



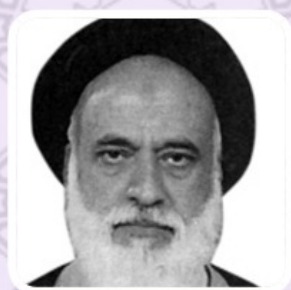
SYED ALI AKBAR

MOOSAVI

**ISLAMIC
CULTURE
— AND —
RELIGIOUS
EDUCATION
(FOR PUPILS)**

Islamic Culture and Religious Education (For pupils)

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This book is a compilation of lessons children learn that connect them both to the science and religious fields of knowledge.

The present work is a collection of 19 lessons that help the child understand issues like how the body works or the green leaves of plants or beautiful theology books to issues such as fasting and hajj.

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Lesson 1: I Learned a Lesson about Knowing Allah From a Science Book

In The Name Of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

When I got home from school one day my mother asked, "What did you learn in school today, Maryam?"

"We studied science" I said. "We discussed the digestion of food, our teacher asked, 'Does anyone know what the esophagus (ih-sof-uh-gus), is? Where the stomach is? What is the function of the intestines? How food is digested?' "

The answers given by the students were not completely correct.

The teacher suggested, "Look into these questions at home this evening, and tomorrow come and tell your classmates.

I brought my science book out so that with the help of my mother I could study this problem. My mother also brought a book from her bookshelf which had many "diagrams in it. She showed me one of the pictures and said "See this bag? The food which we eat goes into it. This is the stomach. Can you tell me how the food travels to the stomach?"

I looked at the diagram and said, "Probably from this tube"

My mother said, "That's right, its name is esophagus. The esophagus connects the mouth to the stomach. The other tube connects the mouth and nasal passages to the lungs. When we take a breath, air passes through this tube into the lungs, do you know its name?"

Looking at the picture I said, "Trachea or wind-pipe."

"This is the passage way that the food we eat takes and this is the passage way for the air we breathe," my mother told me.

"If food goes down the windpipe what happens?" I asked.

"Food must never enter the windpipe, because if it does the passage way of air will become blocked and we will choke," she answered.

I asked, "How is it possible that I haven't choked to death by now? I never knew that I shouldn't allow food to get into my windpipe."

My mother said, "Dearest daughter! Eating, swallowing, and the digestion of food is a very interesting subject? Look at this diagram. See, the throat has four passage ways, one to the nose, one to the mouth, one to the lungs which is called the "trachea" (wind-pipe), and one to the stomach called the "esophagus". When we swallow food, only the esophagus should be open and for this reason the throat section has two flaps (like small trapdoors) which has been created for us, one of these small flaps close the passage way of the trachea, and the other flap closes the nasal passage. We call the flap that closes the trachea "epiglottis", and the flap which closes the nasal passage way as "urula". We are completely dependent on these two small flaps, if they did not exist, we would have choked on our very first bite of food.

I said, "How wonderful that I have an epiglottis and an urula, because if I didn't I would have choked to death."

My mother said, "Maryam-dear, do you have any idea of the chances that the epiglottis or the urula was created purposeless or unplanned?"

"No ... because the purpose and function of each of them is completely obvious: one closes the nasal passage way, the other closes the trachea. They each have a special function and purpose and did not come into existence unplanned, and it proves that a Superior Being created them for us."

"Very good, Maryam! That's absolutely right, He who created us knew of all our requirements and knows everything. He knows that we need that small flap; the epiglottis, because we need to breathe and we need to eat. And He is aware that food must not get into the trachea and for this reason created the epiglottis for us so that when we swallow the trachea will close and food will not enter.

"Our Creator, Allah the All-Knowing, All Powerful, knows all of our needs and has provided and created them for us. For example, He created thousands of tiny glands in the wall of the stomach which secrete gastric juice into the stomach in order to digest it and break it down into a liquid mass. He created the intestines so that the food when liquefied passes from the stomach into the intestines and there is digested and absorbed into the body. He created the gall-bladder and the pancreas so that they secrete special digestive juices which digest the food and prepare it for use by the blood.

"He created thousands of tiny glands in the wall of the intestines which secrete enzymes which digest the food we eat. After the food is completely broken down the necessary nutrients are absorbed through the wall of the intestine and passed into the blood which is carried through- out the body.

"Maryam dear, the orderly system and coordination of the digestive system did not come into existence at random. The All-Knowing and Merciful Allah foresaw our needs and created them for us.

When we eat we receive energy and can stay alive. Allah has provided the energy we need to live by providing this complicated system of digestion, and we in turn, as thanks, should use this energy to praise Him, follow His guidance and refrain from sins so that Allah will be pleased with us and bestow even better blessings in the Hereafter.

Think And Answer

1. What is the purpose of the creation of the epiglottis?
2. What is the purpose of the creation of the urula?
3. If these two did not exist, how could we eat?
4. Did the epiglottis just come into being unplanned?
5. Our digestive system is made up of what parts?
6. How is food digested?
7. Is the digestive system purposeless and unplanned?
8. Did we ourselves create-this well organized and coordinated system?
9. What do we learn from the orderly system of the digestive system?
10. What must we do to receive the blessings of Allah?

Lesson 2: Signs and Works of Allah

In The Name Of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

That morning when I arrived at school, the other children gathered around me; they must have already heard about what happened last night. When the bell rang we went to our seats and when the teacher entered the room we all rose. I wiped my eyes as I got up but my face and eyes were still moist with tears.

My classmates told the teacher what they knew about the accident.

"When they took Ahmad's brother to the hospital his face and hands were a dark color, and they asked, 'Why was Ahmad's brother's hands and face so dark? What causes suffocation, (asphyxiation)? Why did he suffocate? What will happen to him?'"

Our teacher said, "Dearest students! If you would like to learn the answers to these questions, we will begin our studies on the circulatory and respiratory systems, right away. We will begin our lesson in science tomorrow. Who can bring the heart and lungs of a sheep to school tomorrow?"

Two students raised their hands and promised to bring the heart and lungs of a sheep to school.

The next day they brought them to class. Our teacher cut them apart with a knife and showed the students the different parts of the heart and lungs and explained their functions. All the students learned about the function of the heart and lungs and learned the answers to their questions. Afterwards, the teacher outlined what we had learned and posted it on the bulletin board for all to see.

The Circulatory System

From this lesson, we became familiar with some of the body's mysteries, and learned about the harmonious functions of the body's organs. From observing the signs and works of the power of Allah, we learned more about Him.

You all know that blood is constantly circulating through our veins, but do you know why it circulates?

Blood, like a stream of water, flows alongside every cell in our body and provides food and oxygen to them.

One of the most important functions of blood is to transport oxygen to every cell in the body. If at any time oxygen does not reach our body cells we will die. The temperature and energy of the body is dependent on oxygen. The red blood cells which are present in our blood, flow through the body and provide oxygen to the body cells. Do you know how the blood is circulated? A powerful pump performs

this job. This mighty pump regularly contracts, pumping the blood throughout the body. Do you know what this powerful pump is called? Red blood cells carrying oxygen, with every contraction of the heart, are pumped into the largest artery in the body. From this, arteries divide and re-divide like the branches of a tree until, finally, the tubes become microscopically thin blood vessels. The smallest branches are called capillaries. The capillaries are so thin, in fact, that ten of them placed side by side are no wider than a hair. No cell in your body is very far from a capillary and red blood cells fresh and full of oxygen, carry oxygen to the cells and take carbon dioxide—a poisonous gas—away. When the red blood cells give off their oxygen and receive the carbon dioxide from the body cells, they become a dark maroon color. If they remain in this condition they die, and our death soon follows.

