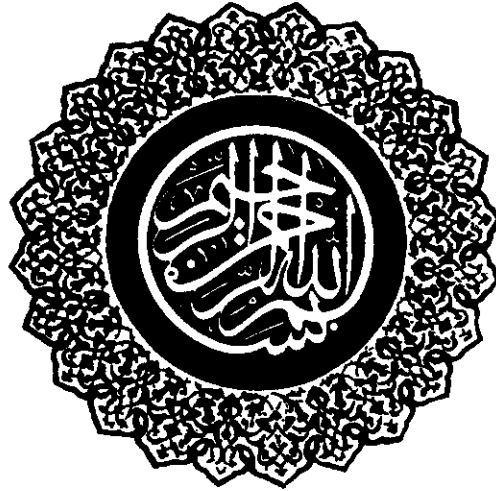


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The Children's Book of Islam

Aytaullah Ibrahim Amini



*In the Name of Allah,
the Merciful, the Compassionate*

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THE CHILDREN'S BOOK ON ISLAM

BOOK FOUR

**By
Ayatullah Ibrahim Amini**

آموزش دین / جلد ۴
به زبان انگلیسی
علامه ابراهیم امینی

The Children's Book on Islam
Book Four

Ayatullah Ibrahim Amini

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Foreword

Children are invaluable assets of future generations. Islam has given particular attention for their education and training as well as for their respect, love and affection. Islam provides detailed instructions for preservation of children's rights and emphasizes their guidance so that they could endeavour for perfection as human beings with an aim of worshipping Allah and serving the humanity.

A large number of Muslim children receive their education whose medium of instructions is English language. Therefore, there is a great need for preparing suitable Islamic books in English for the benefit of such children and others who feel interested in these books. Earlier, an attempt was made in this regard; however, it was not very successful. The I.P. Co. takes pleasure in announcing the publication of four books in series in English which have been exclusively written for children in Persian by an eminent theologian and learned senior professor of *Al-Hawzah al-'Ilmiyyah* (Theological Centre), Qum, Iran, Hujjatul-'Islām Ib-rāhīm Amīnī, who is an author of several important books on Islam.

These books have been written in a lucid language in a form of different lessons on Islam. At the end of each lesson, questions and exercises have been given which would be helpful for children in their learning and practice of each lesson. Illustrative photographs

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have also been included to make the book interesting and entertaining for children. An attempt has been made that this complete set of four books may impart necessary Islamic education to children.

The I.P. Co. hopes that these books would be well received by all concerned, particularly by children, parents and teachers, whose constructive suggestions would be most welcomed for incorporations in and modifications of subsequent editions of these books.

International Publishing Co.

LESSON ONE

Learning about Allah from a Science Book

When I arrived home from school one day, my mother asked me what lesson I had that afternoon. I told her that it was a science lesson, pertaining to the digestion of food. The teacher asked us if we knew about the gullet, the stomach and the intestines, and also if we knew how the digestion of food takes place. Since none of us really knew about these things, the teacher told us to find out all about them for tomorrow's lesson.

Hearing this my mother told me to take out the science book, and she took a large book from her bookshelf. It had many diagrams. Then we sat down to study these things together.

She pointed to one of the diagrams. "Do you see this bag-like thing here?", she asked. "The food we eat all goes into that bag. It's called the stomach. Do you see how the food gets into stomach?"

I looked closely at the diagram. "It must go through this pipe", I said.

"That's right", said the mother. "Its name is the gullet, and it connects the throat to the stomach. And this pipe connects the throat to the lungs."

I looked at the diagram. The mother said: "When we breathe the air it goes to the lungs through this passage; do you know its name?"

"It's called the windpipe", I said.

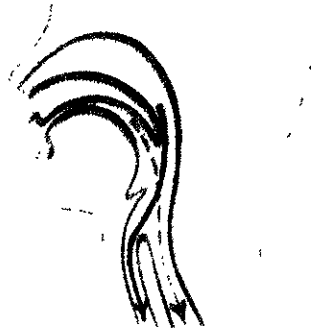
"That's right", said the mother. "This pipe, is for the passage of food, and this pipe is for the passage of air."

I then asked a question, "What would happen if food went down the windpipe?"

Simple, my mother said: “We would suffocate and die.”

“So how come I’m not dead,” I replied. ‘I never knew that food mustn’t go down the windpipe’.

“Ah”, said my mother. The story of how we swallow food is amazing. Look at this diagram. See, the throat has four passages. One passage leads to the nose, one to the mouth, one to the lungs and one to the stomach.



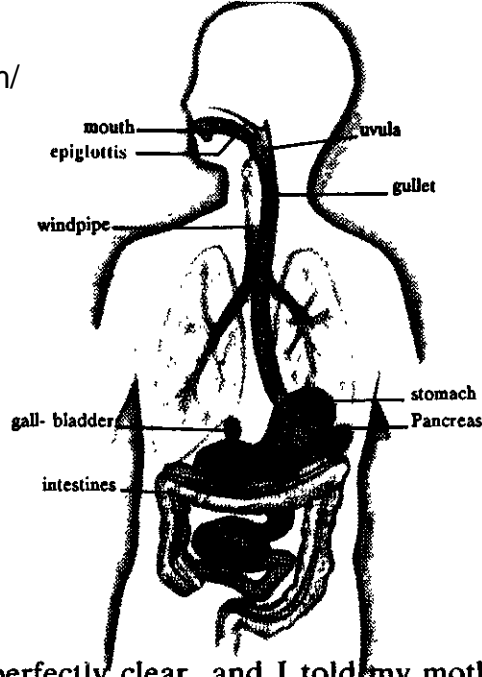
When we want to swallow food, only the passage to the stomach must be open, otherwise the food would get stuck in our windpipe and we wouldn’t be able to breathe. Therefore, our body has been provided with two little flaps that enable us to breathe. One of these shuts the windpipe, the other shuts the passage to the nose. The one that shuts the windpipe is called the *epiglottis*, and the one that shuts the passage to the nose is called the *uvula*.

We are entirely dependent on these two flaps. Without them, we would suffocate with our first mouthful of food.

I’m glad I have them too, I said, or else by now I would have been dead.

Then my mother said. “Do you think that these two flaps came into existence just by themselves?”

I thought about it for a moment, and then the answer



became perfectly clear, and I told my mother; “No, since both of them have a special job to do they couldn’t have just developed by chance. It is obvious that a wise being has created them for us.”

“Well done”, said my mother, “You are exactly right”. Allah created us and knew everything that we would need, just as He knows everything. He knew that we would need the epiglottis, for we must both eat and breathe at the same time; and He knew that the food must not enter the windpipe. So He created the epiglottis for us, and now, whenever we wish to swallow a mouthful of food, the epiglottis does its work and automatically closes so the food stays out of the windpipe.

We have been created by Allah, the All-Knowing and the All-Powerful. He foresaw all the things that we would be in need of, and He created them for us.

Let us look at another example. In the stomach wall—which is a kind of lining in the stomach—Allah created thousands of glands. Each of these glands

secretes a special liquid onto the food we eat, and this liquid makes the food easier to digest. He also created the intestines, and when the food leaves the stomach it enters these intestines, and there the food enters the next stage of digestion. He created for us two organs called the gall-bladder and the pancreas, and while the food is in the intestines, these secrete some chemicals which make it easier to digest the food.

“In the wall of the intestines, He created thousands of tiny glands which again secrete fluids as part of the process of digestion. Finally, when the food is perfectly digested, the intestinal wall picks out its essential ingredients, and these are picked up by the blood stream and circulated all round the body.

So you see, my dear, this well-ordered and well-planned system of digestion has obviously not come into existence at random. No, indeed, Allah our Wise and Merciful Lord thought of it and created it for our benefit.

By eating our food we gain strength and energy which enables us to stay alive. Allah has bestowed this strength and energy partly through the food we eat and partly through the digestive system by which we digest it, and in gratitude to Him we use this strength in obedience to Him. We accept His commands, we refrain from sins and crimes, bad manners and morals, and we try to make Allah pleased with us and grant us more blessings in this world and in the Hereafter.

Here is a diagram of the intricate and orderly digestive system that Allah knew we would need and created for us. Is it possible that such a well-planned system could have come into being by chance?

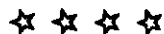
Write down the names of the parts of the digestive system alongside the lines.

Questions

1. Why has the epiglottis been created?
2. Why has the uvula been created?
3. Can we eat without these two flaps?
4. Do you think that the epiglottis and the uvula have come into existence by themselves?... Why not?
5. What parts of the body go to make up the digestive system?
6. How is the food, that we eat, digested?
7. What does the symmetry of the digestive system tell us?
8. What must we do to enjoy more of Allah's pleasure and blessings in this world and in the Hereafter?

✿ Exercises

1. Read this lesson to the members of your family.
2. Think over three more questions from this lesson and ask your friends to answer them.
3. Write a summary of the lesson.



LESSON TWO

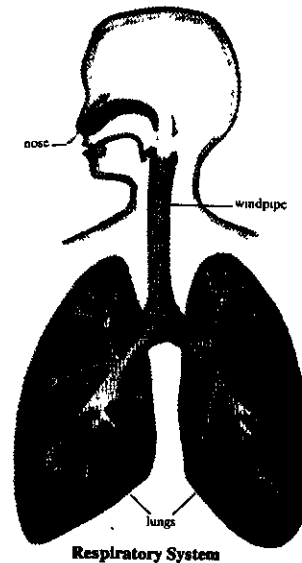
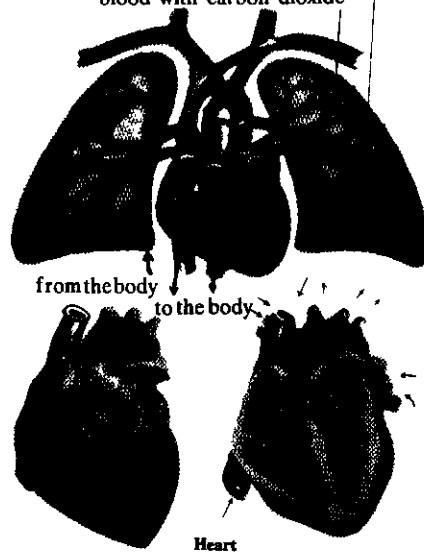
The Signs of Allah

When I went to school that morning, everyone was talking about the accident. One of the boys in the class, Aḥmad, had suffocated.

One of the boys asked the teacher: “Why did Aḥmad’s hands and face turn blue, and what is meant by suffocation?”

The teacher thought for a moment and then said: “Since you all want to know the answers to these questions, we would better begin with our lesson on blood circulation and respiration. I suggest we begin it tomorrow. But I will need your help; who is ready to bring to the class the heart and lungs of a sheep?”

Two of the boys promised to bring them, and the next day everything was set for the lesson. First, the teacher dissected the heart with a sharp knife, and showed its different sections to the class, explaining each of their functions. Then he did the same with the lungs. By this time we were all aware of the importance of the heart and lungs, and we knew the answers to our former questions. Then the teacher handed out copies of the following summary which he had written on the same subject.



Blood Circulation and the Respiratory Systems

In this lesson you will learn some of the secrets of your body, and you will understand further the harmony and symmetry of the parts and systems of the body. You will also realise that the body itself is one of the signs of Allah's power and wisdom and so you will learn more about Allah.

You all know that the blood in our bodies is constantly circulating, but do you know what purpose this "blood circulation" serves? Just like a stream or a river, blood flows to each and every cell of the body, and it brings it food and oxygen.

Oxygen is very crucial for life. If the cells of the body do not receive oxygen constantly, we would immediately die because it is oxygen that maintains our body's heat and energy.

Oxygen is circulated in the body by the red blood cells. These cells swim in the bloodstream. Of course, blood cannot circulate in the body just by itself. This

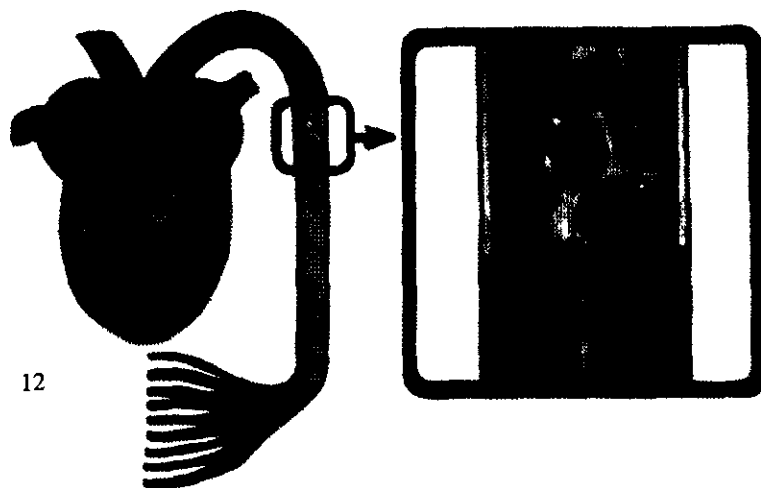
is accomplished by a very strong pump, and this pump works regularly to push the blood throughout the whole of the body. Can you guess its name?

Yes, the name of this pump is the heart.

With each beat of the heart, the red blood cells with their oxygen enter the largest of the body's arteries. This artery divides into different branches, and each of these branches in turn divides into other, narrower branches. The narrowest of these branches are called the capillaries.

When the blood is flowing through the arteries, we call it arterial blood, and this blood flows to the tissue cells of the body. There it does two things. Firstly, it gives the tissue cells the oxygen it is carrying, and this keeps the cells alive. Secondly, it takes away from the tissue cells carbon dioxide, which is a poisonous gas. This gas makes the blood cells dark and dull, and if they were to remain like this they (blood cells) would die, and then we would die too.

In order to remain alive, the blood cells need oxygen. First, they must return to the heart, and for this they must travel along different passages, for they cannot return through the arteries. Our wonderful Creator foresaw this need and provided our bodies with another kind of channel called veins. The blood passes through



these veins with its poisonous gas, until it reaches the heart. Amazingly, He created tiny valves so that the blood in the veins, does not mix with the blood in the arteries.

When the blood reaches the heart, it must not mix with the fresh blood to be pumped into the arteries. Therefore, Allah has created a kind of thick, strong wall in the heart to keep the two types of blood apart. This “wall” is called the ‘septum’.

But, of course, there is no oxygen in the heart, and the tired and used blood that carries only gas must still make its way to the lungs. Where the blood is revived by the oxygen in the air we breathe.

With one powerful beat, the heart sends the used venous blood from the heart to the lungs. There, they take the oxygen they need from the air and release the carbon dioxide which is expelled from the body by the lungs. This is what happens when we breathe out.

This symmetrical system of blood circulation and respiration has obviously come into existence according to a pre-arranged and well-thought out plan. The design of this system is so intricate and precise that it cannot, by any means, come into being all by itself and at random. Matter by itself has no intelligence to design such complex and intricate structures. Therefore, who—other than Allah—could have created such a beautiful system?

In this way, when we study systems like the respiration and blood circulation, we are struck by their perfect symmetry and harmony, and we come to realise that all of this is a sign of the greatness of our Creator. We become more aware of His countless blessings, we know Him better; we worship Him more sincerely; and we are always ready to praise Him and serve Him.

Questions

1. What are the benefits of the circulation of blood throughout our bodies?
2. What is the function of red blood cells?
3. How does the blood circulate?
4. Through what passages do the used blood cells return to the heart?
5. Does the used blood of the veins mix with the fresh blood of the arteries?
6. Where do the blood cells receive their oxygen?
7. What would happen if the blood cells received no air?
8. How does oxygen enter the lungs?
9. Can the blood circulation system and the respiratory system come into being by themselves?
10. What does the precise symmetry of the human body indicate to us?
11. What should we do in return for all these blessings?

LESSON THREE

The Green Leaves of Plants: Another Lesson in Theology

All of us need food. Without food we cannot stay alive or do any work. Trees and plants produce food for us, and the green leaves of plants are food-producing factories.

Firstly, the plants take water and minerals from the earth through their roots, and then they pass this through their stem, or trunk in the case of trees, and deliver this to their leaves.

Secondly, the leaves take the carbon dioxide gas from the air through tiny pores, so small that we cannot see them, and they also take light and energy from the sun.

Then the leaf factories go to work, and soon they produce food. Some of it they eat themselves so that



they remain healthy and grow, and what is left they save for us, or for the animals.

Sheep and cattle need food. They eat grass or grain and produce milk, and we drink this milk or we use it to make yoghurt, butter or cheese, and we also eat their meat. Another animal that eats grain is the hen, and this provides us with meat and eggs.



All animals need plants, and all of them depend on plants for their food. Human beings depend for their food on plants and animals; animals depend on plants; and plants depend on water, soil, carbon dioxide and sunlight. Without these things there would be no plants, no animals, and no human beings. Without plants and animals, what could we eat?

Who has created the sun to shine on the world and give it light and energy so that the plants can exist and produce food for us?

Who has produced plants and trees and made their beautiful leaves able to produce food for us?

