise words which will give him some more guidance and stop him from going astray”

We must cultivate the habit of greeting each other and shaking hands (in Islamic way) and enquiring about each other's health as has been stated by our Prophet thus:

“He who takes the initiative to greet is better in the sight

of Allah and his Prophet (s.a.w.a.)”.

According to a tradition, our Prophet (s.a.w.a.) guided his companions to possess the following seven qualities:

- (1) *To visit the sick.*
- (2) *To join in the funeral procession (Tashyiy al-Janazah).*
- (3) *To accept the word of one who swears.*
- (4) *To pray for one who sneezes.*
- (5) *To rescue and help the oppressed.*
- (6) *To greet whomsoever one meets.*
- (7) *To accept an invitation (except that which is unlawful)*

Another tradition says that our Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) stated that in Paradise there are transparent houses which will be awarded to those of his followers who possess the following qualities:-

- (i) *One who converses with people respectfully.*
- (ii) *One who entertains people to food*
- (iii) *One who offers salutations (salam) aloud.*
- (iv) *One who wakes up in the thick of the night to offer prayers to Allah when everyone is asleep.*

Then he added that saluting aloud has been recommended so that one does not become stingy in saluting his brother Muslim.

Our Sixth Imam, Imam Ja'far Sadiq (a.s.) has stated thus;

“One of the signs of humility in a Muslim is that he

salutes aloud everyone he meets.”

Our Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) has stated,

“Do not reply to a person who speaks to you without first saluting you.”

“If someone comes to you without saluting you, do not entertain him to good until he salutes.”

“The niggards of all is one who does not greet others, and the laziest of all is one who cannot seek or supplicate Allah’s help.”

“Anyone who leaves a gathering by bidding a salutation, if those that remain behind speak good things, then he is included in the reward and if they speak evil he won’t be included among them.”

We have explained the traditions of our Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and Imam Ja’far Sadiq (a.s.) as regards the benefits of salutation.

Now let us see what Allah says in the Holy Quran:

“When you are saluted, reply in a better manner or likewise”¹

For example, when you are saluted thus: Assalamu alaykum or Salamun alaykum the better reply is:

عَلَيْكُمْ سَلَامٌ وَرَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ وَبَرَكَاتُهُ

¹ Surah an-Nisaa (4), Verse 86

If you can't reply then say:

عَلَيْكُمْ سَلَامٌ

Our Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said:

“Whoever greets you with Salamun ‘alaykum will be rewarded ten times. Whoever greets you with السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَ رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ وَ بَرَكَاتُهُ will be rewarded thirty times.”

Lesson 38

Etiquettes Of Drinking Water

It is forbidden to eat and drink out of a pot made of gold or silver.

When drinking water do not gulp it down at once, but sip it in three parts (i.e. drink, then wait a moment, then drink, then wait a moment and then drink). If a drinking vessel is broken from a side don't drink from there, nor should you drink from the handle side; for people do not usually wash those places. During the day it is better to drink while standing and at night while sitting.

Imam Ja'far Sadiq (a.s.) has said:

“When a person says Bismillah before drinking water and then after a sip says ‘Al-hamdu lillah’ and then drinks a little again by saying ‘Bismillah and after drinking says alhamdu lillah’, thus doing three times, the water that has gone in his stomach will glorify Allah and he will get its reward.”

Do not drink excessive water for it causes illness. Drink enough to satiate thirst. There is nothing better than water, for water is the life of everything, as Allah says in the Holy Quran:

“We made every living thing from water.”¹

Thus on water life depends. It is one of the greatest blessings of Allah.

Giving Water in Charity

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) has said:

“The best form of alms is giving water to a thirsty person.”

The first person to be rewarded on the Day of Judgment will be the one who offered water to drink. Imam Ja’far Sadiq (a.s.) has said:

“Whoever gives water to a thirsty man where there is water, the reward of his act is equivalent to freeing one slave; and one who gives water to a thirsty man where there is no water; the reward is akin to giving life to new person, and one who gives life to one person it is like giving life to all people.”

A companion of our sixth Imam, Dawood Riqqi relates that he was with the Imam (a.s.) when he ordered water. After he had drank water the Imam wept and then said:

“O Dawood! May Allah curse all those who martyred Imam Husain (a.s.) son of Ali (a.s.) How the memory of Husain (a.s.) arouses sorrow. Whenever I drink cool water I remember my grand father Imam Husain (a.s.) and whoever recalls the thirst of Imam Husain (a.s.) when

¹ Surah al-Anbiya (21), Verse 30

drinking cool water, and curses all those who participated in martyring Imam Husain (a.s.) gets 1,00,000 rewards, and his 1,00,000 sins are forgiven and his position is exalted 1,00,000 times in paradise and Allah will resurrect him with a bright face.”

So when you finish drinking water say thus:

صَلَوَاتُ اللَّهِ عَلَى حُسَيْنٍ وَ أَهْلِ بَيْتِهِ وَ أَصْحَابِهِ وَ لَعْنَةُ اللَّهِ
عَلَى قَتَلَةِ الْحُسَيْنِ وَ أَعْدَائِهِ.

“Blessings of Allah be upon Husain, his progeny and his companions and curse be upon his murderers and enemies.”