Blood cells require oxygen so they can become red and fresh and begin their cycle again. From where do they receive oxygen? How can they begin their work over again?

They must return to the heart. They need other blood vessels with which to return to the heart.

Our Magnificent Creator, knew of this need, and created veins in our body specifically for the purpose of carrying these deoxygenated (lacking oxygen) blood cells back to the heart. The amazing thing about these veins is that they have small valves which propel the blood towards the heart and prevent it from flowing back. The heart pulls this darkened blood which has been deoxygenated through the veins towards itself.

Soon the dark blood cells reach the heart but there is no oxygen in the heart. The blood cells are near death, if they die we will soon die also. They need oxygen. They want to reach fresh air so that they can use the oxygen in it.

Our All-Knowing Creator, created a passage way from the heart to the lungs, so that the cells in this way reach fresh air and utilize the oxygen which is in the lungs.

With a contraction, the heart pumps the tired (de-oxygenated) blood to the lungs. There, your blood cells reach the fresh air inside the lungs, take in oxygen and give off carbon dioxide.

The respiratory and circulatory systems are coordinated and synchronized with each other and were created for the same purpose. Could it be possible that these exact and orderly systems have come into existence at random without any purpose? Could an unintelligent being create such accurate and purposeful systems? From observing the precision of the circulatory and respiratory systems and their methodical coordination, we discover the Greatness and Power of our Creator and become more familiar with His limitless bounties, and thus, better known, worship and praise Him, and keep worshipping other than Him.

Think And Answer

1. What is the function of the circulation of blood?
2. What do the red blood cells do in our body?
3. How is the blood circulated throughout the body?
4. How do the red blood cells which have become dark (deoxygenated) return to the heart?
5. Where do the blood cells receive oxygen?
6. If oxygen doesn't reach the blood cells, what will happen?
7. If the red blood cells didn't have a way to return to the heart, what would happen? How do the blood cells travel back to the heart?
8. How does oxygen get into the lungs?
9. If we didn't have lungs or the respiratory system what would happen? Where would the blood cells receive oxygen?
10. If there wasn't any oxygen in the air what would happen? Where would the blood cells find oxygen? How would they live?
11. How does suffocation occur? How long can we go without breathing?
12. What did you learn about the synchronized coordination of the body's systems?

Lesson 3: The Green Leaves Of Plants Or Beautiful Theology Books

In The Name Of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

We all need food; we couldn't live or work without food. Trees and plants provide food for us; the green leaves of plants are small food-producing factories; working to provide food for us.

Plants like the apple tree get water and minerals from the ground and carry food to the leaves through the branches.

Carbon dioxide which is in the air is absorbed through microscopic holes in the leaves, the light and energy of the sun shines on the leaves. With this combination, the factory of green leaves goes to work and with the help of the sun's rays makes food.

Plants produce more food than they require. A portion of what they produce, they use to keep alive and grow and what is left over is stored for our use.

Sheep and cows also need food; they eat grain and green grass and provide for us, milk, butter, cheese, yogurt and meat. Chickens also eat grain and provide meat and eggs. All animals need plants to survive; their food is made up of green plants.

No human or animal can produce their own food without the help of plants, for all are dependent on plants.

Man is dependent on both plants and animals and animals depend on plant life, and plants require water, soil, carbon dioxide and sunlight to produce their food.

See how the Mighty, All-Knowing created the sun in such a way that it shines upon the earth radiating light and energy so that plants are able to provide food for us?

What powerful intelligence created such systematic and coordinated trees and plants and gave their beautiful green leaves the ability to make food?

Could an unknowing, unintelligent being be able to bring about such magnificent order and harmony?

Never! On the contrary, a mighty and intelligent Power brought this system of order into existence and fore-saw all the needs of every creature. This intelligent and powerful Creator, loves us so much that He provided all our needs and bestowed on us the ability to think and reason so that we may use our minds to strive towards making the world green and free; a land of plenty. We also love Him, and thank Him for His blessings, follow His guidance and strive to put it into practice. Who better than Allah to guide us and set us free?

Think And Answer

1. What is bread made from?
2. What do the stalks of wheat need in order to provide grains of wheat?
3. If the sunlight does not shine on the wheat stalks will there be grains?
4. If green plants didn't make grains of wheat and other food would we be able to make our own food?
5. Who provided our needs and created this orderly system?

6. What are our responsibilities to Him and His blessings?

Lesson 4: Can It Be Seen?

In The Name Of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

This is a picture of a bicycle. You've all seen a bicycle. Name the different parts of a bicycle which you see here. The light, handlebars, frame, pedals, chain, wheels.

Does a bicycle have intelligence? Surely your answer is no! A bicycle doesn't have wisdom or understanding.

This is a picture of Mahmood. Mahmood is drawing a picture. See what a beautiful dove he has drawn!

Does Mahmood have intelligence? Can you see his wisdom and understanding?

Can you say that because his intelligence cannot be seen that he does not have any?

Surely your answer is that: wisdom and understanding cannot be seen. But we are able to see the signs and effects of wisdom and understanding and by observing these signs and effects we comprehend when someone has wisdom and understanding. Yes! Your answer is exactly right. Wisdom and understanding cannot be seen because they are not objects which you can see. Eyes and the other senses merely comprehend the qualities and effects of objects. Many things exist which we are not able to see, but we see their effects and thus believe in their existence.

Also, because Allah is not a physical being, we cannot see Him, nor by any of our other senses comprehend Him. But we witness the magnificent world which He created. From this sign of His power we are convinced of His Existence and can understand that He created and governs the whole wide world.

Think And Answer

1. Look at your friend, what do you see?
2. Can you see his (or her) intelligence?
3. Then how do you know that he (or she) has intelligence?
4. Can you say that because you are not able to see wisdom and intelligence that it does not exist?

5. What can our apparent visible senses comprehend?
6. Can Allah be seen?
7. Can Allah be comprehended by our other visible senses?
8. Can anyone say that because Allah cannot be seen that He doesn't exist?

Name some things that exist but cannot be seen.

Lesson 5: The Leader Of The Monotheists, Hadrath Ibrahim

In The Name Of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

At the time of Hadrath Ibrahim (A.S.), the people were ignorant and uninformed, they had long forgotten the advice and commandments of the previous prophets. They did not know the ways and customs of worshipping Allah, and instead of worshipping Allah they worshipped idols. The people made statues of stone, wood, gold and silver in the shape of humans and animals and they bowed down before these lifeless, powerless idols and made solemn vows, prayers, and offered sacrifices to them. Some people were sun worshippers, while others worshipped the moon and stars.

Another group of ignorant people at that time were obedient to oppressors and dictators; they actually worshipped them, and believed that obedience to them was necessary and required, and without thinking they followed the orders of the oppressors. They humbled themselves, bowing down in the dirt, and declared their servitude to these terrible oppressors.

