
بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ
In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

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Eemaan (Faith)

1

What is *Eemaan*?

What is true *eemaan*, or faith? Who is a true believer (*mu'min*)? What are the essential elements, or articles, of *eemaan*? These questions are of vital importance. In fact, this is what Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) explained to Angel Jibreel (عليه السلام) when the latter asked him about *eemaan*.

When Angel Jibreel (عليه السلام) asked the Prophet (ﷺ), "What is faith (*eemaan*)?" He replied, "It is to believe in Allah, His Angels, His Books, His Messengers, the Last Day, and to believe in the Divine Decree (*al-qadar*), both the good of it and the bad of it." (Muslim)

Eemaan is a Statement and Action

Eemaan is a statement and action. In other words, it has three essential elements: belief in the heart, profession by the tongue and performance of the deeds by the physical parts of the body.

1. Belief in the Heart

The heart is the locus of *eemaan* as well as its foundation. The Qur'an says,

﴿ يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلرَّسُولُ لَا يَحۡزُنكَ ٱلَّذِينَ يُسَٰرِعُونَ فِي ٱلۡكُفۡرِ مِنَ ٱلَّذِينَ قَالُوٓاْ ءَامَنَّا بِأَفۡوَٰهِهِمۡ وَلَمۡ تُؤۡمِن قُلُوبُهُمۡ ﴾

"O Messenger, let not those who race each other into disbelief not grieve you, those who say 'We believe' with their lips, but whose hearts have no faith." (*Surat al-Maa'idah*, 5: 41)

Hence, *eemaan* is the statement of 'the heart'. It is made up of recognition, knowledge and affirmation. In other words, a believer recognizes that there is none worthy of worship except Allah. He has knowledge of this truth and he affirms it in his heart.

The second element of *eemaan* is the actions of the heart. This aspect of *eemaan* is made up of commitment, voluntary surrender and acceptance. These include, among other things, love of Allah, awe of Him, trust in Him, heedfulness of His commands and prohibitions, fear of Him and hope in Him.

2. Declaration of Faith with the Tongue

The second essential element of *eemaan* is to declare one's faith with the tongue. In this case, one testifies that one recognizes the truthfulness of the testimony of the faith and intends

to adhere to the commands and guidance of what he has testified to. Mere pronouncement of the words in themselves is not enough.

3. Performance of Righteous Deeds by the Body Parts

Eemaan is a statement and action. Faith increases by acts of obedience to Allah and decreases by acts of disobedience. The heart is the driving force behind all actions. If the heart is filled with *eemaan*—with the love of Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ), fear of Allah, hope in Him, amongst other things—it will certainly prompt the body to perform acts of obedience to Allah. It will keep him away from forbidden, shameful and even doubtful or dubious acts. Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said, "There is a lump of flesh in the body; when it is sound, the whole body is sound; but when it becomes corrupted, the whole body also becomes corrupted. It is the heart." (Part of a *hadeeth* reported by al-Bukhaaree and Muslim)

Faith, however, differs from one believer to another, and true faith is one that is expressed in actions, as Almighty Allah says, **"And this is Paradise which you have been made to inherit because of your deeds which you used to do [in the life of the world."** (*Surat al-Hijr*, 43:72)

Branches of Faith

> The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "Faith has sixty-odd or seventy-odd branches; the highest and the best of which is to declare that there is no god worthy of worship but Allah, and the lowest of which is to remove something harmful from the road. Modesty, too, is a branch of faith." (Al-Bukhaaree and Muslim)

If *eemaan* has different branches and each part is called *eemaan*, it follows that *salaat* is *eemaan*, *Zakaat* is *eemaan*, and Hajj is *eemaan*. Virtues such as modesty, trust, fear of Allah, heedfulness of Allah, and total submission to His will, even removing a harmful thing from the way, are parts of *eemaan*. Some of these parts are very basic: like the two testimonies of faith. If you lose them, you lose *eemaan* completely. Others are marginal, such as removing an obstacle from the way. If, for any reason, you lose them, you do not lose *eemaan* completely. Instead, you have moved from the lofty level of *eemaan* to its lower level.

There are a number of things that testify to one's true faith. These include the following:

1. Loving the Prophet (ﷺ) more than one loves one's parents and children. (See al-Bukhaaree, 1:14)

2. Establishing voluntary prayers on the Night of the Decree (*Laylat al-Qadr*). (See al-Bukhaaree, 1:35)
3. Fasting the month of Ramadhaan faithfully and in anticipation of Allah's rewards. (See al-Bukhaaree, 1:37)
4. Establishing the obligatory prayers. (See al-Bukhaaree, 1:40)
5. Following the funeral procession of a Muslim. (See al-Bukhaaree, 1:47)
6. Observing *hayaa'* (modesty, honour, bashfulness) (See al-Bukhaaree, 1:24)

Sweetness of Faith

Anas ibn Maalik (ﷺ) narrated that Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said, "Whoever possesses these three qualities will enjoy the sweetness of faith: (1) One to whom Allah and His Messenger is dearer to him than anything else, (2) one who loves a person only for the sake of Allah and (3) one who hates to revert to disbelief as he hates to be thrown into the Hell-fire." (AI-Bukhaaree)

He is still a Believer he who has Deficiency in Faith

The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "A fornicator (a person who indulges in illicit sex) while committing illicit sex is not a [true] believer. A thief while stealing is not a [true] believer." (al-Bukhaaree and Muslim)

A similar *hadeeth* states, "When a person commits illicit sexual intercourse, *eemaan* leaves him and remains above his head like an awning. When he parts from this illicit behaviour, the *eemaan* comes back to him." (at-Tirmidhee)

During the time of the Prophet (ﷺ), some people committed adultery, stole and drank wine. The Prophet (ﷺ) did not call them disbelievers. He did not even declare that relations between them and the Muslims be cut off. Instead, he flogged the drinker and had the hand of the thief cut off. At the same time, he sought Allah's forgiveness for them.