Lesson 39

Dress And Dressing

How To Wear And Take Off Dresses:

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) has declared:

“It does not befit a man to stay naked at any time of the day or night”

Imam Ali (a.s.) has said:

“When a man is naked he is easily tempted and this is what the Satan wants in order to lead him astray. When one sits among people it is undesirable to change clothing of the private part, for this shows lack of manners. When you take off your clothes say ‘Bismillah’.”

Imam Musa Kazim (a.s.) was asked as to what he thought about one who has many clothes, he replied that even if he had twenty pairs of clothes, they are not considered as luxury provided that he uses all of them.

Imam Ali (a.s.) has stated,

“Clean clothes remove sorrow and cause one’s prayers to be acceptable for the cleanliness”.

Imam Ja’far Sadiq (a.s.) has said:

“A man is saved from becoming proud if he puts patches in his clothes, mends his shoes, and carries the food stuff for home consumption himself.”

Neatness and Dressing:

It is necessary upon everyone to dress neatly and well according to his means. If he has limited means he should not be pre-occupied in pursuing neatness beyond his lawful means, because it will spoil his worship.

If Allah has given you the means, then use it in dressing well and neatly. It is not a sign of piety to put on torn and dirty clothes if you have the means.

Allah is happy with the people that show His blessings by dressing well according to their means.

Lesson 40

Sleeping

It is abominable to sleep between the break of dawn and sunrise, between the prayer of Maghrib (Dusk) and 'Esha (night), and after 'Asr (Afternoon) prayers.

During hot season, it is recommended to sleep before the prayers and between Zuhr and 'Asr (Mid-day and afternoon) prayers.

Imam Ja'far Sadiq (a.s.) has said:

“Sleeping at dawn is harmful, for it stops sustenance, changes the colour of one's face to yellow and takes out its beauty. To sleep then is bad for at that time the Bani Israel were getting sustenance of 'Manna' and roasted bird and whoever slept missed it”.

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) has said:

“Any Muslim who continues sitting on his prayer-mat from dawn to sunrise (engaged in devotions and recitation of Quran) will be saved by Allah from Hell Fire”.

Another tradition states that dawn devotions would earn him a reward of performing a Hajj and his sins will be forgiven.

Lesson 41

Regarding The House

- ♦ Inauspiciousness of house lies in its courtyard being narrow and the neighbours being bad.
- ♦ **Illuminate your house with the recitation of the Holy Quran.**
- ♦ You should not leave your home suspended, but offer your prayers in it.
- ♦ It is abominable that one should spend his night till morning in a house which has no curtains (privacy).
- ♦ Imam Ja'far Sadiq (a.s.) has been reported to have said: *“It is proper that you should sweep the area of your house. Take the rubbish out of the house and do not allow it to remain in the house at night. Do not also stack the rubbish at the back of the door. Close the doors of the house and cover the vessels containing food and water.”*¹

¹ When we learn these Islamic teachings regarding cleanliness and see the deplorable condition of the cities of the Muslims we realize more about the words of a distinguished person who said that Islam is one thing and most of the present-day Muslims are another thing.

- ♦ Do not remain in the house or sleep in the house while you are alone.
- ♦ Do not peep into the house of the neighbours.
- ♦ Keeping pet animals (especially pigeons, fowls, sheep and goats) in the house is recommended.
- ♦ It is abominable to keep a dog in the house, except in the houses which are distant from the populated areas.¹

While Leaving the House

- ♦ When you go out of your house recite the following supplication:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ. آمَنْتُ بِاللَّهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ عَلَى اللَّهِ مَا
شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ.

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful. "I believe in Allah, I trust on Allah, I accept what Allah wishes. There is no power and authority except Allah."

While Entering the House

- ♦ When you enter in a house salute the inmates.

¹ Unfortunately nowadays the Muslims who are under the influence of West act contrary to these teachings i.e. they do not take interest in rearing animals and birds and attach more importance to keeping dogs, especially imported from foreign countries.

Lesson 42

Cleanliness And Purity

The Holy Prophet of Islam (s.a.w.a.) is reported to have said that *cleanliness is a part of faith*.

Islam has laid stress on cleanliness of utensils, clothing, body, hair, teeth, drinking water, water used for ablution and bathing, dwelling places, streets, public places, food and every other thing in human use. A number of the sayings of the Prophet and the Imams ascribe to the devil everything which is loathsome or causes a disease (e.g. microbes), and describe all such things as a cause of poverty and misery.

Cleaning the Teeth:

- ♦ The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) has been reported to have said: “Jibrael” insisted so much about brushing the teeth that I thought that it will become obligatory on my followers.
- ♦ The toothbrush should be used vertically on the teeth and after brushing the teeth one should rinse the mouth with water. (It is exactly the same thing which the dentists recommend nowadays)
- ♦ It is recommended that the teeth should be brushed before

offering prayers.

- ♦ According to Imam Ja'far Sadiq, peace be on him, there are twelve advantages of cleaning the teeth (miswaq):

- (1) It is the conduct (Sunnah) of the Prophets
- (2) Causes Allah's goodwill
- (3) Cleans the mouth
- (4) Increases brightness of eyes
- (5) Takes out sputum
- (6) Increases memory
- (7) Teeth are whitened
- (8) The rewards of goods deeds increases many-folds
- (9) Stops weakness and falling of teeth
- (10) Strengthens roots of the teeth
- (11) Angels are happy with all those who brush their teeth
- (12) Increases the appetite in healthy manner

- ♦ According to the Holy Prophet there are three things which sharpens your memory power and cures all pains:

- 1) Chewing Frankincense or olibanum (Arabic language: لُبَّان lubbān)
- 2) Brushing the teeth
- 3) Reciting the Holy Quran.