Allah selected Hadrath Ibrahim (A.S.) and taught him the right path of living, ordering him to speak with the people and show them the way of worship and freedom.

Hadrath Ibrahim (A.S.) told the people "What power do idols have that you bow down to them and worship them? What are these statues able to do? They don't see! They don't hear! They are of no benefit to you, nor can they harm you! Why do you humble yourselves before them? Why do you pray to them? Why do you worship and obey them?!"

The people who heard Hadrath Ibrahim (A.S.) didn't even think about what he had said and they replied "Our forefathers and ancestors were idol worshippers. Our friends and acquaintances are also idol worshippers. We shall follow our ancestors and remain with their religion."

Ibrahim (A.S.) spoke to them patiently, saying, "Your ancestors were mistaken and your forefathers were also wrong to worship idols. Don't you have any common sense of your own? Don't you have any understanding yourselves? Can't you see that these idols are unable to do anything? Why do you humble yourselves before oppressors and dictators? They are no better than yourselves, and all people are creatures and servants of Allah.

"O people! I am a Prophet of Allah, bringing a message from Him; a message of freedom and prosperity. Listen to what I have to say so that in this world and the next you may prosper. Your Allah is Lord of your free will. He created you and the heavens and earth, and He governs and supervises the world and all its inhabitants, giving them strength.

"All power is from Him, He has not entrusted anyone to govern the world nor received help from anyone. He is One, Free and Powerful."

Hadhrat Ibrahim (A.S.) continued, "I loathe these idols which you worship! I love Allah, and He alone do I worship, because Allah created us. Everything is in His hands—my life and death, the curing of my illnesses, my world and life after death, everything. I hope that on Resurrection Day, Allah will be compassionate and have mercy on me.

"O people! Be monotheistic, because all strength is from Allah; He is always free and powerful. He is your strength and support, and only Allah guides you. The message of Allah is to worship and obey only Him. Worship is only for Allah, other than Him no one is worthy of honor and worship. Your leader is Allah and he who Allah has determined."

Think And Answer

1. What did the ignorant people of Hadhrat Ibrahim's (A.S.) time worship? Who did they think it was necessary to obey?
2. What did Allah order Hadhrat Ibrahim (A.S.) to do?
3. What did Hadhrat Ibrahim (A.S.) tell the people? How did he explain to the people that idols are not worthy of worship?
4. Did the people think about or agree with what Hadhrat Ibrahim (A.S.) said? Why or why not?
5. What was their answer to Hadhrat Ibrahim (A.S.)? Was it right or wrong? Why?
6. Is it proper for one human being to accept servitude to another human being?
7. What was Hadhrat Ibrahim's (A.S.) reason for mono- theism? Why did he love Allah and worship Him alone?

8. Why is it that no one other than Allah is worthy of honor or worship?
9. Is someone who obeys a dictator a monotheist?
10. Who do we call a monotheist and what are the hopes of a monotheist?

Lesson 6: Are Good And Bad The Same To You?

In The Name Of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

You understand the meaning of good and bad, and certainly you can tell the difference between a good person and a bad one. A good person is one who is good tempered, honest, loyal and can be trusted, and a bad person is one who is bad tempered, dishonest, disloyal and a tyrant. Are good and bad people the same to you?

Don't you like good people? Aren't you annoyed with those who bother you and act badly?

Allah also loves those who do good deeds and is displeased with those who sin and do bad deeds. That is why He sent the prophets (praise be upon them) to invite all people to do good deeds and avoid evil.

Now consider these questions:

Won't all good people receive their just reward, and all bad people their punishment according to what they have done? Will the good and the bad receive the rewards and punishments for their deeds in this world? Where are the good people separated from the bad? Where will the consequences of one's deeds be seen?

Allah has another world, called the Hereafter or the everlasting world. In that world the good will be separated from the bad and will see the results of their actions. If there was no Hereafter and good people would never be rewarded, then for what reason would they do good deeds? Why should they abstain from sin and bad actions? If there was no everlasting world, the invitations of the prophets would have been useless. Being good or being bad would have no real meaning. If there was no eternal world coming up in our future, our lives would be futile and our creation pointless.

Did the All-Knowing, All-Powerful Allah create us merely so that we could live a few days on the earth? In other words: eat, sleep, write, play and then die, nothing else?! This is a futile and useless idea. Allah never does anything which is useless or without a cause.

Allah says in the Holy Qur'an that you were not created in vain, you were created and placed upon the earth to live and do good deeds in order to become worthy and perfected. Then you will pass from this

world into the next so that there you may receive your just reward.'

In the Hereafter the good people are separated from the bad. Those who were faithful and righteous, and accepted the governance of Allah and the Divine prophets will go to heaven to live happily forever. Allah is pleased with them, and they in turn, are happy and satisfied with the beautiful life and endless blessings of Allah. Those who were without religion and were wicked and accepted the leadership of oppressors and evil leaders will go to hell and receive the punishment from their wicked and evil deeds. Allah is angry with them and they will suffer torment and live very difficult, painful lives.

Think And Answer

1. What are the characteristics of a good person? A bad one?
2. Are good and bad people the same to you?
3. Are good and bad people equal in Allah's eyes?
4. What did the prophets invite mankind to do?
5. If good and bad people were the same to Allah, would there be a reason for sending the prophets? Why or why not?
6. Will the people of this world see the results of their actions?
7. Where will they receive their just rewards?
8. If there was no Hereafter, would good and bad have any meaning? Why or why not?
9. If there was no Hereafter, what reason would we have for living?
10. After we discover that there is a world after this one, what responsibility do we have? How must we live? What type of leader must we follow and obey?

Lesson 7: How Do The Dead Rise Up Again?

In The Name Of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

Hadhrat Ibrahim (A.S.) was a Prophet of Allah, a governor and a leader of the people. He believed in Allah, the Day of Judgement and the Hereafter. He knew that on the Day of Judgement the dead would rise up and be judged, but in order to be certain he asked Allah to show him how the dead would live

again. He said, "O Lord! Show unto me how the dead are made alive."

Allah commanded, "Do ye not have faith that the dead will rise up again?!"

Hadhrat Ibrahim (A.S.) answered, "O Lord! I believe, but I would like to see for myself."

Accepting his request, Allah ordered Ibrahim (A.S.) to find four different kinds of birds, kill them, grind up their feathers, flesh, and bones together and divide the pieces into several sections and then put each section on the top of a different mountain in the surrounding hills. Then he told Ibrahim (A.S.) to stand in the valley below and call each bird by name, "The birds will, by the Will of Allah, and at your request, live again and fly towards you. Be assured that your Lord is All-Knowing, All Powerful."

Hadhrat Ibrahim (A.S.) followed Allah's command and chose four birds: a peacock, a dove, a rooster and a crow, then he killed them, ground their flesh, feathers and bones together, divided them into sections and placed each section on the top of a mountain.

He then stood between the mountains in the valley below and called, "O, peacock! Come forth!"

The different parts of the peacock arose from the mountaintops, came together and moved towards Hadhrat Ibrahim (A.S.). The head and neck, the feet and feathers, the entire body became whole again. The peacock came to life, flapped its wings, and flew to Ibrahim (A.S.).