The one who has created all this for us is Allah, the All-Knowing and Almighty, Who is aware of everything and in control of all things. Allah wants good for us and foresaw all the things we would need and created them for us. In turn, we love Him, thank Him for His blessings, accept His guidance and strive to put it into practice.

After all, who could be a better guide for our lives than Allah?

Questions



1. What is bread made of?
2. What things are necessary for the wheat plant to produce wheat?
3. Could the wheat plant exist without sunlight?
4. If there were no leaves to make food for us, what could we eat?
5. Who has foreseen our needs and created the world for us?
6. In return for these blessings, what is our duty?

✿ Exercises

1. Conduct some experiments and find out how leaves purify the air.
2. Read the lesson to one of your friends and then ask him to read it to you.
3. Think over some more questions about the lesson and ask your friends to answer them.
4. Write a summary of the lesson and explain the important points.



Green Tree Leaves

Look at the kindness of Allah, bear this world in
mind.

Everything He created, just to serve mankind.

* *

How fine it is, when in the leaves of the tree.

The power of Allah is so clear to see.

* *

Allah's peerless power, His craft so keen,
Makes a tired old tree, bloom and turn green.

* *

The sun's warm glow, the soft fall of the rain,
Livens up the garden, freshens the orchard again.

* *

From the heart of this dark soil, Allah so kind,
Brings forth fruits, gifts for mankind.

* *

Allah does all this work, and so that people know,
Sometimes, He makes it summer, sometimes the
season of snow.

* *

We are all in need of Him, He in need of none,
Allah's kindness descends on every one.

* *

So be grateful for His kindness, and be happy too
And He will send down His blessings, plentifully on
you.

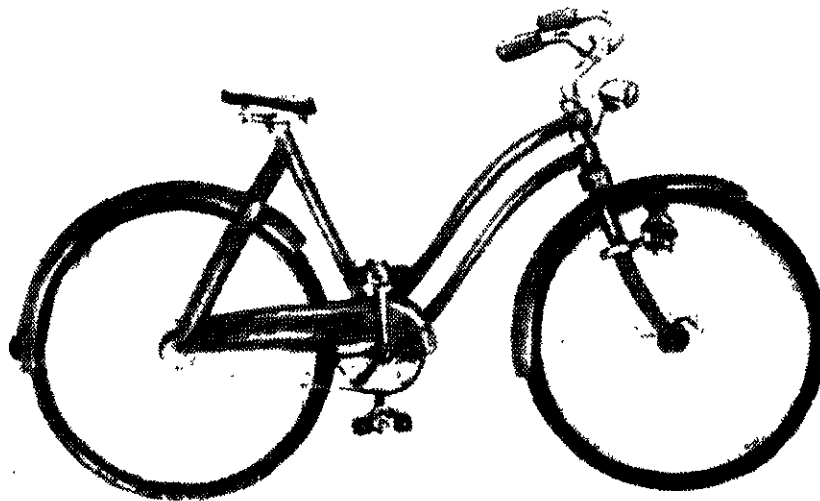
سُبْحَانَكَ اللَّهُمَّ رَبِّ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
رَبِّ الْعَرْشِ الْمَجِيدِ

LESSON FOUR

Can We See Allah?

Look at this picture of a bicycle, can you see all the different parts? There is a lamp, handlebars, a frame, pedals, a chain, wheels, etc; but does the bicycle have reasoning too? Can it understand?

Of course, not. Clearly, a bicycle has no understanding and reasoning.





This is a picture of Maḥmūd, Maḥmūd is himself drawing a picture. Look at the fine picture of a pigeon he has drawn. Does Maḥmūd have reasoning and understanding? Of course he does, but can you see it?

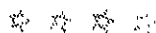
We cannot see Maḥmūd's reasoning and understanding with our eyes, but does this mean that he has none? I am sure you will agree that it is impossible to see reasoning and understanding with the eyes; but we do see their effects, and because we see the effects of Maḥmūd's reasoning and understanding, we realise that they must exist.

Reasoning and understanding cannot be seen by the eyes, for the eyes can only see matter, that is material objects. Reasoning and understanding are not material objects and so the eyes cannot see them. The eyes and the other senses can only perceive matter, and what is not matter and material, they cannot perceive. Instead, we discover their existence through perceiving their signs and traces.

Allah, our lovely God, is not matter. He is above and beyond matter. For this reason He can't be seen with the eyes, nor witnessed by the rest of the five senses. But when we witness this magnificent world of creation, and notice that it is full of signs and traces of His Might, we understand that He exists, and realise that He has created and is in charge of this great universe.

Questions

1. What do you see when you look at your friend?
 2. Can you see his reasoning and understanding?
 3. So, how do you know he has reasoning and understanding?
 4. Would it be right to say that he is without reasoning and understanding, just because you cannot see them?
 5. What can we perceive with our five senses?
 6. Is it possible for our eyes to see Allah?
 7. Can we perceive Allah with our other four senses?
- Do you know why?
8. Would it be right to say that since we cannot see Allah, therefore He does not exist?
 9. Think of some of the things that we know exist even though we cannot see them?



LESSON FIVE

A Prayer in Verse

Allah, Allah, Holy and Great,
Allah, Allah, no peer or mate.
Lord of the seas and of the skies,
Lord of the vales, and of the rise.
From You fine birds have the ability,



To move their wings with such nobility.
Hens, ducks, pigeons, too,
All different kinds, all of a different hue.
That which is me, my soul, body and face,
A clear sign of You, O Lord, a trace.
For this, my struggles day and night,
Are spent knowing You, Your Glory and Might.
I'm Your humble slave and servant,
O Lord, Powerful and Observant.
From the store of Your kindness and affection
Show me the right path, the true direction.
Help me, Allah, Mighty and Great.
Till my knowledge of You becomes innate.
Till my heart overflows with the love that is due,
And my soul separates from all except you.

✿ Exercises

1. Memorize this poem and practise reciting it.
2. Recite it to your friends, and try to recite it in harmony with them.
3. Recite the poem to one of your family members and explain it to him.

LESSON SIX

Allah Is not Matter

Books, pens, tables, stones, trees, the sun, the earth and things like these are all material, that is, they are made of matter. Light and even air are material. All matter needs space, in other words a place to be in, and matter cannot exist without space. But matter is confined to one place, and cannot be in two places at the same time.

For example, our bodies are made up of matter; when we are at school, we cannot be at home and when we are at home, we cannot be at school. When we are at home, we cannot see what is happening at school; and when we are at school, we cannot see what is happening at home.

Material things can be seen by the eyes and felt by the hands. The things we see or feel are all matter, even air and light. Now, think about these two questions:

- (a) Is Allah matter?
- (b) Can Allah be seen by the eyes?

Allah is perfect and without any needs, and His Wisdom and Power are limitless. Therefore, He is in need of no object and no person. Allah is not matter, because if He were matter He would need space, and Allah is in need of nothing. Allah has Himself created

space.

Allah is not matter, because if He were matter He would be here and not there, or there but not somewhere else, and He could not have created the things that were elsewhere.

Allah is not matter, for He is not situated in a certain place so as not to be elsewhere, rather everyone and everything has been created by Him.

For Allah there is no here and there, this place and that place, for to Him all places are as one. He is with everyone and is informed of all places.

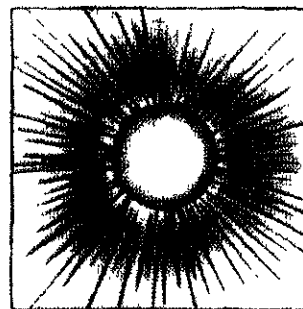
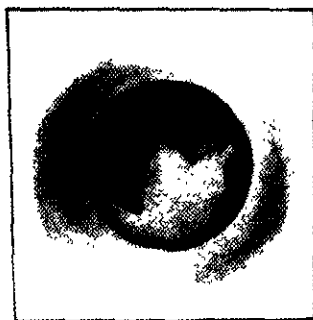
Allah is not matter, and He occupies no space, neither in the heavens nor in the earth.

Allah is not matter, and He cannot be seen with the eyes or felt by the hand.

Allah is not light, for light is material and is in need of space, but Allah needs nothing.

Allah has created space. Allah has created eyes and hands. Allah has created light.

The limitless power of Allah is near everything and every person, and He is informed of every place and every person.



Questions

1. Count the material objects around you, do they need space?
2. Look at a chair, can it be in two places at the same time?
3. Can you think of any material object that does not need space
4. Is Allah matter? Does He need space? Can you say why?
5. Is it possible for the eyes to see Allah? Do you know why?

✿ Exercises

1. Write down these questions together with their answers in your best handwriting in your notebook.
2. Recite the lesson aloud.
3. Write a summary of the lesson and read it to your friends.
4. Think over some new questions and ask your friends to answer them.

LESSON SEVEN

Leaders Appointed by the God:

Prophet Ibrāhīm (AS)

The Prophet Ibrāhīm (AS) lived long ago. In those days the people were ignorant and illiterate. They had totally forgotten the teachings of the previous prophets, and they had lost the way and tradition of worshipping Allah. Instead, they worshipped idols. They made statues of people or animals out of stone, wood, silver or gold, and they worshipped them. In front of these lifeless, powerless objects they would prostrate themselves, pray to them and offer them sacrifices.

One group would worship the sun, another group the moon, another the stars, and so on.

Many of the people in those days served the tyrants and oppressors. They even considered them as gods and worshipped them. They accepted their commands as if they were the commands of Allah, and never questioned them or reflected about them. The people humiliated themselves by throwing themselves to the ground before their rulers, and made every effort to satisfy them.

In such a dark time our Merciful Allah chose Ibrāhīm (AS) and taught him the right way of life, and then



He commanded Ibrāhīm (AS) to call the people to the way of worshipping Allah.

Ibrāhīm (AS) used to say to the people:

“What power do the idols have?

Why do you love and worship them?

What have these statues ever done for you?

They do not see, they do not hear,

They cannot harm you and they cannot benefit you:

Why do you humiliate yourselves before them?

Why do you prostrate before them?

Why do you worship them, and submit to their priests?”

But the people heard these words without reflecting on them. They would reply:

“Our fathers and forefathers worshipped the idols.

Our friends and colleagues worship the idols.

So we will follow our ancestors and remain on their religion.”

Ibrāhīm (AS) used to say to them:

“Your ancestors were mistaken.
Your fathers were also mistaken.
They should not have worshipped idols.
But do you not yourselves have reason?
Do you yourselves not have understanding?
Can you not see for yourselves that these idols are
weak and helpless?

“O people, I am a Prophet of Allah, and I have brought His message. It is a message of freedom and prosperity. Listen to my words and accept them and be blessed in this world and in the Hereafter.”

“O people, no idol is your lord and sustainer, nor master of your fate. The One Who is your Lord and Sustainer and Master of your fate is Allah, Who has created you and the earth and the heavens, and Who controls the world and all that is in it. He has all power, and He has not given control of the world to anyone nor has He taken help to control it. He is Unique, Triumphant and All-Powerful.”

“These idols of yours disgust me. I hate them and I refuse to submit to them.”

I love Allah, and I am devoted only to Him. I know that my sickness and my cure, my life and my death, my time in this world and my time in the Hereafter, everything is in His hands. My only hope is that on the Day of Resurrection He will be kind to me, and treat me generously.

“O people, be worshippers of the One True Allah, for all power is from Allah, and it is Allah alone who is Triumphant and All-Powerful. Allah is the only One to befriend you and help you. Be attentive to Him and worship only Him. He is the only One worthy of submission and worship. You must only be led by Allah and His servants whom He has appointed to lead you and guide you”.

Questions

1. What were the ignorant people of Ibrāhīm (AS) time worshipping?
2. What did Allah command Ibrāhīm (AS) to do?
3. What did Ibrāhīm (AS) tell the people? How did he explain to them that it is wrong to worship idols?
4. Did the people listen to Ibrāhīm (AS) and think about what he said?
5. What was their reply to his words? Were they right or wrong? Why?
6. Is it right for human beings to serve other human beings?
7. Have you ever seen someone who worships idols?
8. How did Ibrāhīm (AS) explain his worship and devotion to Allah? Why did he hate the idols and love Allah?
9. Why is it that Allah is the only Being worthy of worship, devotion and obedience?
10. Can someone who is really devoted to Allah be a servant of tyrants?
11. What kind of person worships Allah? What is the hope and fear of such a person?

✿Exercises

1. With one of your friends, reenact the conversation between Ibrāhīm (AS) and the idol-worshippers.
2. Write a brief summary of this lesson.
3. Recite the lesson to one of the members of your family.

LESSON EIGHT

Are Good and Bad the Same?

We all understand the meaning of good and bad, and it is easy to distinguish a good person from a bad one. A good person has good manners, good behaviour, is honest and truthful, loves justice and is polite and trustworthy. But a bad person has bad manners and bad behaviour, tells lies and bullies other people, and is impolite and deceitful. Do you think that good and bad people are the same?

Like most people you probably like good people, and don't like bad ones.

Allah loves the people who do good, and He hates the people who do wrong. For this reason He has sent His prophets to tell the people to do good deeds and stop doing bad deeds.

Now, answer these questions.

- (1) Will Allah reward the people who do good deeds?
- (2) Will He punish the people who do bad deeds?
- (3) Is it in this world that good people are rewarded?
- (4) Is it in this world that bad people are punished?
- (5) Where do people receive the recompense of their actions?

Allah has another world that we call the Hereafter. In that world the good people are separated from the bad ones and each group receives the recompense of

its actions. If there was no Hereafter, good people would have no motive and reason to perform good deeds, and no motive to refrain from bad deeds.

If there was no Hereafter, the call of the prophets would be futile and pointless. Good and bad would have no real meaning. If there was no Hereafter, our lives would be of no use and our creation would be purposeless.

Do you think that Allah has created us just to live in this world for a few days, just to eat and drink, to sleep and to wear clothes, and then to die, with nothing more? Do you think that this is all we should live for? And that Allah, Who does nothing in vain, has created us merely for this?

In the Qur'ān we are told:

“Your creation was not in vain, you have been created to live in this world and perform the best kind of deeds, and to strive towards goodness and perfection. Then, after your life in the world, you will be taken to the Hereafter, where you will receive the result of your deeds.”

The Hereafter is the place where the good are separated from the bad. The people who have performed acts of goodness in their lives will be allowed into Paradise, where they will live in happiness and bliss. Allah is pleased with them, and they too are pleased with the many blessings of Allah. But the bad and irreligious people are sent to Hell, where they receive the punishment for their evil deeds. Allah is angry with them and they live in suffering and pain, and that is the result of their own deeds, and what they deserve.

Questions

1. Can you tell the difference between a good person and a bad one? List the qualities of each.
2. Do you think that good and bad people are the same?
3. Do you think they are the same in the view of Allah?
4. To what deeds do the prophets call mankind?
5. If good and bad were the same to Allah, would He have sent the prophets? Do you know why?
6. Do people receive the full recompense for their deeds in this world?
7. If not, where do they receive it?
8. If there was no Hereafter, would good and bad really mean anything?
9. If there was no Hereafter, what would the purpose of our lives be?
10. Having understood that there is a life after the life of this world, what is our responsibility? How should we lead our lives?
11. In order to be fully successful in this life and the life to come, what kind of leadership must we accept?
By what kind of person should we be guided?

✿Exercises

1. Write down the answers to five of these questions.
2. Discuss the answers to these questions with your friends.
3. Recite the lesson to your family.

LESSON NINE

How the Dead Return to Life

The Prophet Ibrāhīm (AS) was one of Allah's most loyal servants. He had faith in Allah, the Hereafter and the Resurrection. He was perfectly aware that in the Hereafter the dead return to life and are present for Allah's Judgement. However, in order that his faith would become even stronger, he asked Allah to show him how the dead return to life, and said.

"O Allah, show me how you raise the dead to life."

In response, Allah revealed to Ibrāhīm (AS): "O Ibrāhīm, do you not believe in the Resurrection?" (Of course, Allah was fully aware of the reason for Ibrāhīm's (AS) request, but He wanted him to state it explicitly.) Ibrāhīm replied:

"O Allah, I believe, but I wish to see with my eyes so that I am fully satisfied."

Allah accepted Ibrāhīm's (AS) request and revealed to him:

"Take four birds, kill them and cut them into pieces and pound them finely. Then divide the pounded meat, feathers and bones into four parts, and put each part on a separate hill. Stand between the hills and call each bird. By the will of their Lord and at your command they will hurry towards you. Know that Allah is All-Knowing, All-Powerful."



Ibrāhīm (AS) did as he had been told. He took the four birds; a pigeon, a crow, a cock and a peacock and he killed them, cut them into pieces, ground them and mixed them. He then divided the mixture into parts and put each part on the top of a hill. When he stood between the hills and in a loud voice called out: "Peacock, come to me".

The particles of the peacock made their way miraculously to Ibrāhīm's (AS) feet, and immediately the bird's head, body, legs and feathers all joined perfectly together again. Then the peacock came to life: it flapped its wings and began to walk, just as if nothing had ever happened to it.