Scholars have argued that the Prophet's words in the *hadeeth*, "*Eemaan* leaves him and remains above his head like an awning" suggest that *eemaan* does not depart from him completely. A person who performs such deeds still remains a believer but he has a deficiency in his faith. In other words, he is a believer with respect to his faith and an evildoer with respect to the sin he commits. He is not a true believer. He does not fulfil his faith sincerely.

The Essential Elements of *Eemaan*

The essential elements, or articles, of *eemaan*, according to a *hadeeth* reported by al-Bukhaaree, are as follows:

To believe in

1. Allah,
2. His Angels,
3. His Books,
4. His Messengers,
5. The Last Day, and
6. Allah's decree, the good of it and the bad of it.

Exercises

A. Fill in the blanks.

1. The _____ is the locus of *eemaan*.
2. _____ is the driving force behind all actions.
3. Faith has _____ branches.
4. According to a *hadeeth*, the lowest degree of faith is to _____ something harmful from the road.
5. "A thief while stealing is not a _____ believer."

B. Answer the following questions.

1. What are the three essential elements of *eemaan*?

2. What aspects does belief in the heart consist of?

3. What does profession of faith by the tongue entail?

4. What are the highest and lowest branches of Faith?

5. Which branch of faith will make one lose one's *eemaan* completely?

6. What do you know about a Muslim who commits major sins? Give examples.

7. What are the essential elements of *eemaan*?

Belief in Allah

2

Belief in Allah is the cornerstone of *eemaan*. All other forms of belief in Islam revolve around belief in Allah. It is, therefore, very important that a Muslim's belief in Allah must be correct.

The Importance of the Correct Belief in Allah – The *Tawheed*

Tawheed means monotheism, the testimony to the Oneness of Allah, and it is of three types:

1. ***Tawheed ar-Ruboobiyah* (The belief that Allah is the Lord of all the creatures):** He is the Creator, the Provider, the One who gives life, the One who takes it away and the One who disposes of all affairs. Therefore, there is no creator except Allah, as Allah the Almighty says, **"Allah is the Creator of all things."** (*Surat az-Zumar*, 39:62) There is no one who provides sustenance except Allah, as the Qur'an says, **"And no moving [living] creature is there on earth but its provision is due from Allah."** (*Surat Hood*, 11:6) There is no one who alone disposes of all the affairs except Allah the Almighty: **"He manages and regulates [every affair] from the heavens to the earth."** (*Surat As-Sajdah*, 32:5) There is no one who causes death and gives life except Allah alone: **"It is He who gives life and causes death, and to Him you shall return."** (*Surat Yoonus*, 10:56)

   This kind of tawheed was declared by the disbelievers during the time of the Prophet (ﷺ), but this declaration alone was not sufficient for them to be considered believers, as Allah the Almighty says about them, **"And if you [O Muhammad] ask them: 'Who has created the heavens and the earth?' they will certainly say, 'Allah.'"** (*Surat Luqmaan*, 31:25)

2. ***Tawheed al-Uloohiyah* (The belief that Allah the Almighty is the true God who alone deserves to be worshipped):** therefore, all acts of worship, such as invocation, trust, fear and sacrifice, should be directed to Him alone. Thus, we should invoke none but Allah, rely on

none except Allah, seek no one's help except Allah's help, and seek no one's refuge but Allah's refuge.

It is this type of *tawheed* with which Allah's messengers, peace be upon them, came. Allah the Almighty says, **"And surely, We have sent among every nation a messenger [proclaiming]: Worship Allah [Alone] and keep away from the taaghoot."** (*Surat an-Nahl*, 16:36)The *taghoot* here means all false deities that are worshipped besides the True God, Allah the Almighty.

This was the very type of *tawheed* which the disbelievers, past and present, reject. The disbelievers during the Prophet's time scornfully said, as the Qur'an says about them, **"Has he (i.e. Prophet Muhammad ﷺ) made the gods [all] into One God (Allah)? Surely, this is a curious thing!"** (*Surat Saad*, 38:5)

3. ***Tawheed al-Asmaa' was-Sifaat* (The belief that Allah the Almighty has the Most Beautiful Names and the Loftiest, Perfect Attributes):** A Muslim believes in all Allah's Names and Attributes with which Allah describes Himself or His Messenger described Him, without distorting their meanings, denying them completely, qualifying them or likening them to any of those of His creatures.

To clarify this, Allah the Almighty describes Himself in the Qur'an as *Al-Hayy* 'the Ever Living' (See *Surat al-Baqarah*, 2:255). Therefore, we should believe that *Al-Hayy* (the Ever Living) is one of Allah's Names and also believe in the quality which is contained in this name, namely the perfect form of life which is neither preceded by non-existence nor followed by death.

Another example is the Name *As-Samee'* (the All-Hearer). The Qur'an says, **"There is nothing like Him, and He is the All-Hearer, the All-Seer."** (*Surat ash-Shooraa*, 42:11) Similarly, we must believe that As-Samee' is one of Allah's Names and also believe that this is one of His qualities; namely, that He is able to hear in a manner that suits His Majesty, without likening this attribute to any of those of His creatures.

Some Manifestations of Allah's Attributes

Allah Alone is the Sustainer – the Lord (*ar-Rabb*). He is the One without any partners in His Kingdom. He is the Only Creator and the True Owner of creation. He is the Only One who nourishes, sustains and maintains His Creation. He created



everything by Himself, and total power belongs to Him Alone. Everything that happens in this creation happens by His permission and will. Sustenance and provisions are from Him alone. Life and death are in His Hands, and all bounties come from Him alone.