In the same way, the dove, the crow and the rooster also came to life again. Thus, Hadhrat Ibrahim (A.S.) witnessed, with his entire being, how the dead come to life again. He received complete assurance of the power of Allah and he better understood how the dead rise up again on Judgement Day.

Think And Answer

1. What did Ibrahim (A.S.) ask of Allah?
2. Why did he ask this of Allah?
3. What was Allah's answer? And what was His command?
4. How did Ibrahim (A.S.) carry out Allah's orders?
5. How did he bring the birds to life?
6. Who gave the 'Power of Life' to Ibrahim (A.S.)?
7. What did Ibrahim (A.S.) learn from this experience?

Lesson 8: How Do We Learn and How Are Habits Formed?

In The Name Of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

How do children learn to ride bicycles? What effect does the repetition of a deed or action have on our minds and bodies?

When an action {like riding a bike}, is repeated several times, it effects our bodies and our minds, gradually habits are formed and it becomes easier for us to do it well.

Our handwriting, for example, is effected by practice. If you take care to write neatly, your handwriting will improve, but if you are careless it will have a bad effect and your handwriting will become worse.

Everything we do has an effect on our bodies as well as our minds and souls. Good deeds have good effects and bad deeds have bad ones.

Our Report Card Of Life

Good deeds effect our spirit and soul and give us a pure and radiant glow. By doing good deeds we may be- come closer and more attentive to Allah, and receive an inner satisfaction from doing good.

Sound beliefs, proper morals, and upstanding behavior aid in the development of our soul and spirit and make us radiant and joyous.

Bad deeds and unacceptable behavior also effect man, creating darkness and impurities in his soul. An impure spirit is heedless of Allah and becomes accustomed to bad deeds; gloomy and depressed. Unsound beliefs, improper morals and unacceptable behavior causes the deterioration of man's soul and prevents its perfection.

Our existence is not without reason, and the works we do are neither useless nor unaccountable. Everything we do, whether good or bad leaves its mark on us and will remain forever. We will see the results and effects of our every deed on Judgement Day: Heaven and all the bounties therein await those who are good and Hell, with all its torments await the bad.

All of our deeds, both good and bad, have been recorded on our report card of life and will remain forever. We may be unaware of what we do but our deeds are never erased, they remain safe-guarded by Allah. In the next world the curtain of unawareness will be pulled aside and all of our deeds will be revealed.

In the Holy Qur'an Allah says, "When man awaits judgement and sees the record of all his actions he will say in dismay. 'How is it possible that not a single deed has been forgotten?' "

Allah's reply arrives, "These deeds were with you all of your life but you were unaware of them, when your soul awakens you will see them all."

Also in the Holy Qur'an, Allah says, "He who does a good deed, will see it on judgement Day, and he who does bad will witness what he has done on judgement Day."

We know now, that every single deed, both good and bad will never be erased, they will be recorded on our report card of life and will be judged in the Hereafter. Is it possible then, for us to be indifferent concerning our actions and behaviors? Doesn't our common sense tell us to obey Allah and act according to His commands? Doesn't our conscience tell us to follow Allah and His prophets?

Think And Answer

1. How do good deeds and proper behavior effect our soul?
2. Will our good and bad deeds be erased?
3. What effect do bad deeds and unacceptable behavior have?
4. What things bring us blessings and promote our perfection?
5. Where are our deeds recorded?
6. Where will we witness our deeds?
7. What does Allah say concerning our actions?
8. Now that we understand that all of our deeds are recorded and kept until Judgement Day, what should we do? How should we live?

Lesson 9: Thoughts About Choosing A Path And Goal

In The Name Of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

In order to become successful in life, which path should we choose? In order to be happy in both this

world and the next, what plans should we make? Have you thought about this?

Do you look to others and choose whatever path they have taken and follow whatever way of life they have chosen?

Have you ever given any thought to what your goal in life is? Have you considered how you should plan your life? You may say, 'The scholars and wise men will prepare a suitable plan for me.'

But, are they aware of all your needs, both in this world and the next? Do they know what the hereafter is like? Who then is able to prepare a complete and beneficial system for man? Man himself or man's Allah, of course man's Allah. For He is the Creator of man and is knowledgeable concerning the mysteries of creation. Only He knows what the conditions of man's life in this world and the next are. Due to this fact, only Allah is capable of foreseeing and preparing a way of life and man's perfection. So the best way to salvation and perfection is the way that Almighty Allah has prepared and sent for man through His prophets. And those men who accept the leadership of the prophets and obey their commands will find freedom and salvation in this world and the next.

Think And Answer

1. Is it possible for you alone to plan a way of life which will lead to salvation in this world and the next? Why? Explain.
2. Can others? Why?
3. Then who can? Why?
4. Who has brought Allah's way to salvation to man?
5. If we want to find salvation in this world and the next, which way of life must we choose? Why?

Lesson 10: Human Being's Real Perfection

In The Name Of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

If you plant a grain of wheat in the ground and water it regularly, what changes will you see? Which path will it take? Does it have a certain goal? Does it move towards a specific goal?

Yes, a grain of wheat from the beginning has a determined goal and moves towards it, and in order to reach that aim grows and develops. In other words, the grain of wheat first grows roots in the soil, then sprouts up, becomes green and little by little grows and becomes a stalk of wheat. Each grain of wheat

becomes several stalks and the stalks a crop which is harvested and is then beneficial to thousands of people.

All plants, like wheat, grow and develop and follow a specific purpose which has been determined for them.

If you plant an apple seed in the ground and water it, from the beginning you know that this small seed has a destination and will move towards its goal, it will grow and develop. The seed will grow roots, sprout up out of the ground and grow green and grow larger and larger. Each day growing more than the day before until finally it blossoms, and the beautiful blossoms become apples and in this way that small seed reaches perfection and provides man with the fruits of its endeavors.

The All-Knowing, All Powerful Allah, who created everything also provided a way to perfection for all things and the means to reach their peak of perfection.

For example, plants like the grain of wheat and the apple seed, need water, soil, sunlight and air in order to grow, and Allah created (water, soil, sunlight, and air) so that plants can develop.

Man must also grow and develop, but how? With what system? Who knows what things the spirit and soul of man requires? Or how it develops?

Of course, the Creator of mankind knows well what the needs of man are. Only He knows of the mysteries of creation, and knows of man's future in the hereafter. For this reason, He provided a specially planned system for man's development and sent it to man through His prophets. He ordered man to follow the commands of the Holy prophets in order to find salvation in both worlds.

The last and most specific plan for perfection was sent for all through His last Prophet, Muhammad (S.A.W.). This method of development is called, Islam. It is the responsibility of the Prophet (S.A.W.) to explain to the people this Islamic system of life and then the responsibility is passed down through the divine descendants and the just, aware, jurisprudent who guides the society and they all guide man towards one superior and humanitarian life.

Think And Answer

1. Apple seeds and other plants have a destination. Explain this.
2. What do plants need for their growth and development?
3. Have these, the needs for their growth, been created for them?
4. Who can prepare a system for the development of man? Why?
5. How did Allah send His method of human development?

6. Who has brought the last and most specific system of development to us?
7. What is the name of this developmental system?
8. Who shall explain this Islamic system of life to the people?