Ibrāhīm (AS) then commanded the other birds to come to him, and one by one they came to life in exactly the same way as the peacock. In this way Ibrāhīm (AS) witnessed the Resurrection of the dead from the depths of his heart. His faith and conviction became totally complete, and he was fully satisfied.

Questions

1. What request did Ibrāhīm (AS) make to Allah?
2. Why did he make that request?
3. What did Allah tell Ibrāhīm (AS) to do?
4. What did Ibrāhīm (AS) do?
5. How did he bring the birds to life?
6. Who bestowed on Ibrāhīm (AS) the power to bring the birds to life?
7. What result did Ibrāhīm (AS) receive from this experience?

✿ Exercises

1. Tell this story to the members of your family.
2. Ask one of your friends to answer the questions.
3. Think up three more questions from this lesson and ask your best friend to answer them.

LESSON TEN

Learning to Do Things

How do you learn to do things?

How do you get the hang of things so that you can do them without thinking?



What is the effect of practising a thing over and over again?

When you repeat an action over and over again, it makes an impression on your mind, heart and soul. Little by little you get used to it and it becomes a habit, and you can do it better and more easily. When you write, for example, the way you write makes an impression on you. If you write carefully and take the trouble to write neatly, that care makes its mark on you and your handwriting becomes tidy and beautiful. But if you are careless when you write, that carelessness will have its effect on you and your handwriting will always be untidy and ugly.

In the same way, all the things we do have an effect on our hearts and souls. Good and beautiful deeds have a good effect, and bad and ugly deeds have a bad effect.

The Record of Our Lives

When we perform good deeds those deeds have an effect on our hearts and souls, and make us pure and radiant. By performing good and beautiful deeds we become mindful of Allah, and then, because we are always aware of His magnificent presence, we take great pleasure in performing more and more beautiful deeds.

Right beliefs and correct attitudes and behaviour bestow perfection upon our hearts, and make us radiant and happy. But bad beliefs, attitudes and behaviour also leave their mark on a person, and make the soul impure. Then, when the soul is impure, it becomes heedless of Allah, and it falls into the habit of doing bad and evil deeds, and the heart becomes dark and depressed. False beliefs and bad, unworthy attitudes and behaviour cause the destruction of the

human soul, and take a person away from the path of perfection.

Our creation is not in vain, and therefore our actions are accounted for, and are not in vain either.

All our deeds whether good or bad, have an effect on us, and that effect will remain with us always. For that reason we will realize their full effect in the Hereafter. Good works and correct beliefs lead us to Paradise and all its wonderful blessings, while false beliefs and bad and evil deeds lead us to Hell and all its sufferings.

All our deeds, both good and bad, are recorded in a special register where they remain forever. We ourselves may be unaware of our deeds, but they are never lost and a record of them all is kept and preserved by Allah. In the Hereafter the veils of ignorance are removed, and we will perceive all our deeds.

Allah tells us in the Qur'ān:

“When a person comes to the reckoning and sees the record of all his deeds, he says with surprise: What kind of record is this? Have all my deeds been recorded and guarded? How is it that not one of my deeds has been missed?”

Then Allah will say: “These deeds were yours in the world, but you paid no attention to them. Now your soul has sight, you perceive them.”

The Qur'ān also says:

“Whoever does good will see it on the Day of Resurrection, and whoever does bad and evil will also see it on that Day.”

Now that we know that our deeds, be they good or bad, are not lost but are kept in a permanent register of our lives, and that in the Hereafter we will receive the recompense of all our deeds, should we not be

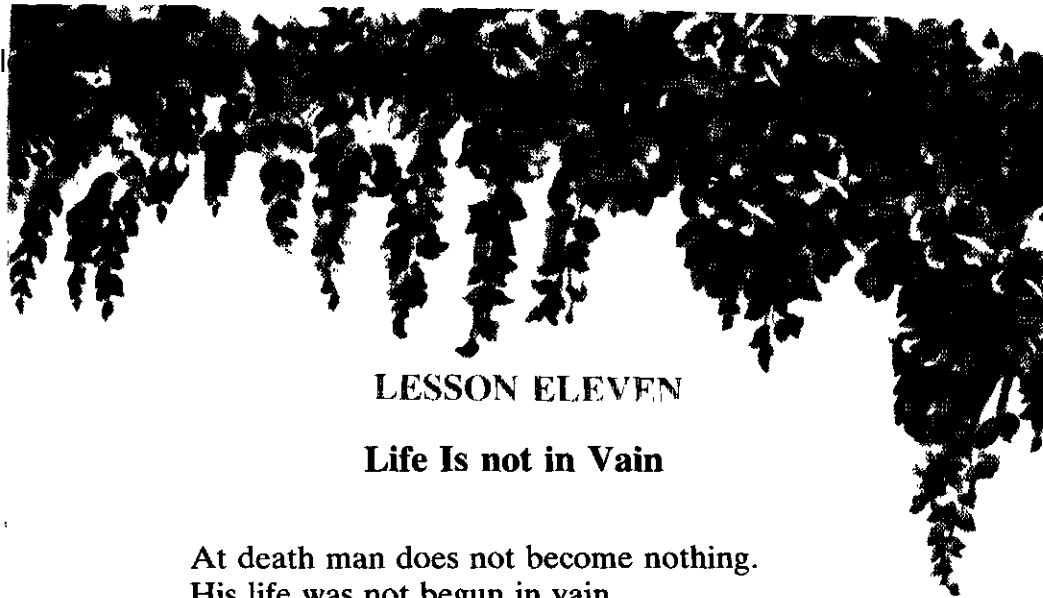
careful about our behaviour and attitudes? Does our wisdom not tell us to obey Allah and to put His commands into practice? Does our conscience not tell us to follow the laws of Allah, and the guidance of His learned and pious servants?

Questions

1. What is the effect of good deeds and attitudes on our souls?
2. What is the effect of bad and evil actions?
3. Are our good and bad deeds all in vain?
4. What things are the key to our happiness and perfection?
5. What things bestow on us the blessings of Paradise?
6. What things lead us to the sufferings of Hell?
7. Where do we receive the results of our deeds?
8. What does Allah tell us about our actions in the Qur'ān?
9. In the light of this lesson, how should we lead our lives? What kind of deeds and actions should we do?

✿ Exercises

1. Write down your answers to these questions and compare them to the answers of your friends.
2. Read the lesson to the members of your family and discuss it with them.
3. Copy out the part of this lesson that has been taken from the Holy Qur'ān.
4. Write a summary of the lesson in five lines.



LESSON ELEVEN

Life Is not in Vain

At death man does not become nothing.
His life was not begun in vain.
In a world far greater than this one,
Does he after death remain.

* *

Death to the true believer,
Is the gateway to Paradise glittering.
But sad is he, who loving but *kufr* *
Was lured by this world so flattering.

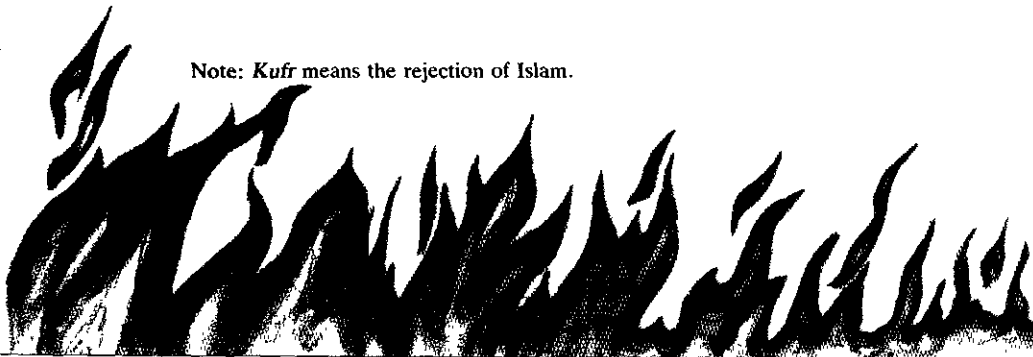
* *

Came not to this world in vain and at random,
Man whose place in creation is most high.
The death of man is not his last action,
The way to the next life is to die.

* *

Finally at the end of our lives
Do their meaning become at last clear
A believer can think of no better,
But the lot of others is fear.

Note: *Kufr* means the rejection of Islam.



He alone knows about all the conditions of man's life in this world and the Hereafter.

For this reason, only Allah can arrange a proper and complete programme for human perfection and prosperity. It is this programme that He has sent to mankind through the medium of His prophets, and the people who follow the programme of the prophets live in freedom and happiness in this world and in the Hereafter.

Questions

1. Can you draw up a programme for your life that will cover all your needs both in this life and the Hereafter?
2. Can others do so? Can you say why?
3. So, who can draw up such a programme? Do you know why?
4. How has Allah sent us His perfect programme?
5. To be safe and happy in this life and the Hereafter, whose programme must we choose? why?

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LESSON THIRTEEN

Human Evolution

When you sow a seed in the earth and water it, what transformation takes place? What course does it follow? Does its transformation follow a specific direction towards a specific goal?

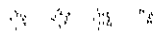
In fact, from the very beginning every seed has a specific goal, and in order to reach that goal it grows and evolves. For example, consider the wheat seed. As soon as the seed is sown, it takes root in the ground, and before very long it sends up a stalk. Then gradually the stalk grows and bears clusters of wheat. A single wheat seed becomes several clusters of wheat, and



water them. What happens? What do you think their final goal is?

Questions

1. What is meant by the following: seeds of apple and wheat have an aim?
2. What do plants need in order to grow and develop?
3. Have these things been provided for them? Could they develop without them?
4. Who alone can devise the programme for human development? Why?
5. How did Allah send to mankind the programme they need for their development and perfection?
6. Who has brought us the final and most complete form of that programme?
7. What name has Allah given to the last programme of human perfection?



LESSON FOURTEEN

How Can You Recognize Him? What Do You Expect from Him?

Think for a moment: Your friend Maḥmūd has left his satchel in your home. A person knocks at the door and says, “I have been sent by Maḥmūd. He wants me to pick up his satchel for him, please give it to me.” If you don’t know this boy, what should you do? Should you immediately hope for the best and trust him and give him the satchel? How do you know he has really been sent by Maḥmūd? How can you recognize him as a true messenger? Do you ask him for some proof that he has really been sent by Maḥmūd?

Surely you will say, “Give me some proof and you can take the satchel.

Then, if he is really sent by Maḥmūd, he will give some proof. For example, he will say: “Maḥmūd said the satchel is in the living room, or it contains his arithmetic book, a religious book, a blue pen, a little red pencil and a watch.”

If his signs are correct, what do you realize, what do you do?

If his signs are correct, you realize that he is telling the truth, and that Maḥmūd has sent him because he trusts him, and you respect him. You trust him too and you give him the satchel.



With this example in mind, can you say how we should recognize a prophet?

A prophet is sent by Allah, and in order to identify himself he brings with him special signs from Allah, so that the people can trust him and accept his call.

If a prophet did not bring a special sign from Allah, how would the people recognize him as a prophet? How would they know whether he was really a prophet sent by Allah, and not simply an impostor?

The special signs Allah gives to His prophets are the miracles. Without these miracles how would the people recognize the prophets? How would they realize that they have a special relationship with Allah, and that they are His servants and messengers? How would they trust them? How would they know whether or not to accept their call?

Miracles are the special signs given by Allah to His prophets. A miracle is an action that people are unable to perform, and can only be performed by Allah and his special messengers.

When someone says: "I am a prophet of Allah and I have a special connection with Allah," then if he shows miracles, the truth-loving people realize that he is telling the truth and is really Allah's messenger and

prophet, and that he has a special connection with Allah and enjoys Allah's trust and confidence.

The truth-loving people trust him, believe his words, accept his call, obey him and say: "Since he has miracles he is a real prophet and must have special connection with Allah."

Miracles in the Qur'ān

In Book Three, you learned about the miracles of the prophets. You learned how Mūsā (AS) put his hand inside his pocket and how, when he brought it out, it shone just like a bright star. You also learned that Mūsā's (AS) staff—by the authority of Allah—used to turn into a fierce snake. The same staff was used by the Prophet Mūsā (AS), with the authority of Allah, to make path in the bed of the Nile River and the tribes of Israe'ī were able to walk upon it and escape from Pharaoh.

Allah has described these and tens of other miracles in the Qur'ān. The miracles of 'Īsā (AS) cured those who were born blind, and brought the dead to life. With the Divine authority he made a bird with clay, breathed into it, and the bird came to life. He was also aware of hidden things. For example, he could tell the people what they had eaten and what they had hidden in their homes. And, when only a new-born baby, 'Īsā (AS) spoke to people from his cradle.

In the same way, by the command of Allah the tyrant Nimrud's fire that he had arranged to burn the Prophet Ibrāhīm (AS) became cool, and Ibrāhīm (AS) felt no discomfort.

The Prophet (SA) of Islam also had many miracles. His greatest miracle is the Holy Qur'ān. Later, you will learn more about all his miracles. Now, let us look at how miracles are shown.

With His limitless power and might, Allah does whatever He wishes. Other than Allah, who can make path in the river with a simple stick? Who except Allah can grant sight to those born blind? Who, except Allah, can give life to a clay model and give it feathers, eyes and flesh? Who—other than Allah—is aware of the unseen?

With the power invested in them by Allah, the true prophets perform such deeds so that the truth-loving people realize that the prophets are genuine. Witnessing these miracles, the people realize that the prophets have a special relationship with Allah, are trusted and chosen by Him, and have brought the people Allah's message.

These deeds are called miracles. A miracle is an action that Allah and His messengers can show. When Allah sends a person as a prophet, He puts these special powers at the disposal of the prophet to be a kind of sign of the people, so that they can recognize him as a prophet.

Without such clear signs for the people, how would they be able to recognize the prophets? How would they know the genuine from the false? How would they be able to trust them and accept their leadership?

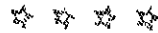
Questions

1. Do we expect the prophets to have some special signs so that they can be recognized?... For what reason?
2. What do we call the prophets' special signs?
3. How do the truth-lovers recognize the prophets?

4. What is a miracle?
5. When we witness a miracle, how do we realize that the man behind the miracle is really a prophet of Allah?
6. How are miracles performed?
7. Who has invested the prophets with this power?

✿ Exercises

1. Write a summary of this lesson in ten lines.
2. Try to recite the entire lesson properly and fluently.
3. Ask your friends to answer the questions.
4. Think over three more questions from this lesson, and ask your parents to answer them.



LESSON FIFTEEN

The Eternal Miracle of the Prophet (SA) of Islam

The Holy Qur'ān is the eternal miracle of the Prophet (SA) of Islam. By listening to its verses and reflecting on them, knowledgeable people realize that these verses are not the words of Muhammad (SA) but are actually the words of Allah. By listening and reflecting on the Qur'ān's verses, such people realize that the Qur'ān is indeed the Word of Allah, and that the Prophet (SA) of Islam had a special relationship with Him which enabled the Prophet (SA) to bring to mankind such a beautiful and meaningful Book.

Allah tells us in the Qur'ān:

“If you have any doubt about this Qur'ān which I have sent down upon My servant, and you think this Qur'ān to be the word of a normal human being and not that of Allah, then bring a *sūrah* (chapter) like the *sūrahs* of the Qur'ān (2:23).”

In the same way, Allah tells us elsewhere in the Qur'ān:

“Say: ‘If all created beings were to gather together and help one another to produce a book like the Qur'ān, they would never be able to do it (17:88).’”

Truly, no created being can produce words similar to those of the Holy Qur'ān, for all created beings, no

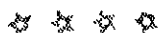
matter how learned and capable they may be, are still the creation of Allah, and cannot do the works that only Allah can do.

For this reason, no one has been able to imitate the Qur'ān in the past and present and no one will be able to do it in the future.

Therefore, since we have this great miracle of the last of Allah's messengers, it is only right for us to appreciate it, value it, recite it, learn its sublime teachings, accept its guidance and use it to make a programme for our lives, so as to live in freedom and bliss in this world and in the Hereafter.

Questions

1. What do we mean when we say that the Qur'ān is the permanent miracle of the Prophet (SA) of Islam?
2. What do the lovers of truth realize when they reflect on the Qur'ān's verses?
3. How do they realize that the Qur'ān has been brought to us by Allah's Prophet?
4. What does Allah say about the Qur'ān being a miracle?
5. How does Allah make it clear that it is His Word?
6. Can people produce a book like the Qur'ān? Do you know why?
7. What is meant by valuing the Qur'ān?... How do we respect it?



LESSON SIXTEEN

The Greedy Tyrant

One of the Prophet Mūsā's relatives was called Qārūn. Outwardly he had accepted the religion of Mūsā (AS) and used to perform his prayers and recite the *Tawrāt*, but inwardly he was a hypocrite whose belief was shallow and weak. He had no real faith, and only wanted people to think well of him so that he could deceive them.

Qārūn used to purchase the harvest of farmers in advance at a low price only to sell it back to those very farmers later at higher price. Moreover, in all his dealings he was dishonest and totally unfair. He took usury, and oppressed the people as much as he could.