- ♦ Another tradition quotes the Holy Prophet as saying that 2 rak'at prayers after brushing the teeth is better than 70 rak'at prayers without it.

Trimming the Hair:

- ♦ Shorten the hair of your head when they become long. When you wish to get your hair cut, sit facing the Qibla and recite the following supplication in the beginning:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ وَبِاللَّهِ وَعَلَى مِلَّةِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ. اللَّهُمَّ
آتِنِي بِكُلِّ شَعْرَةٍ نُورًا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ

“I commence this task with the name of Allah and seek help for its accomplishment and I am doing this task according to the religious law of Allah’s Prophet. O Lord! For every hair of mine give me a light on the Day of Judgment”

And when you are through with this task say:

اللَّهُمَّ زَيِّنِي بِالتَّقْوَى وَجَنِّبْنِي الرَّدَى

“O Lord! Adorn me with piety and save me from destruction.”

- ♦ One of the following two things is recommended for the people; either they should cut the hair of their head (and this is better) or they should let these hair grow, nourish

them, wash them and comb them and should part them in such a way that the crown of the head should become visible.

Keeping the Beard

- ♦ Let the beard be moderate - neither too long nor too short. It is abominable that it should be of more than a fist's length and there is a possibility of its being unlawful.
- ♦ It is well known from the scholars (Mujtahids) that it is unlawful to shave the beard.

Cutting the Nails:

- ♦ Cutting the nails trimming the moustache and plucking the hair in the nose every Friday is preferable.
- ♦ Cutting the nails is an emphatic sunnah.
- ♦ The best time for cutting the nails is Friday.
- ♦ The hair, the nails and the blood which have been separated from the body should be buried in the ground.

Combing:

- ♦ Combing the hair of one's head and beard carries many virtues.

Applying Scents, Perfume and Oil:

- ♦ It is stated from Imam Ja'far Sadiq (a.s.) that sweet scents increase the strength of heart and virility.

- ♦ According to Imam Ja'far Sadiq (a.s.) perfume implies musk, umber, saffron and 'ud.
- ♦ According to Imam Ali (a.s.) application of oil makes the body more attractive, strengthens brain and refreshes it, it opens the pores, cures dryness and hardness of skin and makes the face piously attractive.
- ♦ Using scent and perfume is one of the pleasing manners of the Prophets (a.s.)
- ♦ Using perfume on Friday has been recommended very emphatically.
- ♦ When a perfume is brought for you, you should accept it and should not refuse it.

Bath:

- ♦ To take bath is recommended. It is undesirable to bathe in *hammam* (Public bath-house, of hot air steam, followed by a shower and massage) everyday, but it is good to take every other day.
- ♦ Taking bath under the sky without covering the lower part of the body and entering the streams (or canals) while one is naked has been prohibited.
- ♦ Do not enter hammam while your stomach is full. Similarly do not enter the bathroom when you are hungry but eat a little before going.
- ♦ Wash your feet with cold water when you come out of

hammam.

Recite the following supplication when you enter the bathroom:

اللَّهُمَّ أَذْهِبْ عَنِّي الرَّجْسَ وَالنَّجَسَ وَطَهِّرْ جَسَدِي وَقَلْبِي.

“O Lord! Rub off impurity from me and purify my body and heart.”

- ♦ While you are in hammam do not lie on your back or on your side and do not use comb or toothbrush.
- ♦ Washing of one's head and cloth has been emphasized.
- ♦ Clean your body of the bad odour which inconveniences the people. Allah hates those persons who are dirty and the people are inconvenienced on account of their bad odour.
- ♦ It is proper that Friday bath should not be abandoned from Friday morning till noon and the nearer to noon is better. Friday bath can be taken also after noon till evening with the intention of lapsed (qaza) bath. The Friday bath can also be taken on Saturday from morning till evening with the intention of lapsed bath.
- ♦ Recommended baths have been narrated for the following days:
 - (i) During the odd nights of the month of Ramadhan especially the 1st 15th 17th 19th 21st and 23rd night;
 - (ii) The night of 'Idul Fitr and the day of Idul Qurban
 - (iii) The 8th day of Zil Hajj

Lesson 43

Sleeping And Waking Up And Going In To The Latrine

- ♦ Sleeping after dawn and after sunrise and between dusk (maghrib) and night (Isha) prayers and after ‘Asr (afternoon prayers) is abominable and sleeping between dawn and sunrise has been prohibited.
- ♦ Siesta (nap from forenoon till noon) is sunnah.
- ♦ When you want to go to sleep perform ablution (wuzu).
- ♦ Whoever goes to sleep after performing wuzu or tayammum remembers Allah as if he were offering prayers.
- ♦ At the time of sleeping, sleep on the right hand side facing Qibla and place your right hand under your face.

While Sleeping:

According to a hadith from Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.) when one has laid in the bed with his right hand under the right side of his face then he should recite:

“I begin with the Name of Allah. Oh Allah I have my life to Your care, turn my face towards You, hand over my work to You and am afraid only of You and seek Your

good-will. Only on You I depend for my salvation and towards You for refuge. I have brought faith on the Book which You have sent and the Messenger whom You have sent.”