He commands and forbids. He causes death and gives life. He changes the day into night and alternates the days of people and nations, replacing one with another. He creates and designs. Things occur according to His will. Whatever He wills comes into being at the time and in the manner He Wills it. His order and His decree are fulfilled in the heavens, in the farthest reaches of the earth and beneath it, in the seas, the skies and in every other part of the universe. He encompasses all things with His knowledge. He keeps count of every single thing.

He envelops all things with His Mercy and Wisdom. His Hearing encompasses all voices, yet they do not blend into each other or resemble each other. Rather, He hears the clamour of all the various tongues, in all the countless languages, distinct in their countless supplications. None of His creatures distracts Him from another, nor does He confuse their innumerable pleas, nor does the tone of the supplicants' voices repulse Him.

His Sight envelops everything; He sees the smallest black ant upon a piece of coal in a moonless, dark night. The hidden for Him is visible and the secret is public. He knows what is more hidden than a secret. He knows what is

secret and contained in a person's mind, conceived in his heart, which is not yet uttered by his lips. He knows even what his heart has not yet intended. He knows that this person will have the intention to do such-and-such a thing at such-and-such a time.

To Allah belong the creation and the command. To Him belong the kingdom and praise. To Him belong this world and the next. To Him belong grace, blessing and respect. In His Hand is all good and to Him all affairs return. His power encompasses everything. His grace extends to all living things. Those in the heavens and the earth ask Him. Everyday, rather every moment, He manifests Himself in a wondrous way! All depend upon Him for their safety and sustenance. He forgives sins, relieves problems and removes woes. He makes the poor rich, bestows knowledge on the ignorant, guides those who have gone astray, directs the confused, aids the desperate, frees the captive, feeds the hungry, clothes the naked and heals the sick. He pardons the one who has been tried. He accepts repentance from His repentant slaves, rewards the righteous and helps the oppressed. He humbles the arrogant, steadies the one who stumbles and gives safety from fear. He does not sleep, nor does drowsiness or sleep overtake Him.

To Him do the deeds of the night ascend before those of the day, and the deeds of the day before those of the night. His Veil is light. Were He to lift it, the vision of His Face will consume all in creation that gaze. He is the Giver of all bounties, and giving does not lessen in the least what He possesses. The heart and the forelocks of every creature are in His Hand. The whole earth will be in His grasp on the Day of Judgment, and all the heavens will be gathered in His Right Hand. The earth will shine bright with His Light on the Day of Judgment.

On the Day of Resurrection, He will grasp the earth [by His Hand] and will roll up the heaven with His Right Hand and will say, "I am the King. Where are the kings of the earth?" (al-Bukhaaree)

No sin is too great for Him to forgive. There is no need too great for Him to fulfil. And if all those in the heavens and the earth, from the beginning to the end of creation, human beings and jinn alike, had the heart of the most pious one among them, it would not add to His Kingdom in the least. And if all those in the heavens and the earth, human beings and jinn, living and dead, were gathered on a single vast plain and

asked from Him and He gave each one of them whatever they asked, this would not lessen even by a tiny particle what He possesses!

If all the trees on earth, from the beginning to the end of time, were pens; if all the seas and seven other seas added to them were ink and those pens were to write in that ink, both the pens and ink would run out but the words of the Creator would not. He is the First before whom there is nothing. He is the Last after whom there is nothing. He is the Inward above whom there is nothing. He is the Outward beneath whom there is nothing. Glorified and Exalted is He!

He is most worthy to be invoked, worshipped and praised. He is the first to be thanked; the One whose support is most desired. He is the Most Generous of those who possess whatever He has bestowed upon them, the Most Merciful of those who have power and the Most Just of those who are just. With His might comes His forgiveness; with His withholding comes wisdom and with His Knowledge comes pardon. No one has a real right upon Him. If He punishes any of His creatures, it is in His total justice; and if He blesses any of them, it is out of His unbounded generosity and grace.

There is no one to withhold what He gives and no one to give what He withholds! There is no one to guide whomever He leads astray and no one to lead astray whomever He guides. There is no one to permit what He forbids and no one to forbid what He permits. There is no one to hold far what He brings near. He is the Supreme Lord without a partner. He is Unique without equal. He is the Eternally Existent without a son or a mate. He is the One without comparison or kind. Everything perishes except His Face, every kingdom fades except His Kingdom, every sheltering shade except His will be withdrawn and every grace except His Grace has a limit.

None obeys except by His permission and mercy. None sins except by His knowledge and judgment. When He is obeyed He is Grateful, and when He is disobeyed He overlooks and excuses! His anger is always just. His blessings are always by His Grace. For Him all hearts and secrets are open and the hidden is evident. When He wills something He merely says: Be! And it is!

There is nothing similar to Him, and He is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing.

Hence, every rite of worship, be it prayer, fasting, pilgrimage, sacrificing an animal, vowing and so forth, must be done solely for the sake of Allah. Similarly, all supplications and prayers must be directed to Him alone.

If someone does any of these acts for someone other than Allah, he is negating his *tawheed*. These acts include putting one's trust in Allah, fearing only Allah and devoting oneself only to Him.

Furthermore, in order for one's *tawheed* to be correct, one must reject and deny any form of *taaghoot*, false gods or false objects of worship.

To conclude: Islam requires complete submission to Allah Alone. Whoever submits his will completely to Him as well as to someone or something else has actually committed the sin of *shirk*. *Shirk* (associating others with Allah in worship) is an unpardonable sin which opposes true faith. Those who commit such a sin are disbelievers.