In this way Qārūn amassed vast wealth, and he loved his wealth above everything. Qārūn was not really a worshipper of Allah, for he really worshipped only money.

Qārūn spent his money only in the path of pleasure and self-indulgence. He built large, beautiful palaces and adorned their walls and doors with precious stones and gold, and he even used gold and precious stones to decorate his horses and camels.

He also had hundreds of slaves, both male and female, and he treated them very badly. He used to



make them prostrate before him, and kiss the ground where he walked.

Often wise believers counselled him and admonished him, telling him:

“O Qārūn, what are all these gardens and riches for? Why have you amassed such a huge wealth and property? Why do you oppress the people? How will you answer to Allah on the Day of Judgment? Why do you trample upon people’s rights? Why do you not help the poor and the needy? Why do you not perform deeds for the Hereafter? Step onto the path of goodness before it is too late.”

But Qārūn was full of pride and conceit, and would only reply: “How I spend my money is my business, and no one else’s.”

The believers answered; "O Qārūn, your riches were not acquired lawfully. Had you not been dishonest, had you not taken usury, you would not have collected all this wealth. Instead, you would be like others, and there would not be such a difference between you and the rest of society."

Qārūn would say; "No, I am not like others. I am intelligent and wise. I have worked hard and have become rich. Others can also work hard and become rich. Why should I help the poor?"

The believers used to try very hard to guide him and would say: "You have only become rich by not observing the people's rights. If you respected the people's rights you would not be extremely rich, and they would not be so poor. If you want to be sure of a happy and prosperous future, you must spend your wealth on the servants of Allah. It is not right to amass vast wealth, for it must be spent in the way of Allah."

This would make Qārūn angry, and he would ridicule the believers. He would laugh at them and ignore their advice, and say to them: "Do not admonish me. I have more faith in Allah than you, and my faith is better.

Go away and mind your own business."

The Measure of Success

One fine day Qārūn put on his most attractive clothes, mounted his finest horse and left his palace. With him went a large group of his servants and workers.

The people who saw him in the streets stopped and stared at Qārūn in all his splendour, and many became resentful at the sight of so much gold and precious stones. Others, who were more ignorant, bowed and prostrated themselves before him, saying: "How bless-



ed is Qārūn! What wealth and prosperity he has! Blessed is Qārūn! What a good life he has! How successful he is! We wish we too were like Qārūn!"

Witnessing these ignorant people the wise believers pitied them, and they admonished them. They said: "Do not think that success lies in riches and wealth. Why do you prostrate yourselves before Qārūn? How can you respect a person who is a tyrant? He is not worthy of respect; he has acquired all this wealth through over-charging and cheating. He is not successful. The successful are they who have faith in Allah and help His creatures, not those who abuse their

Mūsā's (AS) Prayer is Heard

By the order of Allah an earthquake occurred. The earth trembled and in an instant all of Qārūn's palaces were destroyed. It even swallowed Qārūn along with all his riches and put an end to that tyrant's greed and tyranny.

Thus Qārūn went to the Hereafter empty-handed to receive the recompense of all his evil deeds and suffer the pains and torment of the Hereafter, which are much worse and last for ever.

After the earthquake, those who had thought Qārūn successful and had longed for his wealth discovered their mistake, and repented. This is what they said:

“What a terrible end! Qārūn lost all his wealth and went to the Hereafter empty-handed as a sinner, and there he will receive the full recompense for his deeds.

Now we realize that property and wealth alone do not make a person successful, but what makes a person really successful is the faith in Allah and following the Divine instructions.”

Questions

1. How and by what methods did Qārūn amass his wealth?
2. How did he spend it?
3. What did the wise believers tell him? How did they admonish him?
4. What did Mūsā (AS) tell him about *zakāt*?
5. How is it that a part of the wealth of the rich actually belongs to the poor?

6. When the ignorant people saw Qārūn in all his worldly glory, what did they say? What did they long for?
7. How did Mūsā (AS) spend the *zakāt*?
8. Was Qārūn really successful? How was his end?
9. Where does he receive the punishment of his ugly deeds?
10. How did the ignorant people discover their mistake? What did they say?

✿ Exercises

1. Write down the lessons to be learnt from this story.
2. Read the story to your family and discuss it with them.
3. Perform the story in the form of a play with your family and friends.

LESSON SEVENTEEN

Explaining Islam Before Christian Scholars

In the earlier days of Islam the Muslims were very few in number, and the idolaters who were opposed to Islam used to persecute the Muslims.

Being so few, the Muslims could do nothing to stop their persecution, and they thought it better to migrate to Abyssinia (presently known as Ethiopia), where they could live freely and in accordance with the Islamic principles.

Therefore, after a trip across the desert a group of them boarded a ship bound for Abyssinia. The king of Abyssinia was called al-Najāshī (Negus), and was a Christian. When informed of the Muslims' arrival in his country, he kindly granted them asylum and treated them with kindness.

As soon as the news of the Muslims' secret migration reached the idolaters in Makkah, they became very angry. They sent two of their men to Abyssinia laden with costly gifts, and it was their task to have the Muslims arrested and sent back to Makkah. Arriving in Abyssinia they went to al-Najāshī's court and paid him homage and presented to him their gifts.

Al-Najāshī asked them: "Where have you come from? What do you want?"

The Makkans replied: "We have come from the city



of Makkah. A number of our youth have given up our religion. They have stopped worshipping our gods and have now taken refuge in your country. The lords and nobles of Makkah call on you to arrest these youths and deliver them to us, so that we may return them to our city to be punished."

Al-Najāshī told them that the matter would be investigated. Then he summoned the Muslims to his palace and, in the presence of his Christian scholars, he asked them: "What was your previous religion? What is your present religion? Why have you migrated to this country?"

The Muslims' spokesman was Ja'far ibn Abī Tālib, a selfless young man who was full of belief. He replied: "In our city the rich and greedy oppress the weak. The people worship idols. They eat carrion and perform all types of evil deeds. They are not kind with one

another and persecute their neighbours.”

“In these circumstances we have been blessed by Allah who has sent us a Prophet (SA), a man known for his truth and trustworthiness. He has brought to us from Allah the religion of Islam.”

Hearing this, al-Najāshī leaned forward in his seat, so as to pay more attention to Ja‘far and learn about Islam and what it says. Ja‘far stayed silent for a moment, then looked at the Christian scholars and continued: “The religion of Islam tells us not to worship idols, and that we must only worship the One True God, and accept His commands.”

“The religion of Islam tells us to be truthful, trustworthy and loyal. We must be kind and generous to our relatives and slaves, and treat our neighbours with goodness. Nor should we shed the blood of innocent people for no reason, and must give up all our evil deeds. We should not talk badly of people, nor insult them, and we should not speak without a purpose. We must not steal the wealth of orphans, we must perform the prayer and must spend a portion of our money in acts of charity.”

Al-Najāshī and the Christian scholars listened carefully to these words, and were delighted but the Mak-kans were biting their lips in annoyance.

Ja‘far continued: “O king of Abyssinia, the Prophet Muhammad has brought the religion of Islam and we have accepted it. We believe in Allah and in His Messenger and have become Muslims. But as soon as we became Muslims the idolaters of Makkah became angry and began to persecute us. Thus we were obliged to leave the city and seek asylum here in this country to be free to worship Allah and perform the works of our religion.”

By now al-Najāshī was extremely pleased and said

to Ja'far: "The words of 'Īsā (AS) (Jesus) and the words of your Prophet have descended from the same source. Both are the Words of the God. Therefore, you are free to remain in this country. Perform your devotions freely, and remain followers of Islam. Truly, what a good religion you have!"

Then he turned to the Makkans and said: "I do not take bribes. Pick up the things you have brought and go and you must know that I will never hand over to you any of the Muslims. Go this very minute, and return to Makkah as fast as you can... at once!"

Thus the two men, sorry and ashamed, picked up the gifts they had brought and left the court in disgrace.

Questions

1. What does "migrate" mean? Why did the Muslims migrate?
2. What was the king of Abyssinia's religion? Why did he not hand over the Muslims?
3. Who was Ja'far? What did he say about Muḥammad (SA) and Islam?
4. If you are asked about Muḥammad (SA) or Islam, what do you say?
5. After listening to Ja'far, what did al-Najashī say? How did he treat the idolaters? Did he accept their gifts? Do you know why?

✿ Exercises

1. Enact this story with your family or friends in the form of a play.
2. Describe how Ja'far introduced Islam.
3. Draw a scene from this story.

LESSON EIGHTEEN

The Relatives Are Invited

During the first three years of his mission, the Prophet Muḥammad (SA) did not propagate Islam openly. In every nook and corner, in the hills surrounding Makkah, he would speak to the people about Islam. Wherever he found a worthy, rational person, he spoke to him about his Prophethood, and condemned the practices of idolatry and oppression. He would call to mind the injustices of the tyrants, and call for sympathy towards the miserable conditions of the weak. He said to the people:

“I am the last of Allah’s prophets. I am commanded by Allah to guide you and to deliver you to the freedom and greatness of worshipping the one True God.

Help me on the path to this wonderful goal.”

As a result of Muḥammad’s (SA) continuous efforts a number of people accepted Islam during these three years, and secretly became Muslims. Then the Prophet received Allah’s command: “Call your near relatives to Islam”.

Therefore Muḥammad (SA) invited about forty of his closest relatives to his home, and when they arrived he greeted them warmly. After the food, Muḥammad (SA) began to speak but one of the guests stopped him. This man was Abū Lahab, the Prophet’s uncle,

who said: "Be careful not to let Muhammad trick you", and, as soon as he had said this, he stood up from his place, and the others did the same.

Arriving outside the house, the guests said to one another: "Did you see how he fed us all? It was amazing. There was only a little food there, and yet we are all full. And what a delicious food it was!"

One of them asked: "How could it be that with such a small amount of food we are all full?"

One of them was angry with Abū Lahab, and said: "Why did you break up the gathering? We should have listened to what Muḥammad (SA) had to say. Why did you stand up and leave the house so soon?"

Following this Muḥammad (SA) decided to invite them all again. He said to 'Alī (AS): "That day I was not able to tell them about Islam. Prepare another meal and invite them again, maybe I will be able to speak to them this time and lead them to freedom and prosperity."

The day of the invitation came and the guests arrived. Just as before Muḥammad (SA) greeted them warmly and treated them all with respect. After the meal, Muḥammad (SA) insisted that his guests remain seated, and listen to what he had to say. Some of them sat quietly, but some like Abū Lahab, began to create a commotion.

The Prophet (SA) told them: "Listen, listen to me. By Allah, it is for your own good. I am the last of Allah's prophets and I have brought a Divine message for you and for all of mankind, a message of freedom and prosperity. O kinsmen, in the Hereafter you will receive a reward for good deeds and a punishment for your bad deeds. The righteous will receive the beauties of Paradise, and the wrongdoers will receive the sufferings of Hell. O kinsmen, I bring you all the good of



this world and all the good of the Hereafter. No one has brought you anything better than this."

"Which of you is willing to help me in this work, and be my brother, my minister and my successor?"

At this, the guests were silent. No one replied to this heavenly invitation. Only 'Alī (AS), who was about 14 years of age, stood up and said: "O Prophet of Allah, I am ready to assist you. I am ready to help you."

Muhammad (SA) looked lovingly at 'Alī (AS), then he repeated his words and made his request again. Just as before all were silent, until the silence was broken once more by 'Alī (AS), who said in a firm voice. "O Prophet of Allah, I am ready to assist you. I am ready to help you."

The Prophet (SA) was silent as he cast a meaningful look at the selfless youth's radiant face. Then he spoke again: "O my kinsmen, I have brought you the good of both the worlds. I have been ordered to call you to

the worship of Allah, to *Tawḥīd* (monotheism). Who is ready to assist me in this; to be my brother, my minister, my executor and my successor?"

Again they were all silent and only 'Alī stood up, this time he spoke in an even firmer voice: "O prophet of Allah, I am ready to assist you. I will help you in everything you wish."

Then, to the amazement of all the guests, the Prophet (SA) took 'Alī's (AS) hand and accepted his promise of support. Then he turned to the guests and told them: "This youth is my brother, minister, executor and my successor. Listen to him and obey him."

This angered all but a few of the guests. They stood up laughing and said to Abū Ṭālib, the head of the tribe; "From today 'Alī has become your ruler! Muḥammad has instructed you to listen to the words of your son and to obey him!"

Questions

1. How did Muḥammad (SA) call the people to Islam at the beginning of his mission?
2. What command did he receive from Allah after three years?
3. How did the Prophet (SA) obey that command?
4. What were the guests saying to themselves as they left the Prophet's (SA) house? What did they say to Abū Lahab?
5. What did the Prophet (SA) say at the second gathering? What request did he make of them?
6. who answered that request?
7. How did the Prophet (SA) consider 'Alī (AS)?

8. What made the guests say those things to Abū Ṭālib?

✿ Exercises

1. Invite your friends to your house and read to them this story.
2. Read the story to the members of your family.
3. Write a summary of the lesson and read it to your friends.

LESSON NINETEEN

The Last of the Prophets

When Allah made Muhammad (SA) Prophet, He designated him as the “Last Prophet”. For this reason, from the very beginning of his mission the Prophet of Allah told the people that he was the “last of the prophets”, and that no prophet would come after him.

Those who believed in Muhammad (SA) and became Muslims in the early days of Islam, all recognized him to be the last of Allah’s prophets.

The Qur’ān, the Word of Allah and the permanent miracle of our Prophet, also calls Muhammad (SA) the last of the prophets”, where it tells us:

“Muhammad is the Prophet of Allah, and the last of the prophets”.

Therefore, we Muslims who recognize the Qur’ān as the Book of Allah, understand that Muhammad (SA) is the last of Allah’s messengers, and have no doubts about it.

The principles and instructions of Islam are so complete that through it all lovers of truth, in all ages and in all places, are able to reach their perfection and prosperity. Allah is aware of the needs of all people, in all ages, and He has designed Islam’s programmes of perfection in such a way that it is able to meet all of mankind’s needs. Therefore, whatever progress

people make in knowledge and science, still they are in need of the Qur'ān, for it is the Word of Allah and the Book of His guidance. In this there is no difference between Allah's guidance and His other blessings like water, air, sunlight, and so on.

Islam's programmes of perfection are in the Qur'ān. The Qur'ān is the last of the heavenly books and the permanent Book of Islam that, through the efforts of self-sacrificing Muslims, has been preserved through the ages. It is the best, most comprehensive programme of human perfection.

Allah has told us that Islam is the last religion and that our Prophet (SA) is the last of His messengers. We Muslims, by following the leaders who clarify the Qur'ān for us, live in eternal bliss in this world and in the Hereafter.

✿Exercises

1. Complete these sentences:
 - (a) When Allah made Muhammad (SA) Prophet. He called him.....
 - (b) From the very beginning of his mission the Prophet (SA) told the people that he was.....
 - (c) The Holy Qur'ān also terms the Prophet..... and the...
2. Recite the lesson to one of your friends.
3. Write a summary of the lesson.
4. Think over five more questions from the lesson and ask your best friend to answer them.
5. Answer the questions that your friend has thought over.

LESSON TWENTY

The Twelve Imams **Al-'Imām Muḥammad al-Jawād (AS)**

In Books Two and Three you learnt about eight infallible Imams. They are:

1. The first Imam.... al-Imām 'Alī (Amīr al-Mu'minīn) (AS).
 2. The second Imam.... al-Imām al-Ḥasan (AS).
 3. The third Imam.... al-Imām al-Ḥusayn (AS).
 4. The fourth Imam.... al-'Imām 'Alī al-Sajjād (AS).
 5. The fifth Imam.... al-'Imām Muḥammad al-Bāqir (AS).
 6. The sixth Imam.... al-'Imām Ja'far al-Ṣādiq (AS).
 7. The seventh Imam.... al-'Imām Mūsā al-Kāẓim (AS).
 8. The eighth Imam.... al-'Imām 'Alī al-Riḍā (AS).
- Now you will learn about the four other Imams:
- The ninth Imam.... al-'Imām Muḥammad al-Jawād (AS).
- The tenth Imam.... al-'Imām 'Alī al-Hādī (AS).
- The eleventh Imam.... al-'Imām al-Ḥasan al-'Askarī (AS).

The twelfth Imam.... al-'Imām Muḥammad al-Mahdī (AS)

Can you say the names of these Imams?

Did you say them in the right order?

Now we will learn about the ninth of our Imams.

Al-'Imām Muḥammad Al-Jawād (AS)

Our ninth Imam is al-'Imām Muḥammad al-Jawād (AS), who is also called al-'Imām Muḥammad al-Taqi (AS). He is the son of al-'Imām 'Alī al-Riḍā (AS). He was born in Madīnah in the month of Ramaḍān, 195 AH.