Lesson 11: How Shall We Know Allah

In The Name Of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

Your friend Muhammad's schoolbag is at your house. Someone knocks at your door and tells you, "Muhammad sent me to get his bag."

If you don't know him, what would you do? Would you trust him immediately and give him the schoolbag? How could you be sure? How can you find out if he was truly sent by Muhammad? Wouldn't you need some special sign in order to be able to know for sure?

You might say, "Describe the schoolbag and I'll give it to you."

Then he might describe it saying, "Muhammad said it was in the living room and has a math book, a blue notebook, and a small yellow pencil inside."

If his description was correct you would know that he was truly sent and trusted by Muhammad. You may also trust him and give him the schoolbag.

With this example in mind, how shall we know the Prophet? Do we need any special signs?

The Prophet (S.A.W.), sent by Allah, brought special signs from Allah with which to introduce himself so that people might recognize him and accept his invitation to Islam.

If the Prophet hadn't brought any special signs how would the people know him? How could they know that he was truly a Prophet and Messenger of Allah? If Allah does not provide some special signs for His messengers, how will the people recognize them? How can they know that they have a special relationship with Allah? How can they trust them and follow them? How can they accept their invitations?

The special signs of the prophets are called miracles. A miracle is something which cannot be done by man, something which can only be done by Allah or His special messengers.

When someone says, "I am a messenger of Allah and I have a special relationship with Him." and performs a miracle, seekers of truth may know that he is truly a prophet and messenger from Allah, and

is trustworthy and trusted by Allah. Seekers of truth may trust him, believe in what he says, accept his invitation and leadership since he performs miracles (works of Allah), he is truly a messenger and has a special relationship with Allah.

The Signs Of Prophets In The Quran

All of the prophets of Allah performed miracles. Prophet Moses (A.S.) reached into his shirt, and when he brought his hand out it shone like a star. His walking stick– by Allah's will–turned into a dangerous snake. That same walking stick upon Allah's command, parted the ocean waters so that the bottom of the ocean was visible and the people were able to cross.

Allah has described these signs and miracles in the Glorious Qur'an. Regarding Jesus (A.S.) it is written that he healed the blind, with Allah's permission, and raised up the dead to live and breathe again. He shaped a bird out of clay and by the will of Allah breathed life into it and it flew away. Prophet Jesus (A.S.) knew of the unknown. For example, he could tell what a person ate in the privacy of his home or what he had hidden there, and when he was a newborn baby, he spoke from the cradle.

The fire of Namrod, by the will of Allah, did not harm prophet Abraham (A.S.).

Our exalted prophets performed many miracles. The greatest of which was the Glorious Qur'an. In the next chapter we will learn more about the miracles of the great prophets.

Now let us discuss:

How And With What Power Are Miracles Performed?

Allah, with His ultimate power, can do whatever He wishes. Who, but Allah the Almighty can turn a stick of wood into a snake? Who, but Allah, could part the seas with ease, give sight to the blind, breathe life into a piece of clay creating beak, feather eye and ear? Who, but Allah has knowledge of the unknown?

True prophets through the power of Allah perform such works of wonder so that the righteous shall know of their special relationship with Allah, and that they are trustworthy and chosen by Allah to bring forth His message.

These works are called miracles. Miracles are happenings which no one but Allah and His special messengers can perform. When Allah sends a prophet, He gives him the power to perform a miracle as a sign by which he may be known. If the prophets of Allah did not perform miracles as divine signs how would people know that they were prophets? How would they know that they were truly the messengers of Allah?

Think And Answer

1. Do we need a special sign to recognize a prophet? Why?
2. What are the signs of the prophets called?
3. Who granted the prophets this power?
4. Cite three examples of the miracles of Allah's messengers.
5. By witnessing miracles how shall the righteous know that he who performs them is truly a prophet sent by Allah?

Lesson 12: The Everlasting Miracle of the Prophet of Islam

In The Name Of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

The Holy Qur'an is the everlasting miracle of our great Prophet, and learned people who have heard and reflected on its verses know that they are not the words of Hadhrat Muhammad (S.A.W.), but the words of Allah. When knowledgeable and truth-seeking people hear the Qur'an and think about its verses, they find that the Qur'an is the word of Allah and they learn about what a special relationship Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) had with Allah that such beautiful and meaningful words were brought through him. Allah states in the Holy Qur'an: If in this Qur'an –which we sent, you imagine or doubt that this is the word of Allah and believe that it might be the work of an ordinary human being, then write a verse equal to one of the verses in the Qur'an. Allah also states, “If all men gathered together and worked together they could never write a book like the Qur'an.”

Truly, no one can produce words like the Qur'an because no matter how intelligent and skilled they are, they are still the creation of Allah and do not have His power or proficiency and cannot perform the special works of Allah. For this reason, no one has been able to write a book like the Qur'an and no one ever will.

The Qur'an, this Book of human guidance and great everlasting miracle of Allah's Prophet, Hadhrat Muhammad (S.A.W.), is at our service. We must recognize its power and pay our respect to it, read it, and learn through the guidance of the Divine prophets and religious scholars and accept its leadership and this vital Heavenly Book with its outlines for living, so that in the next world we may have salvation and blessings.

Many stories of people's past are told in the Holy Qur'an so that we may learn a lesson from their lives and from these Divine lessons learn the lesson of life.

Think And Answer

1. What is meant by the everlasting miracle of the Prophet?
2. What do the truth-seeking people learn from the Qur'an?
3. How do we know that the Prophet of Allah revealed the Qur'an?
4. What has Allah said about the fact that the Qur'an is a miracle?
5. How is it proved that the Qur'an is the word of Allah?
6. Is it possible for someone to write a book like the Qur'an?
7. How can we pay respect to (or honor) the Qur'an?

Lesson 13: An Educational Story from The Qur'an

Garune (Croesus)–Greedy Oppressor

In The Name Of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

Garune, a kinsman of Hadhrat Moses (A.S.), had outwardly accepted the religion of Moses. He prayed, read the 'Torah', but he was a hypocrite of little faith. He just wanted the people to trust him so he could deceive them.

Garune bought farm products at a low price and then sold it back to the same people at a higher price. He always cheated, was unfair and made unlawful profit. He was as unjust and oppressive as he could be. In this way he accumulated great wealth which he loved more than any- thing else in the world. In fact, Garune did not worship Allah, he worshipped money. He spent of his wealth in ways of pleasure and comfort. He built beautiful castles and adorned the doors and walls with gold and jewels, even his horses and camels were adorned with gold and jewels.

Garune had hundreds of slaves and servants whom he treated badly. He made them literally bow down

and kiss the ground he walked on.

Some scholarly followers of the faith admonished him saying: "O Garune! What are all of these gardens and riches for? What have you accumulated all this wealth and money for? Why do you exploit these people so?"

So how will you answer Allah? Why do you abuse the rights of the people? How come you don't help the poor and needy? How come you don't think about the hereafter? Why don't you do any good deeds?"

With pride and conceit Garune answered: "it's none of your business. I know better how to spend my wealth." These believers said: "O Ga rune! All of this wealth and possessions have not been received legally. If you hadn't cheated and made unlawful profit you couldn't have attained this much wealth. You would be the same as every- one else, not so much richer than everyone else."