Exercises

A. Answer the following questions.

1. How important is belief in Allah?

2. What is the meaning of the word '*tawheed*'?

3. What are the three types of *tawheed*?

4. Give one or two examples for each type of *tawheed*.

5. When does one negate one's *tawheed*?

6. What is the meaning of the word *taaghoot*? Give some examples.

B. Think-up

With the help of your teacher, go over the lesson and highlight the attributes of Almighty Allah.

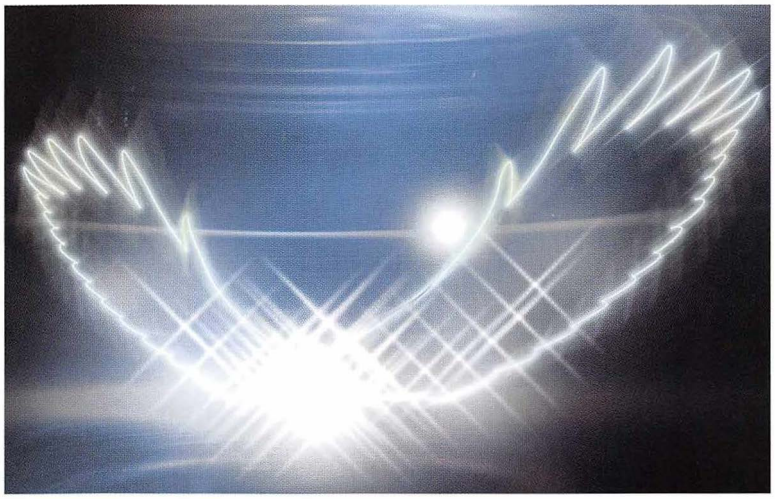
Belief in the Angels

3

Belief in the Angels

Belief in the angels is another fundamental belief that forms the cornerstone of *eemaan* – faith. When Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) was asked by Angel Jibreel (عليه السلام), "What is Faith?" He replied, "It is to believe in Allah, His Angels, His Books, His Messengers, the Last Day, and to believe in the Divine Decree (*al-qadar*), both the good and the bad of it." (Muslim)

Belief in the Angels, therefore, is the second article of faith.



The Word '*Malak*'

The Arabic word for angel is *malak*, whose plural form is *malaa'ikah*. The Qur'an speaks of the creation of man from clay and that of jinn from fire. 'Aa'ishah (رضي الله عنها) narrated that Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said that the *jinn* were created from fire (*naar*), and the angels were created from light (*noor*). (Muslim)

Thus, the angels are a type of Allah's creation that cannot be seen by man. They serve Almighty Allah in what He commands them and they do not enjoy any divine attributes whatsoever. They submit to Allah's commands completely. They never stray away from obeying His orders even for a moment.

This shows that the angels and the *jinn* are two different classes of Allah's creation, and that it is a mistake to consider them as belonging to the same class. The Qur'an speaks of the angels as messengers (*rusul*) with wings. (*Surat Faatir*, 35: 1)

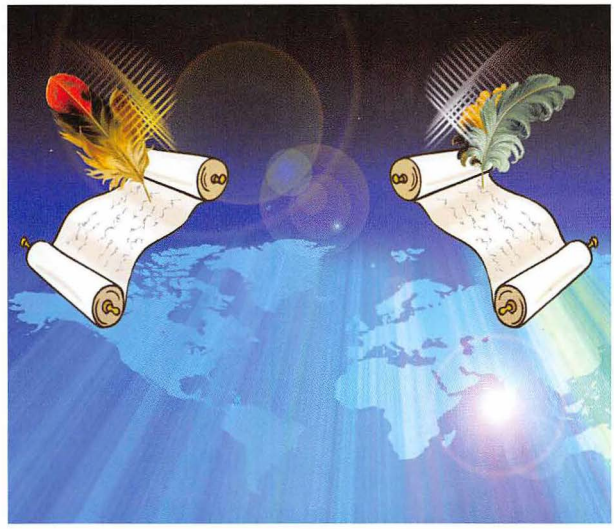
Belief in the Angels consists of the Following:

1. We must believe that they exist.

2. We must believe in those angels whose names we know through the Qur'an or the *Sunnah*. For example, Angel Jibreel (عليه السلام) who brought revelation to the Messenger (ﷺ).

3. We must believe in their attributes, as mentioned in the Qur'an or the *Sunnah*. For example, one of the Prophet's traditions state that Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) saw Angel Jibreel (عليه السلام) in the image in which he was created, with six hundred wings that blocked the horizon.

4. We must believe in the actions that they perform, as mentioned in the Qur'an or the authentic *hadeeth*. The Qur'an says that they worship Allah and glorify Him day and night. It also states that specific angels have specific tasks. Jibreel (عليه السلام) is entrusted with Allah's revelations which he brings down from Allah to His prophets and messengers. Israafeel (عليه السلام) is responsible for blowing the Trumpet that will resurrect the dead on the Day of Judgment. Mikaa'eel (عليه السلام) is entrusted with the rain and vegetation.



Each one of us has two angels with him who constantly record all his words and deeds. The Qur'an says, "Behold, two [recording angels] appointed to learn [his doings and note them], one sitting on the right and one on the left. Not a word does he utter but there is a vigilant recorder." (*Surat Qaaf*, 50:17-18)

The believers know that there are angels called *mu'aqqibaat* that protect man in all situations. The Qur'an says, **"For each [person] there are angels in succession, before and behind him. They guard him by the command of Allah." (*Surat ar-Ra'd*, 13:11)** Another verse reads, **He is the Irresistible, Supreme over His slaves, and He sends guardians over you."** (*Surat al-An'aam*, 6:61) These guardians guard as well as write all of one's good and bad deeds.