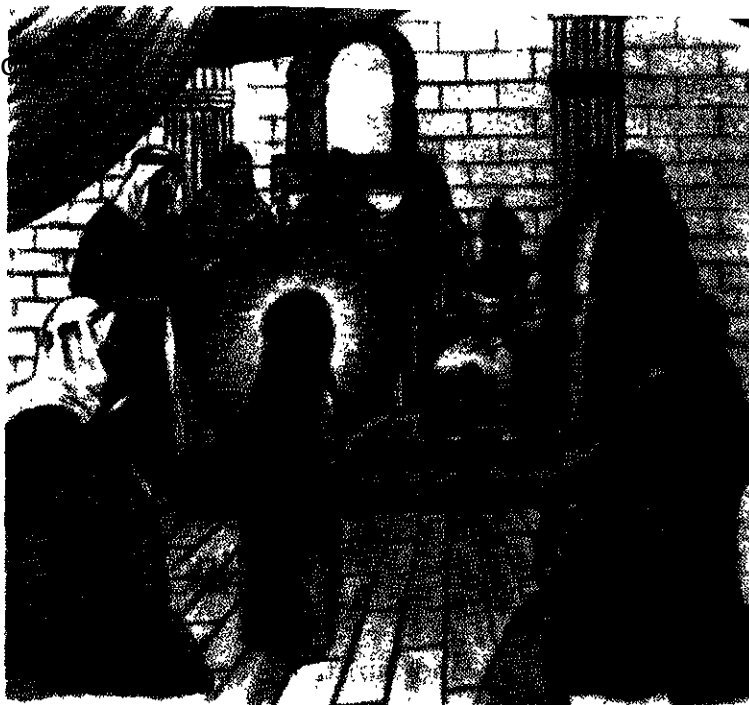
According to the Divine decree and the command of the Prophet (SA), al-'Imām al-Riḍā (AS) declared Muḥammad al-Jawād to be his successor, the Imam and leader of the people after himself.

From his early childhood al-'Imām al-Jawād had a special relationship with Allah, and in his position as Imam he answered the religious problems of the people, guided them and led them. Great scholars would come to him and ask the solutions to the most difficult problems, and the Imam would answer their queries with ease.

Those of the people who were ignorant of the Imam's special position before Allah were amazed at his knowledge. They would assume the Imam to be just like any other child, and would say: "How can such a young lad have gained such knowledge? How is it that his knowledge is superior to the knowledge of all these great scholars?"

These people did not realize that the Imam had not gained his knowledge in the ordinary way, but that it was given to him specially by Allah. They did not realize that Allah grants a special connection with Him to whoever He pleases, young or old, and makes that person the most learned of all mankind.

Al-'Imām al-Jawād was endowed with all the best human qualities while still a child. For this reason the



people called him al-“Taqī” which means pious, and al-“Jawād” which means generous and merciful. He was aware and enlightened and strove to enlighten others. For this reason, Allah blessed him.

Al-’Imām al-Jawād lived during the time of the cruel Abbasid tyrant, al-Mu’taṣim, who realized that if al-’Imām al-Jawād succeeded in awakening the people they might turn against him and put an end to his power. He was afraid of this and was terrified by the Imam’s charisma and popularity. He summoned the Imam from his home in Madīnah to Baghdad, the capital of the Abbasid Empire, and after a few months he had the Imam martyred through poison. At the time of his martyrdom al-’Imām al-Jawād was just 25 years old.

The Imam’s sacred body was buried alongside that of his grandfather, al-’Imām Mūsā al-Kā’zim (AS), on the outskirts of Baghdad, at a place today known as Kāẓimayn. Eternal peace be upon him.

A Letter to a Governor

One of al-'Imām al-Jawād's companion's reports:

I performed the Ḥajj with al-'Imām al-Jawād (AS), and when the Ḥajj was over I went to see the Imam to say my farewell. Before I left I said to the Imam: "The government has levied a very heavy tax upon me and I am unable to pay it. Please, will you write a letter to the governor of our city, and recommend him to act leniently towards me".

Imam replied that he did not know the governor, and could not therefore write and advise him.

"But he is one of your friends and followers. If you write to him he will definitely accept your counsel."

Al-'Imām al-Jawād picked up a pen and wrote:

"In the name of Allah, the Merciful and the compassionate.

Peace be with you and with all Allah's righteous servants. O governor!

Power and authority are trusts from Allah which He has invested in you for you to serve the people. You must use this power to help your brothers in religion.

The only things that remain with you are good deeds and the help which you grant to your brothers, the Muslims. Know that on the Day of Resurrection Allah will review all your deeds and not the slightest action will be hidden from Him.

yours

Muhammad ibn ' Ali Al-Jawād

I took the letter, made my final farewells and set off for my city. When I arrived, news of the letter I was carrying had already reached the governor. He came to meet me and I gave him the letter. He took it respectfully, kissed it, and then he opened it.

After reading it he enquired about my occupation, and just as I had wanted he behaved kindly and leniently towards me. In fact, from that moment on, he behaved justly and kindly with all the people.

Questions

1. When was al-'Imām al-Jawād (AS) born?
2. Why were the people amazed by him? What did they use to say?
3. What were they unaware of?
4. What does "Taḳī" mean? What does "Jawād" mean?
5. Why did al-Mu'taṣim summon al-'Imām al-Jawād to Baghdad?
6. How old was al-'Imām al-Jawād when he was martyred?
7. Where is his sacred body buried?
8. What did the Imam write to the governor? How did he reprimand him?
9. How did the governor receive the Imam's letter?
10. What lessons are there to be learnt from the Imam's letter?

*** Exercises**

1. Write a letter to one of the government authorities and ask him for a reply.
2. Read the lesson to the members of your family.

LESSON TWENTY-ONE

Al-'Imām 'Alī al-Hādī (AS)

Our tenth Imam is al-'Imām 'Alī al-Hādī (AS), who is also called al-'Imām 'Alī al-Naqī. He was born to al-'Imām Muḥammad al-Jawād (AS) on 15th Dhū al-Ḥijjah, in one of the villages around Madīnah. According to the Divine decree and the command of the Prophet (SA), al-'Imām Muḥammad al-Jawād designated 'Alī al-Hādī (AS) as his successor, the Imam and leader of the people after himself.

Like his father, al-'Imām 'Alī al-Hādī (AS) attained the position of Imamate at a very tender age, and in this position he guided and led the people.

From his early childhood al-'Imām al-Hādī (AS) was a perfect model of Islam. He was free of all faults and defects, and was adorned with all good qualities and virtues. It was for this reason that the people called him al-'Naqī" which means pure and holy, and al-'Hādī" which means guide.

With great determination and effort al-'Imām al-Hādī (AS) worked hard to guide the people, and he taught them the correct manner of living. The people were extremely fond of him, and they benefited greatly from his guidance, his knowledge and his awareness. Through him they found the right path in life.

Al-Mutawakkil, the bloodthirsty Abbasid tyrant,

was envious towards al-'Imām al-Hādī (AS) and fearful of the Imam's powerful influence. For this reason he summoned the Imam from al-Madīnah to Sāmarrā', in present day Iraq, and placed him under surveillance in an army camp.

Al-'Imām al-Hādī (AS) lived in this world for forty years. He was always opposed to the oppression of the ruling Abbasids, and used to condemn their tyranny and oppression. The result was that on 3rd Rajab, 254 AH, he was martyred in Sāmarrā' through poison. His sacred body was buried in Sāmarrā'. May eternal peace be upon him.

Midnight Advice

Al-Mutawakkil, the tyrant, was also a drunkard. He did not follow the laws of religion and the Qur'ān, and he committed hideous crimes just to preserve his throne. He was pained by the people's affection for al-'Imām al-Hādī, and afraid of the Imam's powerful influence.

Late one night al-Mutawakkil was sitting on a beautiful couch in his palace, feasting, drinking and carousing with his guests. His poets were reciting verses for him and his minstrels were singing songs for him. The doors and walls of the palace were decorated with gold, and outside the palace, the guards stood on watch.

Amidst his drunkenness al-Mutawakkil suddenly began to wonder whether anyone could take all his power and luxury away from him. After thinking about it for a moment he answered his own question: "Yes, 'Alī the son of Muḥammad, called al-Hādī and al-Naqī, could do that, for the people love him affectionately".

At this al-Mutawakkil became very agitated and disturbed. He angrily called his guards: "Arrest 'Alī ibn

Muhammad, and bring him to me!”

His guards and attendants, that is, the people who had sold him their freedom and humanity along with their honour, rushed to the house of the Imam. They found him sitting while facing towards the Ka‘bah and reciting the Qur’ān. The voice of his recitation was heavenly. The guards immediately arrested him and took him off to the palace.

Al-‘Imām al-Hādī (AS) entered the palace. His face was radiant and calm. He was murmuring: “In the name of Allah, Most Merciful and Compassionate”.

Al-Mutawakkil looked at the Imam. His eyes were dull and bloodshot as he looked into the shining eyes of the Imam. As he stared fiercely at the Imam, those same thoughts came back to his mind. It was as if he wanted to have the Imam killed that very night.

However, instead of having the Imam killed he decided to belittle him in front of all the gathering. Rudely, he shouted to him, “O ‘Alī ibn Muhammad, amuse our party and recite for us some rhyme!”

Al-‘Imām al-Hādī (AS) was silent and said nothing.

Again, this time in an even more harsh tone, al-Mutawakkil repeated his demand: “O ‘Alī ibn Muhammad, I am commanding you to entertain our gathering with some rhyme.” Al-‘Imām al-Hādī (AS) remained silent and refused to meet the shameless gaze of the Abbasid tyrant.

Al-Mutawakkil was now angry as well as drunk. Once more he repeated his demand, and this time added: “You have no choice but to recite for us!”

The Imam raised his gaze and looked sternly at al-Mutawakkil’s bloated face, and said: “Since I am obliged, so listen!”

Then the Imam recited a poem in Arabic the sense of which is something like this:

Among those in power they are without measure,
Who not from Allah but from His signs take pleasure.
To building palaces of stone they are dedicated,
And these they have finely decorated.
Around each palace for fear of their lives,
Are watchmen, armed with swords and knives.

* *



But all this power, finery and land,
Reject these men with death's sure hand.
Death arrived suddenly and captured,
By the neck those men, in evil enraptured.
Took by the collar those filled with malice,
Towards pain and miseries, far from the palace.

Along with the outcome of every deed,
In the Hereafter are they received.
While the bodies of these foul creatures lie,
In the heart of the earth, hidden from the eye.
The souls of these felons taken at a time,
When they were engaged in the vilest crime.

* *

Of these evil ones, depressed and remanded,
A host of questions will be demanded.
Where is "now your arrogance and pride,
That your body in the earth you did hide?
Where is your self-worship and vanity,
That you return with the worst of humanity?
Where all that luxury with no mitigation?
Where all your drunken profligation?
Where are your looks on which you enslaved,
Your hands and face on which lavish attention you
paid?

* *

There is no couch, no bed, no rest,
No perfume, jewelry and no fine dress.
In place of the praise of those you were choosing,
In and out of your body worms are oozing.
You left behind the wealth you had saved
You couldn't take it with you past the grave.

On hearing the poem from the Imam (AS), the entire
gathering was disrupted and everyone was shaking.
Al-Mutawakkil too, despite all his hard-heartedness
and cruelty, was standing shaking like a madman.

Questions

1. When was al-'Imām al-Hādī (AS) born?
2. Who designated him as Imam? According to what authority?
3. What does al-'Hādī" mean? What does "al-Naqī" mean?
4. Why did al-Mutawakkil summon the Imam to Samarrā'?
5. When was al-'Imām al-Hādī martyred? Where is his body buried?
6. What kind of ruler was al-Mutawakkil?
7. Why did he hate al-'Imām al-Hādī (AS)? Why was he afraid of him?
8. What did he ask of al-'Imām al-Hādī (AS)? What was his purpose?
9. In the form of verses, what did al-'Imām al-Hādī (AS) tell al-Mutawakkil?
10. What do we learn from this story?

* Exercises

1. Perform this story with your friends in the form of a play.
2. Memorize the poem.
3. Convert the poem into prose and read it to your friends.
4. Recite the story in your local Islamic centre or mosque when the people gather there for prayer.

LESSON TWENTY-TWO

Al-'Imām al-Ḥasan al-'Askarī(AS)

Our eleventh Imam is al-'Imām al-Ḥasan al-'Askarī (AS). He was born to al-'Imām al-Ḥādī (AS) on 8th Rabī' al-Thānī, 232 AH, in Madīnah. According to the Divine command and the decree of the Prophet (SA), al-'Imām al-Ḥādī (AS) appointed him as the Imam of mankind after himself, to lead humanity on the road to perfection and success.

Like his fathers before him, al-'Imām al-'Askarī was a guide to the people and was able to raise their level of awareness. He guided them towards true *Tawḥīd* (monotheism) and obedience to Allah's commands, and away from *shirk* (polytheism) and obedience to tyrants and oppressors.

The tyrannical Abbasid regime of the time realized that the Imam's policy of guiding the people was a threat to their own interests. The cruel ruler was afraid that the people would become enlightened and aware, and so he began to oppose the Imam. In various ways he caused great hardship for the Imam, and prevented people from visiting him, thus preventing them from benefiting from the Imam's knowledge and invaluable advice.

Finally, the cruel Abbasids took the Imam to Sāmarrā', just like they had done with his father, al-



'Imām al-Hādī (AS) and there they imprisoned him. They appointed strict and bad-tempered men to be his jailers, so as to be sure that the Imam was treated very roughly, but the decent manners and behaviour of the Imam civilized those hard-hearted men and turned them into kind believers.

Because the Imam was imprisoned under surveillance in an army camp, he is called al-'Imām al-Ḥasan al-'Askarī (AS) ('Askarī means military).

Throughout the Imam's long confinement, he never forgot his followers and even though they were not allowed to visit him, he used to write letters to them and manage to send these out of the house when necessary; and in this way he guided them and instructed them in all the necessary subjects.

Al-'Imām al-Ḥasan al-'Askarī struggled throughout his life to guide the people to worship Allah, and to lead them away from obedience to the tyrants. As a result, his opposition to the bloodthirsty Abbasid rulers

led to his early martyrdom at the age of 28.

Al-'Imām al-'Askarī was martyred on 8th Rabi' al-'Awwal, 260 AH, in the town of Sāmarrā', where his body was buried alongside that of his holy father, al-'Imām al-Hādī (AS). Eternal peace be upon him and upon all those martyred in the service of Allah.

A Letter from al-'Imām al-'Askarī (AS)

'Alī ibn Ḥusayn al-Qummī, a famous scholar who lived in Qum, once received a letter from al-'Imām al-Ḥasan al-'Askarī (AS). In it the Imam wrote:

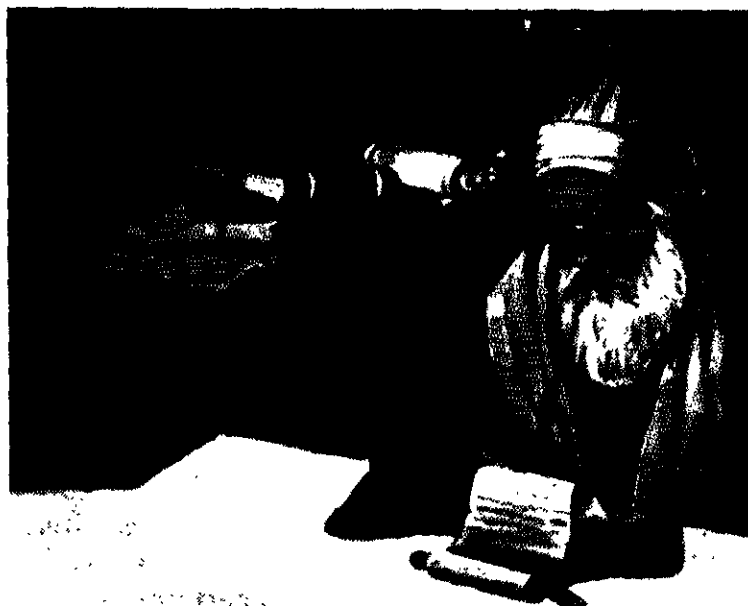
"In the name of Allah, the Merciful the Compassionate,... O trustworthy scholar, O wise and learned one, O 'Alī ibn Ḥusayn al-Qummī! May Allah grant you success in performing good deeds, and make your offspring worthy and righteous. Never give up virtue and piety. Offer your prayers at the beginning of their times and pay the *zakāt* of your property, for a person who doesn't pay *zakāt* on his wealth will not have his prayers accepted.

Overlook the failings and sins of others. Whenever you become angry reduce your anger. Behave magnanimously with your family and relatives. Be as one of your brothers in religion and be sympathetic towards them. Always strive to meet the needs of the people, and when you are met with ingratitude and ignorance for all your efforts, be patient. Be exact and thoughtful in understanding the laws of religion and the verses of the Qur'ān, and always reflect on the results of your actions. Never stray away from the guidelines of the Qur'ān. Meet people and behave with your best manners. Command people to the good deeds and persuade them to give up bad and unworthy deeds, and never spoil yourself with sins and evil actions.