Garune answered, "No, I am not like everyone else. I am clever, and smart. I worked and became rich, let others toil and work to become rich. Why should I help the poor?"

In order to give him some advice the believers said, "You don't give the people their rightful due and that is how you became so rich. If you paid your workers what they deserved you wouldn't have become this rich nor would they have become as poor as they are. Now, if you wish to become fortunate and have a happy ending you must use your wealth to comfort and improve the people of Allah. Accumulating wealth is not right, you must spend of your wealth in ways that please Allah."

But Garune mocked the believers and laughed at what they said, and with prideful disrespect said, "Don't give me your futile advice, I am much better than you and I have more faith in Allah, you better go do something about yourselves."

What are happiness and prosperity?

One day Garune wore his most splendid clothes, mounted a beautiful horse and came out of his castle. The people gathered to see the splendor of the tyrant.

Garune along the way and longed after all the gold and jewels that they saw. Some more ignorant than the others bowed down to the ground as he passed. They said, "How fortunate is Garune! How rich and fortunate is he! What a good life he has! How happy and prosperous he is! Wish we were like Garune!"

Some knowledgeable believers felt sorry for these people and advised them saying: "Happiness and prosperity do not come with abundant wealth, why do you bow down to Garune? Why do you respect an oppressor? He is not worthy of respect he has attained his wealth by raising the prices and cheating the people, he is not fortunate. The fortunate are they who truly have faith in Allah, help all creatures of Allah and do not abuse the people's rights."

One day Hadhrat Moses received a commandment from Allah: "Tell the rich they must pay 'Zakat'. He communicated the decree to the rich. He also notified Garune that he, like everyone else, must pay 'Zakat'.

This displeased Garune and he roughly said to Moses: "What do you mean 'Zakat'? For what reason should I give others my wealth? They should go work and make money."

Moses (A.S.) then said: "'Zakat' means giving the poor and needy their rightful due, so that they can live well; because you live in a city, a society, and through the help of the people you have accumulated riches. If they wouldn't have helped, you never could have become so rich. For example, if you lived in the middle of the desert alone, you never could have built this castle nor cultivated these gardens, nor attained such wealth. You attained all these things through the help of these people, in truth you are not giving of your wealth, but in fact are paying them in the name of 'Zakat', their rightful due. Besides, you have usurped their rights to become this rich and must return that which is due to them.

Garune did not pay heed to Hadhrat Moses words, and disrespectfully said, "O Moses, what are you saying? Did I do wrong to believe in you? Did I commit some sin by praying? Now I have to pay tax!"

Hadhrat Moses patiently waited for him to finish and politely answered, "O Garune, I am not taking 'Zakat' for myself! But only to serve the society and the poor it is the command of Allah that people pay this duty to the poor and needy, in other words give 'Zakat' so that they will not remain poor. If you truly have faith in Allah, and accept me as His Prophet, then you must submit to the will of Allah and follow me. If you pray, then you must also give alms, because prayer without alms is useless. Reading the 'Torah' is for understanding and action"

But Garune did not listen to the council of Hadhrat Moses and the learned believers; he did not pay alms from his wealth nor return the usurped rights of the people. In addition, he often tormented the believers and opposed Moses (A.S.) by spreading rumors and slander, he sacrilegiously insulted him.

Moses, weary of Garune's insolence asked Allah to punish this greedy oppressor.

Hadhrat Moses prayer is answered

The ground, by the will of Allah, began to tremble and a great earthquake took place and that was the end of Garune and his oppression.

Garune entered the hereafter empty-handed to answer for all his evil deeds in everlasting torment. And those who had envied Garune and thought he was fortunate now said "What an awful end: Garune lost all his wealth and entered the hereafter empty-handed and guilty, to answer for his evil deeds. Now we know that money and possessions do not make a person fortunate, but that happiness is attained through faith in Allah and acting upon His commandments and serving the people.

Remember

The religion of Islam safeguards the basic necessities of man, and anticipated budgeting, one of which is 'zakat,' one of the religious precepts concerning wealth. 'Zakat' applies to farming, dairy farming, and money. Of course, according to special regulations and in the case that one has reached a moderate level of living.

'Zakat' is used to work and serve the Muslim community.

Think And Answer

1. How did Garune attain his wealth?
2. How did he spend of his wealth?
3. What did the believers tell him? How did they advise him?
4. "What is 'Zakat'? Why should I give to others of my wealth?" How did Moses answer these two questions?
5. What is the reason that part of the wealth of rich people belongs to poor people?
6. When the ignorant people came to see Garune's appearance what did they say? What did they wish?
7. In what way did Hadhrat Moses use 'Zakat'?
8. Was Garune truly fortunate? Finally what happened to him?
9. Where will he receive his punishment for his oppression of the people?
10. How did those people who thought Garune fortunate realize their mistake? What did they say?
11. Does Islam also have 'Zakat'? How is it used?

Lesson 14: Introducing The Religion Of Islam In The Presence Of Christian Philosophers

In The Name Of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

At the advent of Islam, the number of Muslims were few, and the idol-worshippers of Mecca opposed

and harassed them severely.

These Muslims, because their number and power was limited, could not struggle against them so at the Prophet's command and instruction they decided to migrate to Ethiopia in order to freely perform the required duties of Islam and prepare themselves to confront the oppressive idol-worshippers.

For this reason, group by group, they boarded ships and secretly migrated to Ethiopia. Negus was the king of Ethiopia, and he was a Christian. When he heard of the Muslims who had arrived he graciously granted them safety and treated them well.

When the idol-worshippers found out about the migration of the Muslims, they became angry. They sent two representatives laden with valuable gifts to Ethiopia to arrest the Muslims and bring them back to Mecca. They travelled to Ethiopia and went to Negus and presented him with their gifts.

Negus asked: "Where have you come from?" and "What do you want?"

They said, "We came to see you from the city of Mecca. A few of our ignorant young people have left our religion and refused to worship our idols and have run away to your country. The elders of Mecca request that you arrest them and hand them over to us. So that they may return to their country and face punishment."

Negus said, "I must look into this". He then invited the Muslims to his castle and in the presence of the two from Mecca and his Christian philosophers asked them questions. He asked, "What was your religion before?" and "Now what is your religion?" and "Why have you migrated to this country?"

Ja'afar ibn Abu Talib, the Prophet's cousin, who was a self-sacrificing and faithful youth, answered, "In our city the powerful oppress the weak and the people worship idols. They act badly and are disloyal and unkind to their kinsmen and torment their neighbors..."

Under these circumstances, Allah has sent us a messenger to introduce to us honesty and trustworthiness. He has brought the religion of Islam from Allah for us. The religion of Islam...

At this time Negus leaned forward in order to hear every word and learn what this religion of Islam was all about.

Ja'afar was silent for a moment and looking at the Christian philosophers said, "The religion of Islam tells us to be honest, trustworthy and loyal. And that we must be kind to our kinsmen and relatives. Not to speak ill of others and not to swear. Thou shall not bear false witness against thy brother. Do not control the wealth of orphans oppressively. Pray. Spend a part of your income for charity..."

Negus and the philosophers listened carefully and were pleased with what they heard from Ja'afar. But the two from Mecca glanced at them angrily.