Another angel we know of is the Angel of Death who is entrusted with the task of taking souls. The Qur'an says, **"Say the angel of death who is**

set over you will take your souls, then you will be brought to your Lord." (*Surat as-Sajdah*, 32:11)

Some angels are entrusted with the task of keeping Paradise (*Surat az-Zumar*, 39:73), while others (called *az-Zabaaniyah*) are in charge of keeping the Hellfire (*Surat Al-Muddath-thir*, 74:27-31)

Some angels are entrusted with the foetus in the womb. When the foetus has spent four months in the womb, Almighty Allah sends an angel with the orders to write his provision, his lifespan, his deeds and whether he will be miserable or happy in the hereafter.

There are also two angels that question the dead in their graves as well as angels that pray for the believers and support them when they do righteous deeds to earn the Good Pleasure of Allah. For instance, among many *ahadeeth* of this nature, the Prophet (ﷺ) said, "Allah, the angels and the inhabitants of the heavens and the earth, even the ant in its hole and the fish, pray for the one who teaches people good." (at-Tabaraanee)

Their Prayers for the person continue for a long time, even after the person has completed his good deed. Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) once said, "No man goes to visit an ill person in the late afternoon except that seventy thousand angels go with him and continue to seek forgiveness for him until the morning and he shall have a garden in Paradise. And if one goes to him in the morning, seventy thousand angels go with him and seek his forgiveness until the evening and he shall have a garden in Paradise." (Ahmad, Abu Daawood and at-Tirmidhee)

In fact, a believer can reach a point where the angels begin to love him and spread love for him in the world. The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "If Allah loves a person, He calls Jibreel (عليه السلام) saying, 'Allah loves so and so, therefore, so love him. The dwellers of the heaven then love him and he is then granted acceptance among the people of the earth." (al-Bukhaaree and Muslim)

The Supplications of those Angels who are very Close to Allah

The Qur'an says, **"Those [angels] who sustain the Throne of Allah and those around it exalt [Allah] with praise of their Lord and believe in Him and ask forgiveness for those who believe, saying, 'Our Lord, You have encompassed all things in mercy and knowledge; so forgive those who repent and follow Your path and protect them from the punishment of Hellfire! Our Lord, admit them into the gardens of perpetual bliss which you have promised them, and to the**

righteous among their fathers, their spouses and their children. Truly, You are the Almighty, the All-Wise.'" (*Surat Ghaafir*, 40:7-8)

The believer recognizes that the angels are a very good and magnificent creation. As we have learnt earlier, Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) describes Angel Jibreel (عليه السلام) as having six hundred wings. (al-Bukhaaree) Another *hadeeth* in *Saheeh Muslim* describes Angel Jibreel (عليه السلام) once as filling up the entire horizon. The goodness and magnificence of this creation of Allah certainly points to the greatness and magnificence of its Creator. It is this knowledge that deepens a person's love, awe and admiration for Allah.

The Electrifying Possibility of Observing Angels

Usayd ibn Hudhayr (رضي الله عنه) was reciting the Qur'an in his enclosure one night when his horse began to jump about frantically. Repeatedly Usayd would stop his recitation until the horse was calm. No sooner had he resumed reciting than the horse would again begin to jump wildly. Eventually he stopped altogether for fear of having his son trampled over by the horse.

Usayd (رضي الله عنه) observed, while standing near the horse, something like a canopy over his head with what seemed to be lamps in it rising up in the sky until it disappeared. The next day, he approached the Prophet (ﷺ) and informed him of what he had seen the previous night. The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "Those were the angels who listened to you; and if you had continued reciting, the people would have seen them in the morning and they would not have concealed themselves from them." (*Saheeh Muslim*, English translation by Abdul-Hameed Siddeeqee, *Hadeeth* no. 1742)

Loving Others for Allah's Sake

Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said, "A man set out to visit a brother [in faith] of his in another town, and Allah appointed an angel for him on his way. When he came to him, the angel asked, 'Where do you intend to go?' The man replied, 'I intend to visit a brother of mine in this town.' The angel then said, 'Do you have any property with him that you want to check on?' He replied, 'No, it is only because I love him for the sake of Allah Most High.' The angel then said, 'I am a messenger to you from Allah [to inform you] that Allah loves you as you love him for His sake.'" (Muslim) This *hadeeth* indicates that the angels can assume human shape by Allah's leave.

The angels record the words and deeds of each and every one of us. They are always in our presence. This is the reason why the Prophet (ﷺ) stated, "Whoever eats of this [offensive] plant (i.e. garlic) must not approach our mosque, for the angels are harmed by that which harms humans." (Muslim)

Hence, even if no other humans are around, the believer knows that the angels are around; therefore, he should always remain careful and modest in their presence. He should avoid doing anything that may annoy and harm these beloved noble creatures. It is important to note that the angels are neither male nor female, and that they neither eat nor drink.

A very delightful *hadeeth* narrates some of the functions of the angels. Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said, "Allah has some angels who look for those who celebrate the praises of Allah on the roads and paths, and when they find some people celebrating the praises of Allah, they call each other saying, 'Come to the object of your pursuit.' The angels then encircle them with their wings up to the sky of the world. Then their Lord asks them, although He is Most Knowledgeable of them, 'What do my slaves say?' The angels reply, 'They say: *Sub-haanallaah, Allaahu Akbar and al-Hamdulillaah*.' Allah then says, 'Did they see Me?' The angels reply, 'No, by Allah, they did not see You.' Allah says, 'How would it have been if they saw Me?' The angels reply, 'If they saw You, they would worship You more devoutly and celebrate Your Glory more deeply, and more often declare Your freedom from any resemblance to anything...'" (al-Bukhaaree)

Belief in the angels is one of the essential articles of faith. Therefore, if a person does not believe in them, he is without doubt a disbeliever.