Never give up the night prayer, Our Prophet Muḥammad (SA) once told ‘Alī (AS) “O ‘Alī, regard highly the night prayer. Never give up the night prayer.”

O ‘Alī ibn Ḥusayn al-Qummī, know that anyone who is heedless of the night prayer is not a very good Muslim. You yourself must always perform the night prayer, and you must tell our Shī‘ah that they, too must perform this prayer.

Be careful to always follow the instructions of the religion, and strive in the hope of perfect success. Our Shī‘ahs are not happy with the conditions prevailing in this world and are striving for the day of perfect success when my son, whom the Prophet (SA) has



mentioned in many *aḥādīth* (traditions), will appear and with the assistance of the good and righteous Shī‘ahs will fill the world with justice. Know that in

the end, the deserving and the pious will be the successful ones.

Peace be upon you and upon all our Shī'ahs,

Signed,
al-Ḥasan ibn 'Alī'

Questions

1. When was Imam al-Ḥasan al-'Askarī (AS) born?
2. Why did the Abbasid tyrants keep him under close guard at Sāmarrā'?
3. What effect did the Imam's behaviour have upon his jailers?
4. What does 'askarī mean? Why is our eleventh Imam known as al-'Askarī (AS)?
5. Where was al-'Imām al-'Askarī martyred? when?
6. In the letter to 'Alī ibn Ḥusayn al-Qummī, what has the Imam told us about prayer and *zakāt*? Do you offer your prayers at the beginning of their times?
7. What did the Imam write about behaving with relatives? How do you behave with your relatives?
8. What did the Imam write about his son?

✿ Exercises

1. List the points made by the Imam in his letter.
2. Read the lesson to the members of your family.
3. Ask a religious scholar how to perform the night prayer.
4. Write down some sentences from the Imam's letter in your best handwriting.

LESSON TWENTY-THREE

Al- Imām Muḥammad al-Mahdī (AS)

Our twelfth Imam was born on 15th Sha'bān, 255 AH, in the town of Sāmarrā'. His mother was Narjis, and his father was al-'Imām al-Ḥasan al-'Askarī (AS). His father chose the name of the Prophet (SA) for him, and so his name is Muḥammad (AS), but the twelfth Imam is known as 'al-Mahdī,' 'al-Qā'im, al-Ḥujjah and Imām al-Zamān.

The prophet (SA) has told us many things about the twelfth Imam. Among these *aḥādīth* is this one?

“The ninth son in the line of al-Ḥusayn has the same name as myself. His title is al-Mahdī. I give the Muslims glad tidings of his appearance.”

All the Imams have also given us glad tidings of the coming of al-Mahdī, and have told us:

“The son of al-Imām al-Ḥasan al-'Askarī is al-Mahdī, and we give you glad tidings of his appearance and his victory. Our Mahdī will be hidden from sight for a very long period of time but then, by the order of Allah, he will reappear and fill the earth with justice.”

The twelfth Imam was hidden from the tyrants from his childhood and in accordance with the Holy Prophet's decree he lived in secret. He only appeared before some chosen relatives and friends, and he spoke

with them.

According to the decrees of Allah and the Prophet (SA), al-'Imām al-Mahdī became the Imam after his father, al-'Imām al-'Askarī (AS). Owing to the special connection he had with Allah and the knowledge that had been put by Allah at his disposal, the Imam carried out all his heavy responsibilities even when he was a child.

With His limitless power and authority, the Almighty Allah has given the twelfth Imam a very long life. he has commanded him to live in secret and to guide the pure-hearted towards Allah. Although our Imam is hidden he comes and goes among mankind. He helps people and takes part in human activities without being recognized by anyone, and in this way he carries out his responsibilities. He is a great source of benefit to the people, for they benefit from him just as they benefit from the sun when it is behind a cloud.

Imam's period of Occultation

Imām al-Zamān's period of occultation will continue until the world is really ready for a government of honesty and purity, and the foundations of the "World Government of Islam" are laid. At that time, most of the people will be tired of misery and oppression. They will pray to Allah for the reappearance of the Imam with all of their hearts, and will pave the way for his arrival.

Then, when these conditions have been met, Allah will command the Imam to reappear, and with the miraculous power that Allah will give him, he will eliminate all injustice and replace it with true peace and tranquillity based on *Tawḥīd*.

We the Shī'ahs are awaiting that day, and with his help—which is the help of a perfect human being and

leader—we will strive to perfect ourselves and the members of society. With truth-loving hearts we long to see him, and we work hard towards his sacred goals.

We strive to reform ourselves and human society, and thus make the preparations for his victorious appearance.

Questions

1. When was the twelfth Imam born?
2. What has the Prophet (SA) told us about him?
3. What have the other Imams told us about him?
4. Whose command is the Imam obeying by remaining in occultation?
5. Presently, how does mankind benefit from his existence?
6. For how long will the Imam's occultation continue?
7. What will the Imam do when—by the order of Allah—he appears?
8. For which day are we the Shī'ahs awaiting? How do we prepare for Imam's arrival?

✿ Exercises

1. Read the lesson to your family.
2. Discuss the answers to these questions with your best friend.
3. Write a summary of the lesson and read it to your class-mates.

LESSON TWENTY-FOUR

A True Shī'ah

Al-'Imām Muḥammad al-Bāqir (AS) once said to one of his companions: "O Jābir! it is not enough that a person says: "I am a Shī'ah and I love the Prophet (SA) and the Prophet's family and the Imams. By Allah, a Shī'ah is the one who is perfectly pious and obedient to Allah's commands. Anyone else is not a Shī'ah no matter how much they say they love 'Alī (AS) and no matter what they call themselves.

"O Jābir! Our Shī'ahs 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 Qur'ān;
- (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"

Jābir was listening attentively. When the Imam (AS) finished, he said: "O son of the Prophet (SA) among the Muslims there are very few who possess these qualities."

The Imam replied:

"Allah forbid you imagine that just to claim to love

us is enough to be a Shī'ah. No not at all. A person who says 'I love 'Alī (AS)' but doesn't follow 'Alī (AS) in his actions is not the Shī'ah of 'Alī (AS). Similarly, if a person says 'I love the Prophet (SA)' but doesn't follow the actions of the Prophet (SA), his claim will be of no use to him."

"O Jābir! Our real friends and Shī'ahs are obedient to the commands of Allah, and everyone who is disobedient to Allah is our enemy".

"O Jābir! Always be pious and chaste, and perform good deeds so as to enjoy the blessings of the Paradise. Know that the best and most honourable before Allah are the pious and the chaste".

Questions

1. What type of person is a Shī'ah?
2. To be a Shī'ah, is it enough to simply claim that you love 'Alī (AS)?
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 Shī'ah do you have? Which are the ones you do not have?

✿ Exercises

1. Recite the lesson to the members of your family.
2. Review and discuss the qualities of a Shī'ah with your family.
3. Copy the lesson in your best handwriting.

LESSON TWENTY-FIVE

Islamic Leadership

Among the most important and eternal principles of Islām is the principle of leadership, which is also called guardianship (*wilāyah*). In Islam, the leadership of society is a divine responsibility that is not left to just anyone, and Allah makes known to the people those righteous and worthy persons that He has chosen to perform this important task.

During the time of the Prophet (SA), the leader and guardian of the Islamic society was of course the Prophet (SA) himself, and he was never irresolute about performing this important task. He received laws and commands from Allah and communicated these to the people, he was commanded by Allah to implement in society the social and political laws of Islam, and to lead, through his sacred leadership, the society to the path towards perfection.

The management of all the political and social affairs of society was in his hands. The orders for *jihād* (Islamic holy war) were issued by the Prophet (SA), and he personally appointed the commanders of his forces. In all these responsibilities, he would confer with the people, but the final decision was always taken by him and Allah gave him complete authority in this regard. The Prophet's (SA) decisions took precedence over

the immediate wants of the people, for he was aware of their best and long-term interests, and was more able than they were themselves to guide and lead them to felicity and freedom.

In the Qur'ān Allah tells us: "The Prophet is more in authority over the believers than they themselves."

But this leadership and guardianship is not limited to the time of the Prophet (SA). Rather the people of all times need a divine leader and guardian. For this reason under the command of the Almighty Allah, the Prophet (SA) appointed Imam 'Alī (AS) to be the leader of the people and the guardian of the society after himself. At a huge gathering of Muslims, while returning from his last ḥajj, the Prophet (SA) announced at a place called Ghadīr Khumm:

"He whose guardian I am, also his guardian is 'Alī."

Thus, it was by the order of Allah that 'Alī (AS) was designated by the Prophet (SA) as the leader and guardian of Islamic *Ummah* after himself. Likewise, 'Alī (AS) in turn did not leave the *Ummah* without a divine leader. At the command of Allah and in accordance with the decree of the Prophet (SA) he appointed al-'Imām al-Ḥasan (AS) to the post of leadership, and made this known to the people.

In the same way, each of the infallible Imams appointed a successor to lead and guide the *Ummah*, until it came to the turn of the Twelfth Imam, Muḥammad al-Mahdī (AS) who, at the order of Allah, was hidden from the vision of mankind.

During the Imam's *Ghaybah* (occultation), Muslim society is not bereft of the proper leadership. According to the words of the Twelfth Imam (AS) and the Imams before him, the leadership and guidance of Islamic society during this period is the duty of just, aware, selfless and brave *mujtahidīn* (Islamic jurispru-

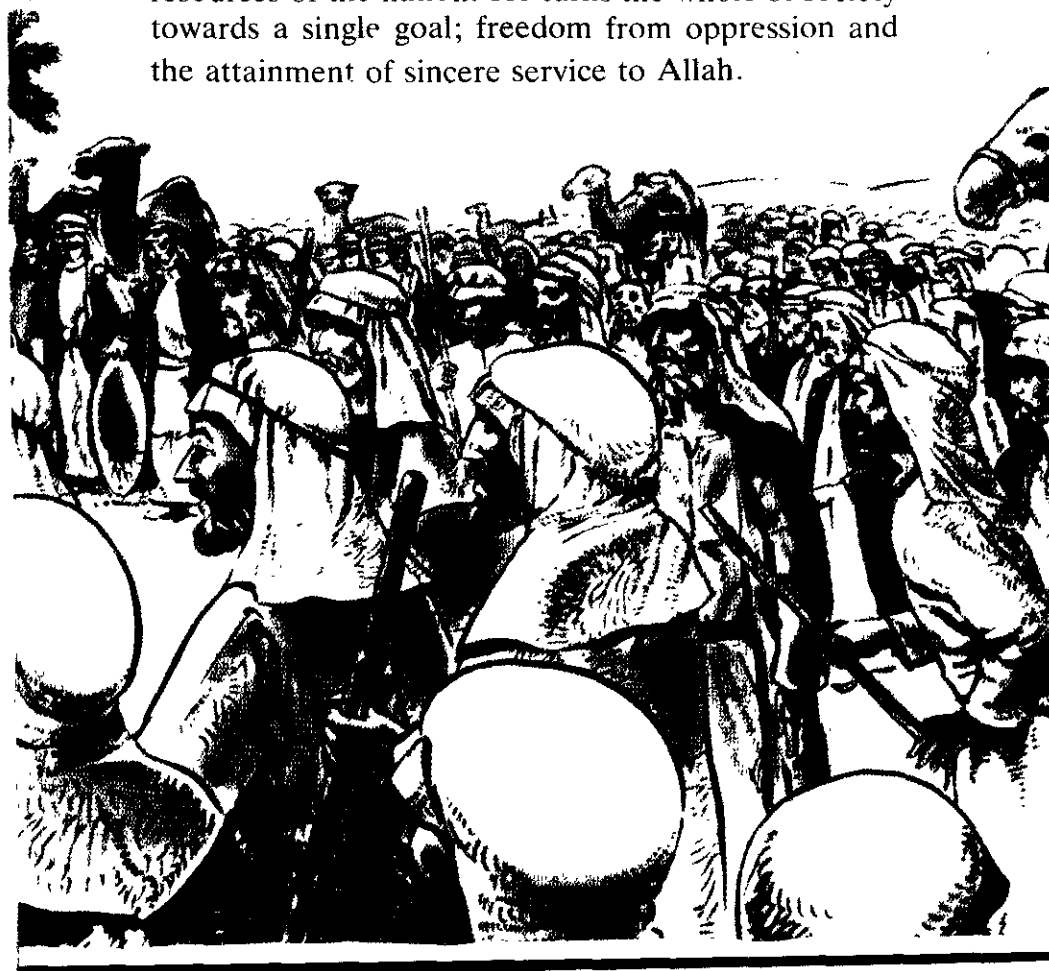
dents). During this period the leader of Islamic society must be a great scholar of Islam, virtuous and pious, who must be totally aware of current political and social affairs and of the needs of the people. The Muslims must accept such an aware and decisive person, and must choose him to be their leader and follow his instructions.

When the Muslims accept such a leader they can easily gain their freedom and overcome the injustice



and oppression of the tyrannical powers. As is clear, by accepting the principle of religious leadership, the people of Iran have freed themselves from the tyranny and injustice of the puppet regime of the ex-Shah, and are slowly but surely on their way to overturning the whole of the oppressive world order.

With perfect vision and decisiveness, the Islamic leader guides the *Ummah* in all social and political affairs. He is ultimately responsible for the armed forces, and he keeps watch over the laws and management of society so that by following the Islamic programmes the society moves towards perfection. He puts a halt to deviations and centralizes all the forces and resources of the nation. He turns the whole of society towards a single goal; freedom from oppression and the attainment of sincere service to Allah.



Questions

1. Who bears the responsibility of leading the society during the era of the Prophet (SA).
2. What were the Prophet's (SA) responsibilities towards the society?
3. What does Allah tell us in the Qur'ān about the Prophet's (SA) leadership?
4. Who did the Prophet (SA) appoint to lead the people after himself?
5. What did the Prophet (SA) say when he introduced 'Alī (AS) to the people as their next leader?
6. Who must carry the responsibility of leading, guiding and supervising the Islamic nation during the *Ghaybah* of the Twelfth Imam (AS)?
7. What qualities must this person have?
8. What are his responsibilities?
9. How can the Muslims become free and overcome injustice and oppression?
10. Who must be in overall charge of the armed forces?

✿ Exercises

1. Read the lesson to the members of your family and discuss it with them.
2. Write a summary of the lesson.
3. Think over three more questions from this lesson and ask your best friend to answer them.
4. Answer the questions your friend has thought over.

LESSON TWENTY-SIX

Enjoining the Right and Forbidding the Wrong

One summer day, Imam ‘Alī (AS) was walking through the town on his way home. The sun was intensely hot, and the Imam (AS) was tired and perspiring. Most of the people were sleeping, and the streets were quiet and deserted. Suddenly, Imam ‘Alī (AS) heard a voice of wailing and crying. He stopped, looked all around, and seeing no one he carried on his way. Then a woman appeared at the end of the alley. She was running helplessly, wailing and weeping. She ran up to Imam ‘Alī (AS), sank to the floor, and wiped the tears from her eyes. She started to say something but she couldn’t help crying. Once again her face drowned in tears.

The Imam (AS) asked her gently as to why she was so upset. With hard breathing and her wailing voice, the woman replied: “My husband is ill-treating me. He has put me out of the house. He wants to hit me... O Amīr al-Mu’minīn, help me, for there is no one to help me, other than you.”

Imam ‘Alī (AS) was very tired. He told her: “Wait until it becomes cool. Then I will go with you and speak to your husband. At the moment it is very hot and I am very tired. It is better that you wait a little.”

This once more brought tears to the woman's face. "O Amīr al-Mu'minīn," she said, "I am afraid. I fear that if I reach home late my husband will be even angrier with me, and will treat me even more harshly".

Imam 'Alī (AS) thought for a moment, and then said: "No, by Allah, I will not delay enjoining the right and forbidding the wrong. I must help this oppressed one."

With that he set off for the woman's house. As they approached the house she pointed it out and stood a little way off, too afraid to go any nearer. Imam 'Alī (AS) knocked at the door and offered his *salām*.

A powerful young man, obviously enraged, opened the door. Straightway the Imam (AS) inquired about his behaviour towards his wife, and then, in a gentle, kind manner he advised him: "O young man, why do you trouble your wife? Be fearful of Allah, and don't trouble your wife any more. Don't hit her, and if she has annoyed you, you must forgive her."

Standing at the other side of the lane the woman was listening to the conversation and hoping that her husband would accept the Imam's (AS) advice and mend his ways towards her. But the young man (who



didn't seem to recognize the Imam (AS) shouted angrily and impudently: "Who are you to poke your nose into my affairs? I now intend to kill her and there is nothing you can do about it. It's none of your business. Right now I am going to set her on fire; let me see what you can do about it!"

Listening to this outburst, the Imam (AS) lowered his head and muttered "*Lā ilāha illā Allāh*". And when the youth rushed towards his wife threatening to set her on fire, the Imam (AS) blocked his way, took his hand and again reprimanded and advised him.

Yet the young man did not heed the Imam (AS) and continued his shouting and his violent and aggressive behaviour. Again he tried to move towards his wife; he really wanted to set her on fire.