After that he should recite Tasbih of Lady Fatima Zahra (s.a.).

Imam Ja’far Sadiq (a.s.) has said: *“There are three things which Allah holds as enemies:*

- (i) Excessive and un-necessary sleeping
- (ii) Laughing without any proper use
- (iii) To eat when the stomach is already full.

He also said that people have disobeyed Allah in the beginning in regard to the following six deeds:

- (i) Love of the world
 - (ii) Love of kingdom
 - (iii) Love of women
 - (iv) Love of food
 - (v) Love of sleep
 - (vi) Love of comfort
- ♦ It is abominable to sleep in Masjid.
 - ♦ If you are alone in a house and wish to go to sleep recite this supplication :

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنْسُ وَحُشَّتِيْ وَاعِنِّيْ عَلٰى وَحْدَتِيْ

[Oh Allah be my friend in depression and anxiety and help me in my loneliness]

- ♦ Sleeping on a roof which does not have a wall and also where two roads part and with greasy and polluted hands is prohibited.
- ♦ Go to the latrine before going to sleep and after waking up.
- ♦ It is sunnah to remember Allah and to recite the Holy Quran before going to sleep. In this connection the recitation of the four Surahs: (i) Surah al-Falaq (ii) Surah an-Nas which are also called the ma'uzatain and the surahs of (iii) Surah al-Kafirun (iv) Surah al-Ikhlās (v) Ayatul Kursi, (vi) the first ten and (vii) the last ten verses of the Surah al-Saffat and (viii) Surah al-Takathur has been recommended emphatically.

Urinating:

Urinating in the following conditions and at places mentioned below is abominable

- (i) At a place where urine splashes on the person urinating
- (ii) In the water
- (iii) While standing
- (iv) In the holes of the animals

- (v) On the roads
- (vi) Near the walls of the Masjid
- (vii) In the surroundings of the houses
- (viii) Under the fruit bearing trees
- (ix) At places where the people are inconvenienced due to it.

Going To Toilet:

- ◆ When you wish to enter the toilet first place your left foot in.
- ◆ After sitting down lean on your left foot
- ◆ After the urine has ceased to come it is recommended to perform ‘istibra’ (the process by which the urinary passage becomes clear), which has been alluded to in the books on Articles of Acts and treatises dealing with practical matters. (No explanation required).
- ◆ It is sunnah to wash the lower half of the body with cold water as it cures piles. It is abominable to sit for a long time in the toilet. It is stated that Prophet Luqman, peace be on him, had asked his son to write on the door of toilet that sitting for a long time in the toilet causes piles.
- ◆ It is abominable to speak in the toilet except that it should be the remembrance of Allah¹.

¹ Islam exhorts man to remember Allah at all places and in all circumstances.

- ♦ While sitting in the toilet one should recite the following supplication:

اَللّٰهُمَّ الرَّزُقْنِيْ حَلَالًا وَاجْنِبْنِيْ عَنِ الْحَرَامِ.

[Oh Allah grant me lawful daily bread and safeguard me from unlawful things.]

While cleaning oneself one should recite the following supplication:

اَللّٰهُمَّ حَسِّنْ فَرْجِيْ وَاسْتُرْ عَوْرَتِيْ وَحَرِّمْنِيْ نَارًا وَوَقِّقْنِيْ لِبَا
يُقَرِّبُنِيْ مِنْكَ يَا ذَا الْجَلَالِ وَالْاِكْرَامِ

[O Allah safeguard me (my private parts) from unlawful things and help me to conceal them. Protect me from the Fire of Hell. O Allah by Your Splendour and Greatness let me follow those things through which I can attain your proximity.]

- ♦ While getting up one should put the hand on one's stomach and recite the following supplication.

اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ الَّذِيْ حَنَّفَنِيْ طَعَامِيْ وَشَرَّبَنِيْ وَعَافَنِيْ مِنَ الْبَلَوِ.

[All praise is for Allah who has made my food digestible and has made me escape from trials.]

- ♦ While coming out one should put the right foot out first,

keep the hand again on the stomach and recite the following supplication.

اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ الَّذِي عَرَّفَنِيْ لَذَّتَهُ وَ اَبْقٰى فِيْ جَسَدِيْ قُوَّتَهُ وَ
اَخْرَجَنَا عَمَّاۤ اَزَااَ يَا لَهٗ مِنْ نِّعَةٍ لِّيَقْدِرُ الْقَادِرُونَ
قَدْرَهَا.

[All praise is for Allah who has made me taste the flavour of food and has preserved its energy in my body and has excreted its refuse from my stomach. There are so many blessings of Allah that even the greatest mathematicians are at a loss.]