Exercises

A. State whether these statements are true (T) or false (F).

1. The *Jinn* are also angels. _____
2. Angels can assume human forms. _____
3. Belief in the Qur'an cannot be confirmed unless one believes in all the angels. _____

B. Fill in the blanks.

1. The Arabic word for angels is _____
2. Almighty Allah created man from _____, *jinn* from _____, and the angels from _____.
3. Angel Jibreel (عليه السلام) is recorded as having _____ wings.
4. When a person visits an ill person, _____ angels go with him, and seek forgiveness for him.

C. Answer the following questions.

1. Mention some qualities of the angels.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. There are two angels who stay with us all of the time. What are their duties?

3. What is the ruling regarding someone who does not believe in the angels?

4. What did the Prophet (ﷺ) say would have happened had Usayd (رضي الله عنه) continued to recite the Qur'an?

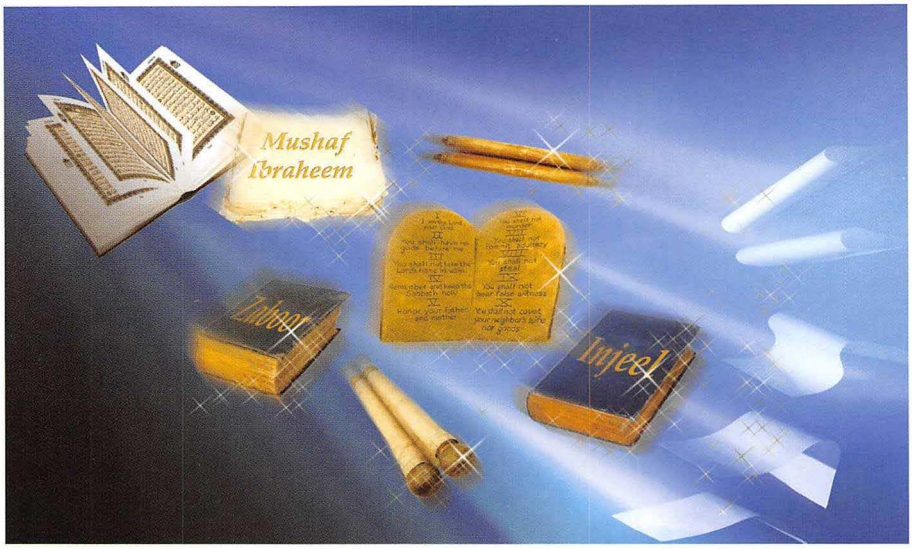
5. According to a *hadeeth*, what are the things that bother the angels?

D. Think-up

Mention at least five angels and their responsibilities.

Belief in Allah's Books

4



Belief in Allah's Books: The Third Article of Faith

Belief in Allah's Books is the third article of faith. It refers to the revelations Allah sent down to His Messengers. These revelations were a mercy and guidance from Allah. Their main objective was to bring mankind from the darkness of ignorance and disbelief to the light of faith as well as success in this life and eternal happiness in the hereafter. The Qur'an, which is Allah's Speech, is the final revelation.

Divine revelations Mentioned In the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*

1. The *Tawraah* (Torah) revealed to Prophet Moosaa (عليه السلام)
2. The *Zaboor* revealed to Prophet Daawood(عليه السلام)
3. The *Injeel* (Gospel) revealed to Prophet 'Eesaa (عليه السلام)
4. There is also reference in the Qur'an to the *suhuf* – the Scrolls revealed to Ibraaheem (عليه السلام) and Moosaa (عليه السلام).
5. The Glorious Qur'an, the Final Book revealed to Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ)

Belief in Allah's Books includes four Things

Belief in Allah's Books includes the following:

1. Belief that these Books were truly revealed by Almighty Allah to His messengers.
2. Belief in the divine books mentioned in the Qur'an or the *Sunnah*.
3. Acting in accordance with the teachings of the Qur'an, which is the final revelation. One must submit to it completely, even if he does not altogether grasp the wisdom behind the command or statement.
4. Belief that all the divine books had been abrogated by the Qur'an, as Allah says, **"And We have sent down to you the Book**

(i.e. this Qur'an) in truth, confirming the scriptures that came before it and judging over them." (*Surat al-Maa'idah*, 5:48) Therefore, it is not permissible to apply any of the laws from the previous books unless the Qur'an confirms that law; and if there is anything about which there is doubt, we must not turn to these books, but to the Qur'an, as Almighty Allah says, **"And if you differ in anything among yourselves, refer it to Allah and His Messenger."** (*Surat An-Nisaa'*, 4:59)

A Word about the Previous Revelations

The Books that the Jews and the Christians possess today, which they call the Torah, Gospel and the Psalms, may contain some of the original revelations. It should be noted here, however, that they have been distorted and that countless changes, additions and deletions have been made into them over the centuries. Hence, to believe in the *Tawraah* of Moosaa (عليه السلام), for example, does not mean that a Muslim believes in the first five books of the present-day Old Testament. The two are different Books altogether. The Old Testament, however, may contain some of what was originally revealed in the *Tawraah*.

All of the previous revelations have been abrogated by the final revelation — the Glorious Qur'an. There is no need for any Muslim to turn to the remnants of any of the previous revelations for guidance. Everything that he needs for his guidance is contained in the Qur'an. It is not permissible to act in accordance with any ruling mentioned in the previous revelations unless it is approved by the Qur'an.