Imam 'Alī (AS) then got angry. With no hesitation he drew his sword and raised it over the young man's head. The flash of the sword terrified the young man and his whole body was badly trembling. The Imam (AS) looked sternly into the young man's face: "I requested you kindly and politely. I advised you to do good work, and I warned you of the punishment of your evil deeds. But as for you, you began shouting like a madman. You were bad-tempered, impudent and quarrelsome. Do you expect me to allow you to tyrannize this lady! Be sorry for your bullying and cruelty, be afraid of Allah, stop troubling your poor wife; or else you will earn the punishments of your ugly deeds."

At this point some of Imam 'Alī's (AS) companions arrived and greeted their Imam. Hearing them address him as "Amīr al-Mu'minīn" the young man recognized 'Alī (AS) and became very ashamed of his behaviour. Full of remorse and regret, he apologized.

Imam 'Alī (AS) sheathed his sword and said to the

woman: 'Go to your house now, you will be safe. But in future treat your husband with more respect and live more peacefully with him. O noble lady, you too, be loving and kind to your husband, and give him no reason to be angry with you.'

Questions

1. What does "enjoining the right" mean?
2. What does "forbidding the wrong" mean?
3. If you see a child being bullied, what will you do? What is your duty?
4. If a bullied or oppressed person asks for your help, how would you respond?
5. How did Imam 'Alī (AS) enjoin the right for the benefit of that young man?
6. How did he enjoin the right for the lady?

✿ Exercises

1. Enact the story in the form of a short play.
2. Write a summary of the story.
3. Read the story to the members of your family.

LESSON TWENTY-SEVEN

A Public Duty

Can you be indifferent to the actions of other people? Can you exist in "isolation" and as totally cut off from the rest of the society? Can you exist without any relations with other people?

What effect does the goodness or badness of the society have on the individual? What kind of individuals grow up in a religious society? When a person grows up in an evil, corrupt and perverse society, to what evils is he led?

What responsibility does the Muslim have towards the society he or she lives in?

In Islam, everyone is responsible before Allah towards the society, and no one can be indifferent to the actions of his neighbours. Each person must realize that he is linked to the rest of society, and that the society is like a single body of which he is a part. Therefore, the true Muslim strives with all his might for the benefit and good of his society. Islam teaches Muslims that the heaven-sent programmes of Islam lead the society to perfection and happiness provided that those programmes are properly carried out and followed by all the people in the society.

Therefore, in order that all the aspects of the laws and regulations of religion be properly carried out,

Islam places the responsibility of ensuring the proper implementation of the Islamic teachings upon two factors.

Firstly, the legal Islamic authority, that is, the legitimate Islamic government. It is the duty of the government in Islam to put into practice all the Islamic laws, regulations and programmes.

Islamic government has the duty of leading the individuals of the society towards good deeds, and it must put an end to all instances of injustice, oppression, corruption and perversion. It must severely punish those who are guilty of these crimes, and must constantly encourage those who are religious and benevolent. These are some of the most important duties of the Islamic government.

Secondly, each and every Muslim is considered in Islam to be responsible for the society and for practising the divine laws. Each person is counted as a kind of guardian and policeman. In Islam, every Muslim must pay attention to the actions and behaviour of the people of his society, and must do what he can to prevent corruption.

A Muslim must himself be good and must also encourage others to do good, and he must strive for the welfare of society. Islam calls this duty "*al-'amr bilma'rūf*", which means enjoining the right.

A Muslim must also refrain from sins and from breaking the laws of Islam and the Islamic government (if it is truly Islamic), and as far as he can, he must try to prevent sins and corruption from occurring in the society.

Islam calls this duty "*al-nahy 'an al-munkar*", which means forbidding the wrong.

Al'amr bil-ma'rūf and *al-nahy 'an al-munkar* together form one of the most important public duties

in Islam, and one of the foremost duties of every Muslim. It is obligatory for every Muslim to defend the laws of his religion in this way, and to strive to safeguard them and have them carried out. Allah tells us in the Qur'ān:

“You are the best nation (O Muslims) brought out for mankind, because you enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong, and you have faith in Allah... (3:109).”

The Prophet (SA) of Islam has said:

“Enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong, for as long as you do so your society will be strong and happy; but when the Muslims would fail in this, their society will be dominated by oppressors and no matter how much they pray to Allah for deliverance from the oppressors, Allah will not answer their prayers and they will find no justice anywhere, neither in the skies nor in the earth.”

Now that you know about this great and sacred duty, what programmes will you draw up for the rest of your life? How will you cooperate with your friends in performing this great duty?

Questions

1. Who is responsible for implementing the laws of Islam?
2. What is the duty of Islamic government?
3. What is Muslim individuals' duty towards the implementation of Islamic laws?
4. What has the Prophet (SA) told us about enjoining the right and forbidding the wrong?

5. What has Allah told us about it in the Qur'ān?
6. What is your and your friends' duty in this regard?

***Exercises**

1. Read the lesson again and write down the best way of performing *al-'amr bil-ma'rūf* and *al-nahy 'an al-munkar*.
2. Think over three more questions from this lesson and ask your friend to answer them.
3. answer the questions your friend has thought over.

LESSON TWENTY-EIGHT

Martyrdom in the Way of Truth

Al-'Imām al-Ḥusayn (AS) was a man of faith and action. During nights, he worshipped Allah in privacy while during the day he worked hard and guided the people. He was constantly mindful of the poor and the needy, and he used to visit them and cheer them up. He used to tell his followers:

“Be always in touch with the needy, for Allah does not love the arrogant”.

Al-'Imām al-Ḥusayn (AS) always helped the poor as much as he could. At night he would carry sacks of food to the houses of the poor and leave them near the doors. He worked hard to eradicate poverty, establish justice and acquaint the people with Allah.

During the time of al-'Imām al-Ḥusayn a tyrant called Yazīd became the ruler. Yazīd called himself the successor of Muḥammad (SA) but this was a lie. He used to spend the income of the Islamic realm on drinking, gambling and wild parties. Public wealth was wasted for supporting his regime and the rights of the poor were trampled upon. In this way he totally scorned the instructions of Islam.

When 'Yazīd became ruler of the Muslims he immediately demanded al-'Imām al-Ḥusayn (AS) to recognise him as the ruler and accept his leadership; but



al-Imām al-Husayn (AS) was the true successor of Prophet Muḥammad (SA) and could not accept and endorse the leadership of an oppressor. He began to enlighten and awaken the people about Yazīd and exhorted them to dissociate from him. He would tell them:

“Do you not see that the truth is being trampled upon and the falsehood and oppression are prevailing? In such conditions, a Muslim must be ready for martyrdom in defence of the right. Martyrdom and self-sacrifice for the sake of truth is victory and success, while life with the oppressors is no more than shame and disgrace.”

At that time the people of Kūfah (Iraq) were loving followers of al-Imām ‘Alī (AS) who had been suffering at the hands of Yazīd and his father, Mu‘āwiyah. They invited al-Imām al-Husayn (AS) to Kūfah to lead them against Yazīd and his wicked rule. Al-Imām al-Husayn (AS) had indeed decided to rise up and fight, and so he accepted the invitation and set off for Kūfah.

When the Imam (AS) and his followers were near

Kūfah, they were met by Yazīd's troops. The troops wanted to arrest al-'Imām al-Ḥusayn (AS) and his followers and take them to Yazīd. The Imam (AS) told them:

“Never will I accept disgrace and surrender to Yazīd. Death for me is superior to disgrace and I am ready to defend Islam and the Muslims until I am martyred.”

At a place called Karbalā' al-'Imām al-Ḥusayn (AS), his family and helpers were surrounded by Yazīd's troops. The Imam (AS) and his followers stood firm as they fought against the thousands of troops of Yazīd. Finally, on 10th Muḥarram, 61 AH (the day we call 'Āshūrā'), they were martyred.

Al-'Imām al-Ḥusayn (AS) and his followers were martyred, but they did not submit to injustice and oppression. They defended Islam and the Muslims. With their blood they saved Islam and the Qur'ān from the danger of annihilation at the hands of Yazīd. Al-'Imām al-Ḥusayn (AS) fought against oppression and defended the religion of Islam, and by doing so he taught the world the greatest lesson on freedom and righteousness. For this reason we call al-'Imām al-Ḥusayn(AS) “Sayyid al-Shuhadā'” which means lord of the martyrs.

Now the turn has come for us to safeguard and defend Islam. We must shoulder this magnificent responsibility.

Questions

1. What did al-'Imām al-Ḥusayn (AS) tell us about maintaining contact with the poor?
2. What goals was al-'Imām al-Ḥusayn (AS) striving for?

3. In which ways did Yazīd use to spend the income of the Islamic state?
4. What did Yazīd want from al-'Imām al-Ḥusayn (AS)?
5. Did al-'Imām al-Ḥusayn (AS) accept this demand? Do you know why?
6. When must the true Muslim be ready for martyrdom?
7. What did al-'Imām al-Husayn (AS) and his followers consider to be real victory?
8. Why did Yazīd's forces block the way of al-'Imām al-Ḥusayn (AS)?
9. Did the Imam (AS) surrender? What did he say?
10. How did the Imam (AS) and his loyal followers save Islam from danger?
11. How did the Imam (AS) teach mankind a lesson on freedom and righteousness?
12. Now that the turn of safeguarding Islam has reached us, what is our responsibility?

✎ Exercises

1. Write down the answers to these questions and compare them with the answers your friends have written.
2. Write a summary of the lesson and read it to your school friends.
3. Read the story to the members of your family.
4. Copy some of the sentences of Imam's (AS) speeches and pin them to the wall of your classroom.

LESSON TWENTY-NINE

Protecting Religion

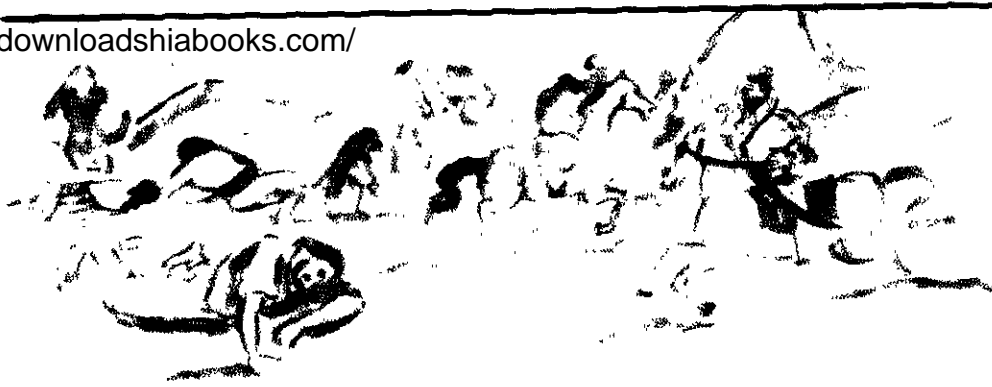
The day of 'Āshūrā' is a glorious day for truth and freedom. 'Āshūrā' is a model for every day of our lives, and the martyrs of that day are the forerunners and teachers for all the martyrs in the way of truth.

One of the self-sacrificing young men of that day was called Wahab. He too gave his life for his Imam (AS) and for the true teachings of the Qur'ān, and provided a lesson on martyrdom to all sincere youths of all times and all places. Wahab was in his tent when his mother entered. She was obviously flustered and nervous; she said to her son:

“Wahab! What are you waiting for? Don't you know that Yazīd's forces have surrounded your Imam (AS)? Rise and defend your Imam (AS). Rise and defend the Qur'ān, freedom and honour. If you want me to be happy and pleased with you, rise and give your blood for the sake of your religion.”

Wahab was already busy putting on his clothes and armour for the battlefield. He quickly finished and made his farewells to his mother and his young wife. He ran to the battlefield with the permission of al-'Imām al-Ḥusayn (AS).

Wahab fought like a valiant lion and his sword fell on the heads of the enemy like lightning. But the day



was hot and soon he became more thirsty and tired. He withdrew from the battle to rest for a while, and seeing his mother standing and watching the battle

alongside one of the tents he rushed to her side. She kissed the bleeding face of her son, and said:

“My son, I was watching your courage and valour, may Allah reward you, but rest is not permissible. Our Imam’s (AS) helpers are few; return to the battlefield and either defeat the enemy or be martyred in the presence of your Imam (AS). Only in this case I will be content with you and pray for you. Go now, my brave son.”

With this encouragement, and after seeing his mother and wife, just once more for the last time, Wahab returned to the battlefield with an ardent desire for martyrdom. An enemy sword fell on his arm and wounded him. Watching from afar, his mother let out an involuntary groan. She picked up a stick and hurried to defend her wounded son. Wahab’s young wife also saw what had happened and she too rushed off to help him. She arrived at his side to find him lying, with blood spurting from his deep wound.

Wahab’s wife wanted only to defend her husband and play her part in defending the religion. While taking care of her wounded husband, she too was attacked by the enemy troops and was martyred.

Defending Islam and the Qur’an is obligatory on both men and women. When necessary, Muslim women must learn shooting and other techniques of warfare. They must learn first aid and the art of nursing and attending on the injured. They are to be ever vigilant guardians of the Islamic homelands and honour.

In Iran, the brave Muslim women in Islamic *hijāb* (dress) followed the instructions of their great leader and took part in the demonstrations that freed the country. These freedom-loving women wearing their modest Islamic dress entered decisively into the arena,

and with the cry of *Allāhu Akbar* on their lips they toppled down the imperial palace itself.

These Muslim women, following the instructions of Islam and observing Islamic *ḥijāb* in accordance with the Islamic teachings, cooperated with the men and delivered their country from the grip of traitors. Today, the Muslim women of Iran are playing an important role in all the organizations of the country.

These are the women who raised in the environment of Islam. Islam wants women to be veiled, to wear plain clothes in public, to keep their beauty and their adornments for their husbands and families, to avoid unnecessary contacts with men who are not *maḥram* (with whom marriage is not permitted) and to maintain in this way their dignity and respect.

Allah tells us in the Qur'ān that the believing women must not gaze at men who are not *maḥram* and must hide from them their bodies and hair. The women brought up in Islamic environment can grow spiritually and turn into brave defenders of Islam, the Qur'ān, dignity and honour. They can play an important role in freeing and developing the great Islamic nation.

Questions

1. What is 'Āshūrā'?
2. what did Wahab's mother tell her son? What did she want him to do?
3. When Wahab returned from the battlefield, in what mood did he find his mother?
4. What did his mother tell him?
5. How was Wahab's wife killed?
6. What is the duty of Muslim women when the

teachings of the Qur'ān or the Islamic state is in danger?

7. How did the pious, freedom-loving women of Iran topple down the imperialistic regime?

8. What are the instructions of Islam towards women's *ḥijāb*?

9. What are the Islamic instructions about women's relations with men?

10. How can women defend Islam?

✱ Exercises

1. What is your duty in strengthening Islam and the Islamic movement? Write down the answer with the help of your family or friends.

2. Write down the answer to question 8 (above) in your best handwriting.

3. Write a summary of this story and read it to your friends.

4. Write the story in the form of a play.

LESSON THIRTY

Dirt and Diseases

Do you know why you fall ill?

Do you know which things are unclean?

Many serious and infectious diseases like typhoid, cholera, TB (tuberculosis) and polio (poliomyelitis) are caused by very small living things called microbes and viruses. These microorganisms live in dirty places, where they grow and breed. Microbes and viruses are useful, but when they are transferred to the human body they are harmful and make us ill.

Perhaps you can now understand why we fall ill; and what we must do to prevent disease.

The best way of preventing disease is to remain clean. In order to be free of disease, we must keep all dirt away from ourselves and our environment.

Can you identify the dirty things that carry microbes?

Do you know that the excreta of human beings and *ḥarām* (forbidden)-meat animals carry harmful microbes?

Do you know that the urine of human beings and these animals is filthy and poisonous?

Do you know that the microbes carried by dogs and pigs are extremely harmful to the human body and soul?

Do you know that the dead bodies of human beings

and animals are the breeding and growth centres of microbes?

The Law-giver of Islam, the Almighty Allah, knew all these things, and has told us that these and some other things are dirty and *najis* (unclean), and has instructed the Muslims to keep themselves and their environment free and clean of these things. Therefore, Muslims must make sure that they are clean of all the causes of physical, mental and spiritual sicknesses, for they know that they pollute their bodies and minds.

Here are some of the things that Islam tells us that they are dirty and unclean:

1. The urine and excreta of human beings and of all *ḥarām*-meat animals;
2. The blood and meat of dead animals, human beings, *ḥarām*-meat animals, and the animals not slaughtered according to Islam;
3. Dogs and pigs;
4. Wine and beer and all forms of intoxicating things or alcoholic drinks; and
5. *Kāfirīn* (unbelievers).

The body and clothes of a Muslim must not come in contact with these; if it so happens to a Muslim, he must go for *ṭahārah* (purification) in a specified manner.