Lesson 44

Ailments And Their Remedies

- ♦ When a believer falls sick the Almighty Allah appoints an angel to write down the good deeds done by him while in good health.
- ♦ You should not complain at the time of sickness i.e. you should not say: “I have become involved in an affliction in which none else has been involved” and things like that.
- ♦ To bleed is curative.
- ♦ Abstinence is the basis of all medicines and stomach is the main cause of all ailments.
- ♦ So long as your body can bear the ailment you should abstain from taking medicine.
- ♦ If you practice the following acts you will always remain healthy:
 1. Eat when you are hungry.
 2. Drink water when you are thirsty
 3. Urinate when you feel like urinating
 4. Sleep when you feel sleepy

- ♦ Honey cures every ailment.
- ♦ It has been narrated that you should treat your sick with alms because alms avert big calamities.
- ♦ There is no harm in receiving treatment from a non-Muslim doctor.
- ♦ The Almighty Allah said to one of His Prophets:
“I will not cure you unless you receive medical treatment”.¹
- ♦ Taking a little sugar cube with cold water at the time of breakfast is very efficacious for fever.
- ♦ Drinking rain water is very useful for being cured of many ailments.
- ♦ Reciting the Holy Quran is curative and in this regard the repetition of Surah al-Hamd (1:1-7) and (ii) Ayatul Kursi (2: 225-257) has been emphasized.
- ♦ Similarly the following supplication of Nur has also been narrated:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ بِسْمِ اللَّهِ التَّوَرِ بِسْمِ اللَّهِ نُورِ التَّوَرِ

¹ It has been mentioned earlier that when a person is involved in calamities and ailments he should seek natural remedies and along with that he should request the Almighty Allah who actually occasions everything to make these remedies effective. This is the reason why the verses and supplications have been mentioned with regards to such cases.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ نُورٌ عَلَى نُورٍ بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الَّذِي هُوَ مَدْبِرُ الْأُمُورِ بِسْمِ
 اللَّهِ الَّذِي خَلَقَ النُّورَ مِنَ النُّورِ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي خَلَقَ
 النُّورَ مِنَ النُّورِ وَأَنْزَلَ النُّورَ عَلَى الطُّورِ فِي كِتَابٍ مَسْطُورٍ
 فِي رَقٍّ مَنْشُورٍ بِقَدَرٍ مَقْدُورٍ عَلَى نَبِيِّ مَحْبُورٍ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ
 الَّذِي هُوَ بِالْعِزِّ مَذْكُورٌ وَبِالْفَخْرِ مَشْهُورٌ وَعَلَى السَّاءِ وَ
 الضَّرَاءِ مَشْكُورٌ وَ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَ آلِهِ
 الطَّاهِرِينَ.

[In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.]

In the Name of Allah the Illuminator, In the Name of Allah the Illuminator of the light. In the Name of Allah the Illuminator over every Illumination. In the Name of Allah the Disposer of all events. In the Name of Allah, who created light from light. All praise is to Allah Who created light from light, and descended the light on Mount Tur; all described in the written Book, in an out straight fine parchment and in the fixed quantity which has been revealed to the wise Prophet. All praise be to Allah Who is remembered with greatness, and glory famed with His Honour, and Who is thanked in prosperity as well as in distress. O Allah! Send your blessings on

our Leader Muhammad (peace be on him and his progeny) and his thoroughly purified progeny]

- ♦ Eating leek and dates and drinking milk as a part of breakfast has been emphasized.
- ♦ It has been narrated in numerous Ahadith that reciting: لَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ الْعَلِيِّ الْعَظِيمِ, removes grief.

[There is no strength nor power except that of Allah The High, the Magnificent.]

- ♦ The sand of the grave of Imam Husain (a.s.) — the Doyen of Martyrs — is curative, provided you have faith in it and you do not take it more than the size of a pea.
- ♦ If a person visits a sick Muslim brother 70,000 angels send greetings to him on that day. Request your sick brother to pray for you, because the prayer of a sick person is like the prayer of the angels and is accepted soon.
- ♦ When you visit a sick person take with you some apples or quinces or citrons or scent (for him).

Lesson 45

The Morning Of A Muslim Family

Masood is a member of a Muslim household. It is a very pious household whose members are very fond of Islamic teachings and modes of worship. So to say it is an ideal Muslim household, which is praised and respected by all. Just as their views and beliefs are pure, their clothes are also clean but simple. They do not believe in unnecessary ostentation or extravagance.

Masood's parents get up early in the morning before sunrise. They also awaken Masood and other children with great love and kindness. As soon as the children get up they say Salam to elders. Thereafter the entire household begins preparing for prayer.

While preparing for prayer they first attend to ablution. After completing ablution they begin their prayer. They perform different stages of prayer very respectfully. They keep their attention directed towards Allah only, and do not do anything which may make their thoughts go astray.

Masood and the other members of the family are well aware of the importance of prayer. They know that while performing prayer, they converse with Allah and seek His help for doing good things and refraining from evil. They also know that besides being an

obligatory worship, Salat makes one punctual and regular.

After offering their prayer they all sit together in the form of a circle. One of them then recites verses from the Holy Quran and others listen with due respect and attention.

After performing their prayers and reciting the prayers from the Holy Quran, all of them have their breakfast. When breakfast is over, Masood's father and elder brother leave for office, Masood and his younger sister go to school and his mother gets herself busy in household work.

Thus this fortunate household commences its day with the worship of Almighty Allah who is the Creator and Nourisher of all.

Lesson 46

The Daily Programme of A Muslim

The schools of Masood and Zahra are quite close to each other. Both of them, therefore, leave home together. They are very good mannered children and cover the distance in a well disciplined manner. They always walk on footpath as and when it is necessary to cross the road, they observe the traffic rules. If they meet any elderly person or a relative on the way they wish him respectfully. They treat their classmates with love and affection. Both of them learn their lessons very carefully and are very respectful to their teachers.