Ja'afar ibn Abu Talib continued, "O King of Ethiopia! Muhammad has brought the religion of Allah and we have accepted it. And we have faith in Allah and all of His prophets. We have accepted the leadership of the prophet- hood and have become Muslims. The idol-worshippers of Mecca are displeased because we have become Muslim and bother us incessively, even torture us. We had no other choice but to migrate from our city and seek safety in this country, so that we may worship Allah and freely practice the religion of Islam...

Negus was pleased by Ja'afar's speech and said, "The words of your messenger and of Jesus spring from the same source. Both are the words of Allah; you are free in this country. And you may freely perform the worship and practices of your religion ... Truly what a good religion!

Then he turned to the two idol-worshippers and said, "I don't accept bribes, take what you have brought and return to your country. Be sure that I will never turn the Muslims over to you, swiftly return to Mecca!

Those two, embarrassed and upset, took their gifts and left disgraced.

Think And Answer

1. What is migration? Why do Muslims migrate?
2. What was the religion of the king of Ethiopia?
3. Who was Ja'afar? What did he say about the Prophet and Islam in the presence of the king and his philosophers?
4. If you were asked about the Prophet and Islam, what would you answer?
5. What did Negus say after he heard Ja'afar's speech? What did he say to the idol-worshippers? Did he accept their gifts? ... Why?

Lesson 15: Hadhrat Muhammad, Allah's Last Prophet

In The Name Of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

When Allah chose Muhammad (S.A.W.) for prophet- hood He appointed him to be the "Last Prophet". Our great Prophet-at Allah's order-from that very same initial invitation introduced himself as the 'Khatam' of the prophets, meaning, the last Prophet of Allah, and preached thus: "After me there will

come no other prophet."

All of the people who, at the beginning of Islam, believed in Muhammad (S.A.W.), and became Muslim, knew that he was Allah's last Prophet. The Holy Qur'an, Allah's word and the Prophet's permanent miracle also introduces Hadhrat Muhammad as the last of the prophets, saying, "Muhammad is Allah's Prophet and the last of the prophets."

Therefore, we Muslims, who know the Qur'an as the Book of Allah, and Hadhrat Muhammad (S.A.W.) as the last of Allah's prophets, have no doubt or hesitation whatsoever, about this matter. The Islamic codes of behavior are such that to an exact and complete degree, the human being can find truth there, at any time or in any place, thus achieving prosperity, perfection and nearness to Allah—upon whom all human beings, in all times depend, has given carefully adjusted, and exact codes of behavior in the Qur'an, in order to fulfill the needs of human beings, and guide them.

In this way, however, knowledgeable and learned that a human being becomes, again it is the Qur'an—the word of Allah and divine guidance—that he stands in need of, in the same way that God's creation in all times, and always, need sunshine, water and air.

The Islamic codes of behavior are in the Qur'an.

The Qur'an is the last heavenly book, and the immortal book of the religion of Islam, which Allah protected with the self-sacrifice of the striving Muslims, so that it could come down to us. This great book, is the best and most perfect plan and guidance for human beings. In this manner, the Great Allah, has introduced Islam as the last heavenly religion, and our Prophet as the last Messenger. We Muslims, must, by following our own leader, which is the Qur'an make great efforts and live victoriously, so that in the Hereafter, we can also find prosperity.

Lesson 16: Public Responsibilities And Care

In The Name Of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

Can you be indifferent to other people's actions? Can you have absolutely nothing to do with other individuals within the society? What effect does a good or bad society have on an individual? What sort of individuals does a religious and honest society train? In what direction does a corrupt and wrong-doing society lead? What responsibilities do Muslims have towards their society? How does he try to achieve goodness and tranquility in this society?

An Islamic human being is responsible to his Allah and cannot be indifferent to the actions of other individuals within the society; he always binds himself to the society, considering the society as the part

of his own large body: in the way of goodness and right, he exerts all his power. The Islamic human being knows that the heavenly Islamic programs, are such that they lead the individual and the society to perfection, prosperity and freedom, when perfectly executed. For the execution of all the points of laws and instructions of the religion, Islam considers two groups responsible. And it requires the implementation of Islamic laws by them.

The leader of the wise, religious persons of Islam and the Islamic government, have a duty to implement the Islamic programs and instructions. An Islamic government has a duty to lead the individuals of a society to do good works, and to prevent oppression and wrong doing. They punish oppressors, wrong-doing and corrupt ones harshly and encourage the religious and right-acting individuals.

Every single Muslim, according to Islam, is responsible to the society, to implement the instructions. Every Muslim individual is recognized as a guard and policeman. Muslim human beings have a responsibility and a duty towards the actions and behavior of his own society, and supervise and take care to prevent wrong doing. He should recognize corrupt individuals and begin to introduce them to the government.

A Muslim should be good himself and also invite others to good actions. He should make efforts for the good and benefit of the society. This behavior is called "inviting to the good" in religious terms.

A Muslim must set himself apart from, sin and opposition to the laws, and as far as he can, refrain from sin and corruption. In religious terms, this action is called "forbidding the evil."

"Inviting to the good" and "forbidding the evil" is a public responsibility and one of the biggest duties of all Muslims. It is compulsory to defend the religious laws, and to strive for them to be kept and implemented. Allah says in the Qur'an: "You are the best of communities' Ummah, because you invite to the good and forbid the evil and you truly have faith in Allah."

The Prophet of Islam has said: "As long as Muslims invite to the good, and forbid the evil, and help and co operate with each other, their society will be upright, victorious, free and prosperous. However, if they, abandon these duties then goodness and blessings will be removed from the society, and oppression will come upon them, as well, however, much they pray, their prayers will not be granted. In the heaven or the earth they will not be given a hearing.' By paying attention to this great duty what a lesson you will be getting? In what ways can you carry this out with your friends, co-workers and partners?

Think And Answer

1. Who has the duty to implement the Islamic commandments?
2. What is the duty of an Islamic government?

3. What is the duty of every single Muslim in implementing the Islamic commandments and regulations?
4. What does "inviting to the good" mean?
5. What does "forbidding the evil" mean?
6. What has the honorable Prophet of Islam stated with regards to "inviting to the good" and "forbidding the evil"?
7. What has Allah said in this regard in the Holy Qur'an?
8. What is yours and your friends' duty in this regard?

Lesson 17: Unclean Things

In The Name Of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

Do you know why you became ill? Would you recognize those things which are unclean? Many of the diseases, such as Typhoid fever, Cholera, Tuberculosis, and Infant Polio, are caused by the existence of many tiny particles, known as bacteria and viruses. The main places where these are to be found are dirty, infected places, where they can be nourished and where they multiply. Bacteria present in one's dwelling, are actually beneficial, but if they become transferred into the human body they will become harmful and cause illness.

Now, perhaps you can say: Why we become sick?

And what we should do in order to prevent disease? The best way to prevent disease is to observe hygiene and cleanliness. In order to prevent ourselves becoming sick we should keep contamination far from us, and always keep our living environment clean. Would you recognize those things which are unclean and contaminated by bacteria? Do you know that, human feces and those of animals unlawful to eat, are where the main concentrations of harmful bacteria are to be found? Do you know that human urine, and that of animals unlawful to eat is dirty and poisoned? Do you know that when blood comes out of the body, many bacteria attack it? Did you know that those bacteria which live side by side with dogs or pigs are very harmful to human life and physical health? Did you know that any dead animal or corpse, is a center for the growth, nourishment and reproduction of bacteria?