Questions

1. What must a Muslim keep away from himself in order to remain pure?
2. What must we do in order to prevent diseases?
3. Count the things that Islam tells us are *najis*?
4. What does '*najis*' mean?

✱ Exercises

1. Ask your parents how to purify things that have become *najis* so that you yourself and all the things you use can remain *ṭāhir* (pure).
2. Discuss the lesson with your friends.

LESSON THIRTY-ONE

The Prayer for Allah's Signs

(Ṣalāt al-'Āyāt)

Whenever an earthquake or an eclipse of the sun or the moon takes place, Muslims are reminded of the day of Resurrection, when the sun and the moon will become dark, and the people will be brought to life and gathered for their rewards and punishments.

When an earthquake or an eclipse of the sun or moon takes place, the aware Muslim sees in it a sign of the power of Allah. His heart trembles at this and he feels the need of his Lord.

Therefore, in accordance with the commands of Allah, he stands up to offer the prayer of Allah's signs (Ṣalāt al-'Āyāt). He prays to Allah and Allah bestows peace and tranquillity upon his trembling heart, for remembrance of Allah puts peace into distracted hearts and enlightens the hearts that are otherwise dark and depressed.

In this way our hearts become calm and we are better



equipped to face the difficulties of life and are able to choose the right path in life.

Reciting the *Ṣalāt al-ʿĀyāt* whenever there is a solar or lunar eclipse or an earthquake is *Wājib* (obligatory) in Islam.

How to Recite Ṣalāt al-ʿĀyāt:

The *Ṣalāt al-ʿĀyāt* is like the morning prayer in that it consists of two units, or *rakʿahs*; but in the *Ṣalāt al-ʿĀyāt* each unit has five *rukūʿs* (bowing down). Before each *rukūʿ* we must recite *Sūrat al-Ḥamd* and another *Sūrah*, and after the fifth *rukūʿ* we move to *sajdah* (prostration) as usual. After the first *rakʿah*, we stand up and perform the second one in exactly the same way as the first, and after the two *sajdahs* we recite the *tashahhud* and *salāms* and then the *Ṣalāt al-ʿĀyāt* will be over.

The *Ṣalāt al-ʿĀyāt* can also be recited in a different way. You can read about it in the detailed books of Islamic Law (*al-Sharīʿah*).

Questions

1. What are we reminded of when we witness an earthquake or an eclipse of the sun or the moon?
2. How do we recite *Ṣalāt al-ʿĀyāt*?
3. What is the benefit of the *Ṣalāt al-ʿĀyāt*?
4. When is it *wājib* to recite the *Ṣalāt al-ʿĀyāt*?

✽Exercise

Practise the *Ṣalāt al-ʿĀyāt* with your family and friends.

LESSON THIRTY-TWO

O Mosque, O Mosque!

O Mosque, O Mosque, O sacred place,
O Mosque, O Mosque, centre of grace.
Your minaret, from which light abounds,
Sends forth your meaningful sounds.



With a hundred counsels you invite us,
To hasten towards Allah's forgiveness.
Hasten for the prayer—food of sages,
Time of ascension and flying through ages.
Hasten in my direction the prayer, the prayer,
The best work is prayer so honest and fair.
O Mosque, fair guide of the human race,
The sound from you is the sound of faith.
A tent of light on dark, dark land,
A cool canopy on hot, scorching sand.
Over our heads, you, kind neighbour,
Our citadel in times of danger.
Holy cradle of heart, soul and faith,
Of me and Allah, a meeting place.

✿ Exercises

1. Learn this poem by heart.
2. Discuss the point raised in the poem with your family.
3. Now write a summary of the poem in ordinary prose.

LESSON THIRTY-THREE

The Friday Prayer

The *Salāt* in Islam is the greatest stimulus to faith and the high point in the life of a human being. A person who gives up reciting *Ṣalāt* has no faith in Islam and is far from humanity.

While reciting *Ṣalāt*, we stand facing the *Qiblah*, ie, Ka'bah which is the House of Allah in Makkah, and enter into discourse with our loving Creator. The Prophet (SA) has recommended that we should recite *Ṣalāt* in a mosque in *Jamā'ah* (congregation) with our fellow Muslims, for it has much more blessings and value. The Almighty Allah accepts *Ṣalāt* fully if it is recited in *Jamā'ah* in a mosque with perfect concentration.



Among the congregational *Ṣalāts*, the *Ṣalāt al-Jumu'ah* (Friday Prayer) has a special status, for it can only be recited in *Jamā'ah*. It also has other characteristics. Can you say what are these? Do you know why the imam holds a weapon in his hand? Do you know on what topics the imam must speak before he can lead the *Ṣalāt al-Jumu'ah*?

The imam of the Friday prayer holds a weapon in his hand so as to warn the internal and external enemies of Islam that the Muslims are ever ready to defend the domain of Islam. By holding this weapon he reminds the Muslims that the freedom of reciting the *Ṣalāt al-Jumu'ah* depends upon *jihād* or struggle. He holds a weapon in his hand as he delivers his *khuṭbahs* (addresses) as a way of saying that the *Ṣalāt* and *jihād* are inseparable, and that the Muslims must always be vigilant against their enemies.

The imam of the Friday prayer is selected by the leader of Islam. With a weapon in his hand he stands facing the Muslims and delivers two *khuṭbahs*. In the first *khuṭbah*, he speaks about the social and political needs of the people, and explains the general conditions of the State. He also talks about the problems society may be facing, and also about their useful solutions.

In the second *khuṭbah*, he invites the people to increase their acts of virtue, self-sacrifices, and love for Allah. He calls them to righteousness, honesty, truthfulness, cooperation and all the other virtues.

Meanwhile, the people sit in orderly rows, facing the *Qiblah* as if reciting *ṣalāt*, and thus benefit from such a practice in discipline, brotherhood and unity and also show the enemy their discipline and unity.

As soon as the imam begins the *khuṭbahs* of the *ṣalāt* it is obligatory for all the people taking part to

sit still and listen quietly to the *khuṭbahs*. The great leader of the Islamic Revolution, Imam Khomeynī, has told us that the *ṣalāt al-Jumu'ah* must be recited in the most awesome fashion possible.

Questions

1. What do the orderly rows of the *Ṣalāt al-Jumu'ah* signify?
2. Why does the imam carry a weapon during his *khuṭbahs*?
3. What does the imam speak about in his *khuṭbahs*?
4. What has Imam Khomeynī told us about the *Ṣalāt al-Jumu'ah*?

✿ Exercises

1. List the benefits of the *Ṣalāt al-Jamā'ah* and *Ṣalāt al-Jumu'ah*.
2. Read the lesson to the members of your family.
3. Write a summary of the lesson.

LESSON THIRTY-FOUR

Household Chores

Maḥmūd was writing the following essay:

My name is Maḥmūd. I have two sisters, Zaynab and Fāṭimah. 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. Fāṭimah does some chores and Zaynab 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, Ridā, doesn't have a job to do, and he is only ten months old. My mother says that Ridā'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 (SA) has said:



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

Besides doing our own tasks, we also help one another. One day I came home and found 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 (AS) and we must follow him in piety. Imam ‘Ali (AS) 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 Ridā goes with us to the library, but instead of reading a book sometimes he tears the book 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.

Mahmūd handed over the essay to his English teacher. When he got it back, the teacher had written:

“Mahmūd! 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 (SA) 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. Can you find a better way to solve them? How?
6. Does your family share the household chores? What is your job?

7. Do you have a library in your house? Who provided the books?
8. What did the teacher write regarding Maḥmūd's essay? Why did he tell him to be grateful to the Almighty Allah?
9. What does selfless mean?

✿ Exercises

1. Write a few lines explaining the "model selflessness" of one of your friends.
2. Like Maḥmūd, write a brief account of all the things you do during a typical day, and explain how you share the household chores.

LESSON THIRTY-FIVE

Fasting

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

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

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

Allah has made observing the *ṣawm* a *wājib* 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-Şādiq (AS) has said: "A person who merely abstains from eating and drinking will not always be counted as one who is observing *şawm*."

This means that when you observe *şawm*, your ears, eyes, tongue, etc. must also be observing *şawm* and must not perform any unlawful actions. Your hands, feet, and all the parts of your body must also be observing *şawm* and must commit no sin. Only then will your *şawm* be accepted by the Almighty Allah.

When you are observing *şawm* 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 *bāligh* (mature), it is *wājib* to observe *şawm* during the month of Ramaḍān, unless it is harmful for them.

* Children eat a little with their families shortly before the *şawm* 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 *şawm* with the rest of their family-members.

* People who eat when they are supposed to observe *şawm*, commit a sin. They must observe the *şawm* for the number of days they have not observed the *şawm* without any proper Islamic reason; and additionally they must also observe *şawm* for 60 days or feed 60 poor people for each day on which they broke their *şawm*.

* Entertaining a guest for the *iftār* is one of the best deeds to perform in the month of Ramaḍān. the

Prophet (SA) has told us: “Whoever invites a person observing *ṣawm* for *iftār*, his sins will be forgiven and the Almighty Allah would bestow on him goodness and blessings.” some of the Prophet’s (SA) Companions used to say: “O Messenger of Allah, we all are not able to do this” and the Prophet (SA) would reply: “If not, then feed a person observing *ṣawm* even half a date, or offer him a glass of water.”

Questions

1. What is the aim in observing the *ṣawm*?
2. What must be our *niyyah* when we wish to observe *ṣawm*?
3. For what kind of deeds, we get more ready by observing *ṣawm*?
4. *Why does observing the ṣawm* 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 *ṣawm* properly?
6. If a person breaks his *ṣawm* without any Islamic reason, or doesn’t observe *ṣawm* when he is supposed to, how does he make up for this major sin?
7. How does observing the *ṣawm* free us of our bad desires?
8. In what season does the month of Ramaḍān fall this year? How old will you be then? Is the *ṣawm wājib* for you? For how many days have you already observed the *ṣawm*? Did you control your behaviour to perfect your *ṣawm*?

✱Exercise

Read the lesson to the members of your family.

LESSON THIRTY-SIX

Hajj

Last year I went with my parents to Arabia to take part in the glorious ceremony of *ḥajj*. What an auspicious journey it was! And how I wish you had been there and seen those glorious *manāsik* (rites) of *ḥajj*.

A little distance to Makkah, we stopped at a place called the *mīqāt*. There we took off our clothes and put on *iḥrām* (the plain white coverings). As I put on *iḥrām* according to Islamic rules, my father said to me: "My boy, you are now in the state of *Iḥrām*. That



means that you must be more mindful of Allah. In the state of *iḥrām* you must not tell a lie, you must not make an oath, you must not hurt animals, and you must not quarrel with anyone. Hopefully this will train you in overcoming your desires and remaining the same way in the future.

“My son, *hajj* to the House of Allah is a great act of worship and a sublime training ground for human development and perfection. Here we are trained in the subjects of simplicity, equality, humility, self-restraint, etc.”

Once we had dressed ourselves in the coverings of *iḥrām*, we headed off to Makkah with all the other *ḥujjāj*, all of us saying “*Labbayk Allāhumma labbayk*”! Really I could hardly believe my eyes. Hundreds of thousands of people, all from different nations and races, were all wearing the same simple *iḥrām*; with one mind, with one voice, in all equality, were moving along with us to Makkah.

As soon as we arrived at Makkah, we eagerly went to the Holy Ka’bah to perform the *ṭawāf* (circumambulation). What a sight it was! How beautiful, how glorious! The surge of the huge crowd reminded us of the Day of Resurrection, and brought home to us the greatness and glory of Allah.

Around the Ka’bah, we performed the *ṭawāf*, and when we finished we performed the other *manāsik* of *ḥajj*.

Being at the *ḥajj* also had another benefit for us. Throughout we all, especially my father, had long discussions with Muslims from other countries. We talked about their economic, political and cultural conditions, and we became aware of their manners, culture and problems. When we arrived home my father talked about these things with all his friends, and so we all

benefited from this good and useful information.

* It is *wājib* for every Muslim, who is able to afford, to go once in his or her life-time to take part in the *ḥajj*, and thus come back with a radiant heart and a new resolve for perfection.

Al-'Imām Ja'far al-Ṣādiq (AS) has said: "Whoever forsakes his *wājib ḥajj* without a religious excuse, will leave this world not as a Muslim but will be considered on the Judgement Day among the non-Muslims."

Questions

1. What is the duty of a person who puts on *iḥrām*?
What are the acts that become *ḥarām* for him?
2. In what matters does the *ḥajj* train us?
3. Who do we remember when performing the *man-āsik* of *ḥajj*?
4. What benefits do we gain from the *ḥajj*?
5. Who must perform the *ḥajj*?
6. What has al-'Imām Ja'far al-Ṣādiq told us about *ḥajj*?

✱ Exercises

1. Sit down for a discussion with someone who has been on *ḥajj*. Ask him (or her) to talk about his journey, and to read this lesson for you.
2. Speak about this lesson to someone who wants to go on *ḥajj*. Read this lesson and discuss the *ḥajj* and its benefits.

LESSON THIRTY-SEVEN

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 ‘*Ālim*’ (religious scholar) came to our village and began to guide us. He took a few months for settling 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 (SA) 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 gutters? Dirty air and dirty water cause diseases. Air and water belong 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 ‘*Ālim*’ before all of us, and we started the work of cleaning the streets and making them tidy. When we finished, the ‘*Ālim*’ 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.

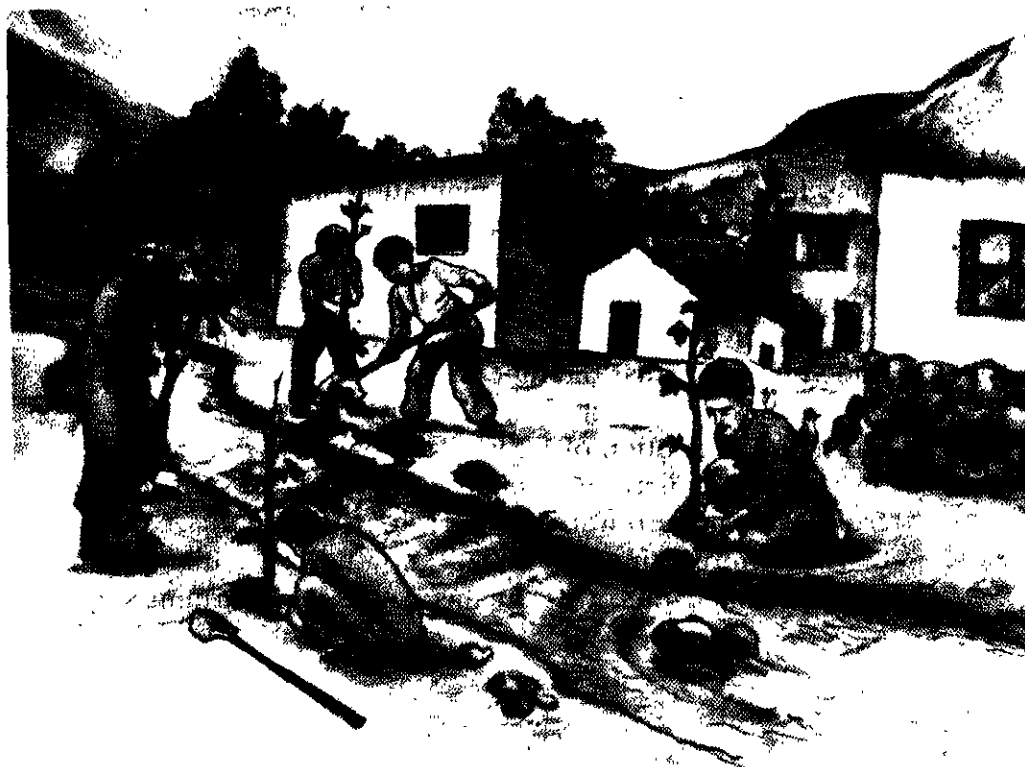
Another night the ‘*Ālim*’ spoke to us about trees. He said: “Do you know that plantation of trees is very worthwhile and highly recommended in Islam? Trees purify the air and give fruits, shadow and have many other benefits. The Prophet (SA) has said: ‘If you have a sapling in your hand and you are 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 (SA) has also said: ‘When a person plants a tree that gives forth fruits, he will be rewarded for each of those fruits.’”

The ‘*Ālim*’ continued: “You all know how hard Imam ‘Alī (AS) and the other Imams 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 *Ālim* advised everyone, 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 that time, as we knew that the Prophet (SA) loves the plantation of trees, we have planted trees everywhere. Wherever there was any va-



cant 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 ‘*Ālim*’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 a 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 ‘*Ālim* 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? How do you guide him? Which saying of the Prophet (SA) 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 Muḥammad (SA) told us about plantation of trees?
6. Have you ever planted any tree?
7. How do you protect public trees?

✦ Exercises

1. Speak to your neighbours about the contents of this lesson, and request them to think about improving the environment.
2. After discussing the above questions with your-friends, write the answers in your best handwriting.
3. With the help of your parents and teachers, draw up a plan for improving the environment; and invite your friends and neighbours to help you carry it out.

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