Masood's father is employed in a firm situated in the business area. He leaves his house in the morning reciting the name of Allah, and reaches his business counter on time. He attends to his work very honestly and carefully and is very polite to the customers. It is due to this quality of his that one sees a queue of customers at his counter, which results in a handsome profit to the firm.

Masood has an elder brother also who works in an office. He, too, leaves home at sunrise reciting the Name of Allah and works hard throughout the day. He does not believe in availing of leave without real need. All his colleagues and officers praise him for his

punctuality, honesty and hard work.

Masood's mother is responsible for looking after the younger children and the household affairs. She is a very skilful woman. She cooks the meals and cleanses the house. Their house is always neat and tidy.

There are still some jobs in the house for which Masood's mother cannot spare time. In carrying out such jobs, she is helped by other members of the family as and when they return from their work or school. Thus all the affairs of the household are looked after properly and in a cheerful manner.

<i>A well managed household is a paradise on earth.</i>
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Lesson 47

The Programme Of A Muslim Family

When Masood and other members of the family return home, they take care to perform their prayer at the appropriate time. They consider it necessary, before everything else, to present themselves before Almighty Allah, and seek His blessings and forgiveness. When they have offered their prayer they have their meals. Thereafter, they rest for some time. When their rest is over, Masood's father and brother return to their work and Masood and his sister busy themselves with their books. They revise their lessons and do their home-work. If they do not understand some lesson they seek their mother's help. After completing their studies they play for some time with their friends.

Masood's father and brother return from their work before evening. After sunset, all the members of the family perform their prayer. They always remember Allah and consider it necessary to offer their prayer at the appropriate time.

When all have offered their prayer, Masood's mother serves dinner. The entire family has the meal with great pleasure and relish. All of them, whether old or young, specially observe the table manners. The children invariably present every dish in the first instance to their elders. When the hunger for one or two

morsels is still left, they finish their meals. They know that according to the hadith of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) observance of this practice keeps one healthy. After having their meal all of them thank Allah and then wash their hands and mouth with water.

After having their meal they discuss various matters for some time. Then they prepare to go to sleep. They go to bed early so that they may get up early in the morning.

This family leads a very happy, peaceful, disciplined and active life. The main source of this peace and prosperity is their firm faith in Allah and their observance of the commandments of Islam. They have moulded their lives according to a specific programme. They, therefore, experience no difficulty in the performance of their duties and carry out all their jobs in a disciplined manner. They always try to do good deeds and never forget Allah. In this lies the secret of their successful lives.

<i>Discipline and faith ensure a prosperous life.</i>

Lesson 48

Prophet - The Model Of Goodness

The behaviour and personality of Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) are the best examples to follow in life. A companion of his, who spent full ten years with him, has said:

“Throughout my stay with him I never heard an indecent word from his lips and never found him rude to anyone. He spoke very politely. He was kind to everyone”.

Although Hazrat Muhammad (s. a. w.a.) was the Prophet of Allah and had been appointed by Allah to guide the people, yet he was not ashamed of doing his work with his own hands. He assisted the members of his family in household work and performed the jobs of other deserving persons with great pleasure. He mended his clothes and shoes. He also took part in the construction of *Masjid al-Nabi* in *Madina* along with his companions.

His dress was always clean, though simple. He was very mindful of cleanliness. He washed his hands and mouth before and after taking his meals.

He was so kind and generous that he never refused a reasonable request of any person. He often distributed edibles among others and went without meals himself. He always helped the needy and

the poor and went to the houses of the sick to enquire about their health. As and when he met anyone he said ‘*Salamun Alaikum*’. He always spoke with a smiling face.

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) was a model of all virtues and qualities of a believer described in the Holy Quran. None can describe him better than Allah who has said he possessed the noblest character.

The personality of our prophet is an excellent model to follow.

Lesson 49

Respect For Parents

After Allah, the Prophet (s.a.w.a.), and the Imams (a.s.) (appointed by Allah for our guidance), there is no one as kind to us as our parents. They rear and nourish us, educate us and prepare us for the struggle of life. They feel true joy when we achieve something. They suffer for our welfare but never mention it like others.

We must be thankful to Allah for having granted us a great blessing like parents. We should also be grateful to our parents for their kindness. We should serve them sincerely. We should keep them happy and should never disobey them. Allah has commanded us in the Holy Quran to be good to our parents.

In the battle fought by the unbelievers against Islam, some men belonging to the tribe of Lady Halima, the foster mother of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.), were captured as prisoners of war, and a large quantity of booty also fell into the hands of the Muslims. Later some leading men of that tribe came into the presence of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and said:

“O Muhammad! Kindly remember the days when one of the women of our tribe nurtured you during your childhood and we expect you to recompense us for the services rendered to you by

her.”

On hearing this, the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) immediately released the prisoners who had come in his share and also returned the share of booty which he had received. Besides this, he also advised his companions to act on the example set by him.

The above incident clearly indicates the love and reward to which our parents are entitled. Allah too is not pleased with those who do not keep their parents happy. The Holy Quran says that Allah is never pleased with those who do not keep their parents happy and pleased.

<i>Worship no one but Allah, and respect your parents.</i>
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Questions:

1. What do our parents do for us?
2. Why should we respect and help our parents?
3. What treatment has Islam recommended for parents?

Lesson 50

Faith And Hardwork

One day Imam Ali (a.s.) was carrying a heavy bag filled with date seeds to the farms near the city of Madina. Some one asked him, “What is inside this heavy bag?”