One of the greatest blessings of Allah is that He sent revelations for the guidance of mankind. In fact, He sent specific and different revelations according to the needs and conditions of different peoples over time. This mercy of Allah continued until the Qur'an was revealed. Indeed, the Qur'an contains all the guidance that people need from the time of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) until the Last Day. Because the Qur'an provides guidance for all places and times until the Day of Resurrection, Allah has undertaken to protect it from any tampering or distortions.

The Glorious Qur'an is Protected by Allah Himself

The Qur'an is the uncreated Word of Allah. It is the Final Message of Allah to all mankind. Its present form is the same as it was at the time of the Prophet (ﷺ). The Qur'an has come down to us complete. No changes have

ever been made in it. Nothing of it is missing. No additions have ever been made to it. No part, not even a tiny syllable of it is forgotten or has gone unrecorded. The Qur'an is protected by Allah Himself from all forms of distortions.

The Qur'an is the only revealed book in the world today that has been preserved in its pure original form. There is no other instance of any revealed book, of whatever description, which has been preserved over such a length of time. The text of the Qur'an will remain as it was revealed until the end of time. It is protected by Allah Himself.

Allah says in the Qur'an,

إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ ﴿٩﴾

"Truly, We Who have sent down the Reminder (i.e. the Qur'an), and We will assuredly preserve it [from corruption]."
(*Surat al-Hijr*, 15:9)

Almighty Allah also says about it,

وَإِنَّهُ لَكِتَابٌ عَزِيزٌ ﴿٤١﴾ لَّا يَأْتِيهِ الْبَاطِلُ
مِن بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَلَا مِنْ خَلْفِهِ ۖ تَنزِيلٌ مِّنْ حَكِيمٍ حَمِيدٍ ﴿٤٢﴾

"It is an honourable, inimitable book; falsehood cannot come to it from before it or behind it; [it is] sent down by the All-Wise, Worthy of all praise." (*Surat Fussilat*, 41:41-42)

The Story of a Jew

Al-Qurtubee mentions a marvellous story in his *Tafseer*. He says: The Caliph al-Ma'moon used to hold occasional debates on various issues at his court where all scholars were invited. It so happened once that a Jew came to attend one of these debates. By his looks, dress, speech and manners, he seemed to be an elegant person. His speech during the debate was excellent and brilliant. When the meeting was over, al-Ma'moon called him and asked him if he was a Jew, which he confirmed. To test him, al-Ma'moon asked him to accept Islam, in which case he could hope to receive the best possible treatment from him. The Jew said that he was not willing to abandon the religion of his forefathers. The matter ended there, and the man went away.

Then after one year the same person returned, but this time as a Muslim. He made a remarkable contribution to the court meetings on the subject of Islamic *fiqh*. When the sessions were over, al-Ma'moon called the man and asked him whether he was the same man who had come the previous year. The man answered, "Yes." Al-Ma'moon asked him, "You refused to accept Islam last time you came. Tell me what made you accept Islam."

He answered, "When I left your court, I decided to do some research on the religions of our time. I am a scribe by profession. I write books and sell them. They bring me good price. This time, I decided to make a test. First I made three handwritten copies of the Torah in which I made some additions and deletions of my own. I took these manuscripts to the synagogue. The Jews found them interesting and bought them.

"Then, I did the same thing with the New Testament. I made three manuscripts, complete with my additions and deletions and took them to the church. The Christians were pleased with these manuscripts and bought them from me. After that I tried the same thing with the Qur'an. I made three superb handwritten copies of the Qur'an but with a few additions and deletions of my own. When I went out to sell them, I faced a problem; for when Muslim booksellers examined the manuscripts they hurled them across saying that the books had been corrupted. From this incident, I learnt that this Book is protected and preserved by Allah Himself. I, therefore, embraced Islam." (Muhammad al-Qurtubee, *Al-Jaami' Li Ahkaam al-Qur'aan*, Vol. 5, pp. 6-7)

Exercises

A. Fill in the blanks.

1. Belief in Allah's Books is the _____ article of faith.
2. Belief in Allah's Books refers to _____ Allah sent down to His Messengers.
3. A Muslim must believe in all the Books revealed by Allah but must follow only the _____.
4. _____ is the only revealed Book today that is preserved.

B. Answer the following questions.

1. What is the purpose for Allah's revelations?

2. What made the Jew embrace Islam when he had refused to do so the previous year?

3. What are the divine revelations mentioned in the Qur'an that Almighty Allah sent down, and to whom had they been sent?