The Law-Giver of Islam knew all this and for this reason and many others, He has caused these, and certain other things to be known as impure and ritually unclean, and ordered the Muslims to keep themselves and their living environment, free of them.

As a general rule, a Muslim person, will keep away from anything which causes illness to body or soul, or contaminates ones spirit and intellect.

Some of the things which are known in Islam as being impure and ritually unclean, consist of:

1. Human urine and feces, and those of animals unlawful as food (almost all flesh-eating animals).
2. The blood, and the corps of any animal wherein the blood still flows.
3. Dogs and pigs.
4. Wine and beer and any intoxicating substance.
- 5 "Kafir"-(unbelievers) who don't worship the One Allah.

The body, clothes and living environment of the Muslim person must be free of these substances.

Do you know how to keep your body, clothes and living environment free from them?

1. What things must a Muslim avoid?
2. What should we do to prevent sickness?
3. Count those things which are considered unclean (najis).

* After careful discussion, write full and exact answers to these questions in your exercise book.

Exercises

1. Ask your parents about the methods by which unclean things may be purified and learn them.
2. Talk to one member of your family about the contents of the lesson, if he does not know them teach him.

Lesson 18: Fasting-A Great Act of Worship

In The Name Of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

Fasting is one of the great Islamic acts of worship. Allah loves those who fast and rewards them in the best manner.

Every Muslim must fast in the month of Ramadhan that is from just before sunrise until sunset he must

not eat or drink. {He must also not do other things which would break the fast}.

When we want to fast we must make the "Niyat" (the intention to fast). This means that we make the decision to fast at the order of the All-Aware Allah.

Allah has made fasting compulsory that:

Muslims will remember Allah, and know themselves better and have better control over themselves. So that they will remember the Day of Judgement more often. So that they will do good deeds and prepare themselves for their own future and store up good works for themselves. So that they will taste hunger and thirst and think of those people who are hungry and thirsty and help them. To practice thirst and bear hunger ... Imam Ja'far Sadiq said: "The person who only abstains from eating and drinking, will not be counted among those who fasted," meaning that, in order to truly fast, not eating and not drinking is not enough.

Perhaps it is that, when you are fasting, your ears, eyes and tongue should also be too, i.e. they shouldn't do anything 'Haram' (unlawful). Your hands and feet, and all your other bodily organs should also fast, that is, not carry out any sinful act, in order for your fast to be accepted.

When you are fasting, you should be better and better behaved than on other days. Stop your tongue from uttering vain words, don't lie, and don't make fun of, or argue with anyone. You must also not stir up jealousy by speaking ill of people or picking fault with them. With harder work than usual, be kind and try not to do bad deeds.

For those boys and girls who have reached puberty and for whom fasting will not do them any harm, it is compulsory for them to fast in the month of Ramadhan.

Younger children also can participate in the ceremony of 'Sahar' in the month of Ramadhan with the rest of the family. They can eat 'Sahar' and then not eat until noon, or as long as they can abstain. In this manner they can share in the divine spiritual rewards of those who fast.

Anybody who breaks his fast without a good reason commits a sin. Afterwards, he must make up his fast, and to pay for his sin he must repent and for every day that he failed to fast he must fast for sixty days, or feed sixty poor people.

Looking after guests for 'Eftar' is one of the best things we can do during the month of Ramadhan. The Prophet of Islam declared: "Anyone who gives 'Eftar' to a fasting person will be included with those who will receive the mercy of Allah."

One of the companions of the Prophet said: "Oh Prophet! We don't all have the means to do this". The Prophet declared: "If you can't, then give the fasting person half a date, and I or a bowl of water."

Think And Answer

1. What is the aim of fasting? When we want to fast, what intention should we have?
2. For what sort of work should we prepare ourselves when we fast? Why?
3. How does a fasting person, come to think about the hungry and poor people? What does he do?
4. How does a fasting person overcome his desires?
5. When fasting, what must be avoided? What must be done in order for a person's fast to be accepted by Allah? How should fasting be done?
6. If someone fails to fast for no religiously acceptable reason, how can he compensate for this great sin?
7. In what season does the month of Rarnadhan occur? This year how old are you? Is fasting compulsory upon you? So far, how many days have you fasted? Have you done all the things which are necessary for the acceptance of your fast?

Lesson 19: Hajj, A Blessed Act of Worship

In The Name Of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

I live in Cairo, and last year, with my mother and father, I travelled to Hejaz, in order to participate in the Hajj (pilgrimage). What a great enjoyable journey it was! I just wish you could have come too and seen the blessed Hajj ceremonies from close quarters!

When we reached 'Miqat' we took off our colored clothing and put on plain white garments 'Ihram'. When I had put on my 'Ihram', my father said, "My child! You are now 'Mohrem'. Do you know that, now you are in 'Ihram', you should think even more about Allah? Do you know that, when you are in the state of 'Ihram' you must not lie? Or swear? You must not hurt living creatures and you must not fight or argue with anyone. You can be victorious over your feelings now and in the future. My child! The Pilgrimage to the House of Allah, is a great act of worship and also a great training school. In this school there are lessons of simplicity, equality, humility and etc. to practice."

Having put on the plain clothes of 'Ihram' (the same as the other pilgrims) and saying, 'Labaik' we set off to- wards Mecca. Thousands of people of various races, and from different countries, wearing the pure, plain clothes of 'Ihram ', alike, with one voice said, 'Labaik ', and hurried towards Mecca ...

We reached Mecca and eagerly went to the Masjid-ul-Haram to make circumambulation. Oh! How beautiful and full of blessings! Waves of people, every aware individual reminded me of the Day of Judgement, and displayed the magnificence of the Lord of the Universe.

We went round and round the Ka'aba and afterwards performed the rest of the spiritual Hajj ceremonies. The performance of this blessed act of worship, the Hajj had other benefits for us too. My father, spoke with the Muslims from other countries about behaviors, morals, political affairs, and economic matters and he became informed about their culture. He explained these things for my mother and I and our friends and acquaintances.

In this way, we became aware of the situation of Muslims in other countries, and we became familiar with the epic events within our own country. We particularly gained a lot of helpful information about the Iranian Islamic Revolution.

It is compulsory for every Muslim who has the means, to go once to the Ka'aba to take part in the blessed Hajj ceremonies. He will return with perfect faith and a radiant heart.

Think And Answer

1. What are the duties of the one who puts on Ihram? What things must be avoided?
2. What lessons are we putting into practice when we perform the Hajj?
3. Whom do we think of when we perform the Hajj?
4. What are the benefits of Hajj?
5. On which day is Hajj obligatory?
6. What has Imam Sadegh (A.S.) said about Hajj?

* After careful discussion, write full and exact answers, to these questions in your exercise book.

* Talk with someone who has performed his Hajj, and ask him about his memories of it. Read this lesson for him.

* Who, among your family and friends, wants to go for Hajj? Go and see them, and talk to them about the benefits of Hajj, and read this lesson for them.

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