Imam Ali (a.s.) replied, “*If Allah wishes, a few date palm trees.*”

As Imam Ali (a.s.) had complete faith in Allah and never shirked hard work, he was hoping that plants would grow from the date seeds and become trees. And that was exactly what happened. Some time after sowing the date seeds, plants sprouted out of the earth.

Islam orders us to work hard having full confidence in Allah’s blessing. We should be rest assured that if our faith is perfect, Allah will not let our efforts go in vain and will grant us success. On the other hand, we should also remember that we shall not succeed if we shirk hard work, and waste our time.

It is not necessary that one’s effort should be rewarded immediately. The law of Nature is that at times man has to face failures as well. However, people who are steadfast in their faith and sincerely believe in their object are not discouraged by the temporary set-backs. One the other hand, they continue to work

hard to achieve their goal.

Remember! In the long run, every difficult task becomes easy and profitable for those who have complete faith in Allah.

<i>Greatness lies in hard work.</i>
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Questions:

1. What was Imam Ali (a.s.) carrying to the farms and why?
2. What is the secret of success of a Muslim?
3. When does a difficult task become easy and profitable?

Lesson 51

Help Yourself

During the time of Imam Ali (a.s.), there were some people who never worked and lived a very miserable and unhappy life. One day Imam Ali (a.s.) asked them, “Where from do you find money to support yourselves and your families?”

They replied, “We have no means of livelihood but we depend on Allah.”

Imam Ali (a.s.) asked, “*How can you live by merely depending on Allah?*”

They replied, “If we lay hands on some money we spend it, and if we do not get it, we wait for it”.

This reply surprised Imam Ali (a.s.) very much. He (a.s.) said to them,

“You are very much mistaken. Faith in Allah and dependence on Him does not mean that one should not work in the hope that Allah will provide him his living. One who depends on others and is a burden on the society is devoid of the blessings of Allah. On the other hand, faith in Allah means that one should work as hard as he can, and simultaneously hope and pray for Allah’s

blessing.

The Holy Quran says,

“If you decide to do something, have firm faith in Allah”.

<i>Allah hates an idle person.</i>

Questions:

1. What was the condition of those people who professed faith in Allah but did not work?
2. What is the true meaning of faith in Allah?

Lesson 52

Respect For Others

The prayer time was drawing near. The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) was sitting in the Masjid in Madina with some of his followers and was speaking to them. By and by, other people also began entering the Masjid to pray with him, and also to benefit from his valuable sayings.

One of the entrants was a rich man wearing a very costly garment. He came and sat just in front of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.). In the mean time, another man also came in and sat by the side of the rich man. The garments and appearance of the new-comer conveyed his weak financial position. The rich man disliked his sitting by his side in an unconcerned manner and pulled his clothes away from him.

This action on the part of the rich man was strongly disapproved by the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) – the greatest benefactor of humanity, the torch-bearer of equality, fraternity and justice. He addressed him in these words:

“I have noticed that you have pulled away your clothes from this man. What is the reason for this? Is it because you are afraid that some of your wealth might go to him, or that his poverty might

penetrate into you?”

The rich man was noble-minded by nature. He at once realized his mistake and said:

“O’ Prophet of Allah! I admit that I have made a great error. To atone for this, I am prepared to give half of my wealth to this brother of mine”.

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) then asked the other person, “*What do you say about it?*”

To this he replied: “O’ Prophet of Allah! I accept the apology of my brother and forgive him. His wealth is not, however, acceptable to me, because I am content with the living earned by hard work. I do not want to become rich without doing hard work.”

<i>To err is human, to forgive divine.</i>

Questions:

1. Why did the rich man pull away his clothes?
2. Did the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) approve of the action of the rich man?
3. Why did the poor decline to share the wealth of the rich?

Lesson 53

Need Of Friends

There is no one in the world that does not need friends. The more friends we have the more successful our lives will be. A learned man has said, *“One who thinks that he does not need friends is like the simpleton who tells the sun that he does not care whether it rises or sets”*.

It should also be remembered that it is necessary to be careful in the selection of friends. Making more friends does not mean that we should have firm relations with anyone and everyone. If we befriend unmannerly and lazy people, their bad habits will gradually affect us and we shall become lazy and worthless like them. This will make us lose our esteem in the eyes of others.

There is a well-known proverb: *“A man is known by the company he keeps”*. We should, therefore, befriend those people who are good mannered, pious and hardworking. Islam says that two companions should act as preachers for each other and each one of them should point out the short comings of the other. So by associating with such people we shall overcome our weaknesses and advance on the path of progress.

It should also not be forgotten that making friends is not sufficient,

but it is also necessary to retain the friendship. This would be possible only when we behave with them properly and sincerely.

Imam Ali (a.s.) said:

“A man who has no friends is very poor. And poorer than him, is he who cannot retain the friendship and loses his friends”.

<i>A man is known by the company he keeps</i>

Questions:

1. Why do we need friends?
2. What type of people should we befriend?
3. How should we treat our friends and why?

Lesson 54

Service To Humanity

It is one of the basic commandments of Islam that we should help and serve others. This is what we have been ordered by Allah and His Prophet (s.a.w.a.) to do, and this is what we have been taught by our Imams (a.s.). It is our duty to help a person who is in difficulty, whether he be a Muslim or a non-Muslim.

One day, a friend of Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.) came from some other place to see him in Madina, where the Imam (a.s.) was then staying. In the course of conversation, he said to Imam (a.s.), “O’ holy Imam! Some nomads are staying in our town. They come around every now and then seeking help. Unfortunately they are not Muslims. Should we help them?”

The Imam (a.s.) replied,

“It is our duty to help every needy person. It makes no difference whether he is a Muslim or a non-Muslim.”

Islam considers those rich persons to be virtuous who meet all financial obligations consisting of Zakat and the right of the relatives, beggars and the needy.

As and when Imam Ali (a.s.) appointed anyone to the governorships of any province, he used to give the person a

number of instructions. One of them was this:

“Always give people their rights, whether they be Muslims or unbelievers. If they are Muslims, they are your brethren in faith and even if they are not Muslims, they are your fellow beings”.

<i>It is our duty to help every needy person.</i>

Questions:

1. Is it the duty of Muslims to help the needy even if they are non-Muslims?
2. What instructions did Imam Ali (a.s.) give to the governors regarding human rights?

Lesson 55

Humility

One day, Imam Musa al-Kazim (a.s.) chanced to pass by the tent of dark-skinned nomad. He went up to him and said, ‘Salamum Alaikum’. Then he enquired about his health and welfare, and conversed with him for sometime. When the Holy Imam (a.s.) took his leave and bade him good-bye, he added, *“If there is anything I can do for you, I am quite willing to do it”*.

When the disciples of the Imam (a.s.) saw him treating that man in such a friendly manner, they said, “O’ Holy Imam! You went up to that humble and ordinary man and conversed with him. While departing also you told him very warmly that if there was anything you could do for him, you would be quite willing to do it. Is it appropriate for a person like you to go and meet such an ordinary man and converse with him in such a cordial manner?”

The Holy Imam (a.s.) replied,

“You forget that he, too, is a servant of Allah and Allah has created all men equal to one another. Furthermore, since he is also a Muslim, he is our brother-in-faith. Besides this, you should also remember that the circumstances of any person do not remain the same for

ever. It is possible that we may be obliged to seek assistance of the same man tomorrow, who stands in need of our help today. If we withhold our help from him now, it will be embarrassing for us to face him at the time of our own need.”

Imam Ali (a.s.) quotes from the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) saying:

“A Muslim should not leave his brother-in-faith alone to face hardships and should consider that thing for him which he considers to be good for himself and should not desire that thing for him which he does not desire for himself.”

<i>A Muslim should protect the honour of his brother-in-faith.</i>

Questions:

1. What did Imam al-Kazim (a.s.) tell the nomad?
2. Why did the Imam's (a.s.) disciples object to his associating with the nomad?
3. What did the Imam (a.s.) tell his disciples to satisfy them?

Lesson 56

The Secret Of A Successful Life

The secret of human success lies in keeping things properly. People who keep their belongings in proper order are always successful in life. On the other hand, those who lack this quality can never achieve success.

Punctuality and regularity in all activities are very important factors of success. We should do everything at its proper time. We should chalk out programming for our work, games, outings, rest and sleep, and adhere to it strictly. We should also perform our prayers regularly and at the proper time. By doing so, we shall be able to perform every task in time and shall not face any embarrassment. We should never postpone today's work until tomorrow. Doing so is the cause of all troubles.

Time is something very precious. It is a well known saying that, 'Time and tide wait for no man'. We should, therefore appreciate the value of our time and should not waste the time of others. If we make an appointment with another person, we should make it a point to reach the place agreed upon, at the appointed time or minute or so earlier. Similarly, if we undertake to do some task for somebody, we should do it properly and on time.

It is necessary to do every job neatly and in a proper manner. When you return from school, you should not throw your uniform to one comer and your books into another. The best way is to request your mother to fix a place for your books and other things and to keep them in a proper way.

An orderly life is the keynote of success.

Questions:

1. What should one do to lead a successful life?
2. Why should we appreciate the value of time?
3. How should we keep our things?

Lesson 57

Sympathy For Animals

Man is Allah's noblest creature. A glance at the universe shows that he is the central figure in it and that Almighty Allah has created him to make gradual progress. It also appears that all other things are subordinate to him and have been created to assist him in achieving this object. The animals form an important part of such useful things.

Man utilizes animals for various purposes. He uses some of them for the purpose of cultivation and others as means of transport. Some animals provide him with meat as well as milk, which is a very wholesome human diet. He also uses their hides and skins to manufacture various articles. There are also many jobs for the completion of which man needs the service of animals.

As we derive so many benefits from the animals, it is also our duty to protect and nourish them. The commands of Islam in this behalf are very important and clear. The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) of Islam has said: *"It is the duty of those who use animals for transport purposes to provide them with enough fodder and water and take proper care of them. They should not load them beyond their capacity and should not harm them"*.

As explained above, it is our duty to treat the animals sympathetically and kindly. We should take particular care to feed the domestic animals properly and accommodate them at a comfortable place. We should not be cruel to them. It should also be remembered that the Holy Imams, too, took special care about the comfort of the animals. Good treatment meted out by us to animals is also likely to be reflected in our treatment of human beings.

<i>Islam has ordered us to treat the animals kindly.</i>

Questions:

1. What benefits do we derive from animals?
2. What instructions did the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) give about the animals?
3. What opinion will you form about a person who does not treat animals kindly?