4. Can the Qur'an, in your opinion, be subject to any human changes whatsoever, and why?

5. Do we have to believe in all Allah's Books? Why or why not?

6. Can we, in your opinion, follow any of the laws mentioned in the present-day Old and New Testaments? Why or why not?

C. Think-up

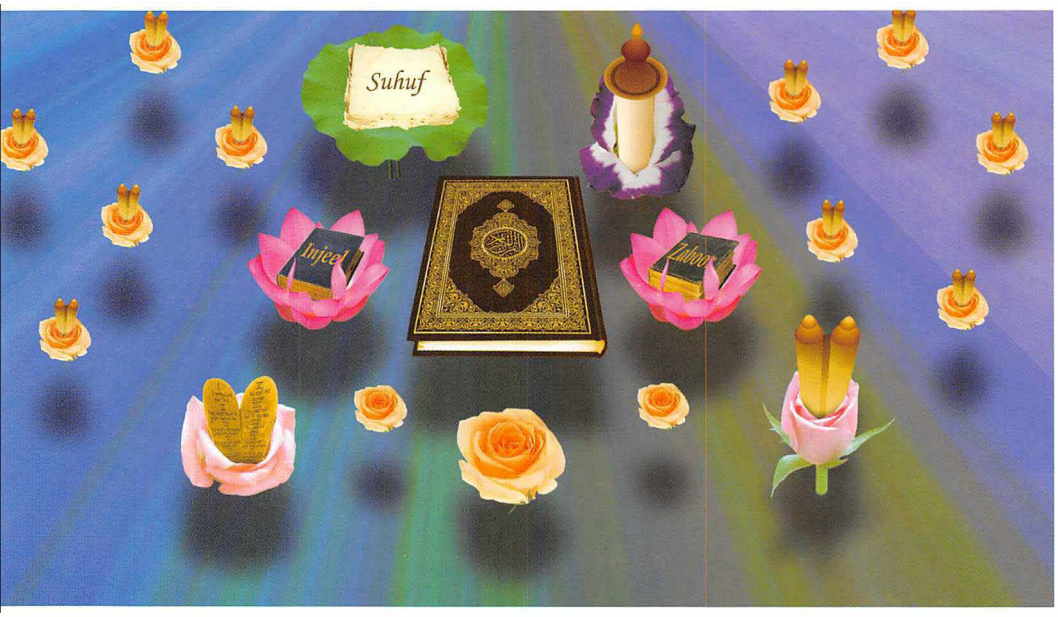
Why do you think Allah has preserved the Qur'an from distortions while He did no such thing with the previous scriptures?

Belief in the Messengers of Allah

5

The fourth article of faith is the belief in the Messengers of Allah.

To believe in Allah's Messengers means to believe with certainty that Allah sent a messenger to each nation, calling them to worship Allah alone and not to associate any partners with Him in worship.



All Messengers were Human Beings

All the prophets and messengers were human beings chosen by Allah to receive revelations from Him. They were commanded to pass on these revelations to people of their time. A person cannot by himself attain Prophethood or Messengership through spiritual exercises or personal efforts. It is Almighty Allah alone who chooses His Messengers and He alone knows best whom to choose.

Indeed, Allah chooses messengers from both angels and men, as the Qur'an says, **"Allah chooses messengers from angels and from men."** (*Surat al-Hajj*, 22:75)

Almighty Allah also sent prophets and messengers to every nation. **"There was not a single nation among whom a warner had not passed."** (*Surat Faatir*, 35: 24)

We do not know about all of them, as the Qur'an says, **"[We sent] messengers about whom We have related [their stories] to you before and messengers about whom We have not related to you."** (*Surat an-Nisaa'*, 4: 164)

As time passed, the original message of each prophet and messenger was distorted or entirely lost, and it became necessary for a new prophet or messenger to appear. Since Islam is the final religion, Allah has preserved its message from all forms of corruption. Therefore, the beliefs and practices which Muslims recognize today are the same beliefs and practices taught by Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) himself.

It is significant to note that all the messengers and prophets were human beings. They ate and drank. They became ill and recovered from illness. They married and had children. They lived and died. They suffered from what other humans suffer. They were, however, unlike ordinary folks. They were mortal but the most perfect of human beings. They were extraordinary men but did not have any divine status. They did not know anything about the unseen except for those matters about which Almighty Allah revealed to them. The Qur'an says, **"Say, 'I am only a human being like you to whom it has been revealed to me that your god is but one God.'"** (*Surat Fussilat*, 41:6)

Correct Belief in Allah's Messengers consists of four Things

The correct belief in the messengers of Allah consists of four things:

1. Belief that the message of all of them is the truth from Allah. If a person denies any single one of them who is confirmed in the Qur'an or the Prophet's traditions, then he is in fact denying all of them. Denial of one is tantamount to denial of all of them, since their message is essentially one and the same. Muslims must believe in all the prophets and messengers.
2. Belief in all the prophets and messengers mentioned by their names in the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*. As for those not mentioned in the Qur'an, one must believe in them in general. One must believe that there is not a single community among whom a warner had not come. Allah sent many prophets and messengers although not all of them are mentioned in the Qur'an or the *Sunnah*.
3. Belief in everything they said. They communicated their message from Allah completely and correctly. They tried hard to deliver Allah's message. They strove hard for Allah's sake in the most complete manner. They were the most knowledgeable of all people. They were the best servants of Allah. Allah protected them from

ascribing to Him something of their own invention or judging according to their whims and desires. He also protected them from committing sins or adding or deleting something from the religion.

4. One must act in accordance with the guidance and the teachings of the messengers Almighty Allah sent for man's guidance.

Indeed, it is one of Allah's great blessings that He sent prophets and messengers to guide mankind to the right path. In fact, people are more in need of the prophets' guidance than they are of food, drink and shelter. Allah sent prophets and messengers with clear proofs and supported them with miracles.

Aadam (عليه السلام) was the first man and the first prophet, and the succession of prophets and messengers came to an end with Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), who was the Seal of the Prophets. Indeed, he was the universal and final messenger of Allah to all mankind. Every prophet and messenger was sent to his own people, but Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) was sent to all mankind, as the Qur'an says, **"Say [O Muhammad], 'O mankind, truly, I am the Messenger of Allah to you all.'"** (*Surat al-A'raaf*, 7:158)

The Qur'an speaks of Aadam (عليه السلام) as the first man and the first Prophet. Prophethood began with Aadam (عليه السلام), and it came to a close with Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ). The end is always in a sense a return to the beginning. This is equally true of the Prophets' mission and Islam. Islam, being the final message, has in it not only the fragrance of the end but also of the beginning. Islam, in its final form, is the most beautiful, adequate, the most wonderful and perfect religion. Prophet Muhammad's character was the Qur'an itself. His whole life was the Qur'an in action.

The Purpose of Sending Prophets and Messengers

The Qur'an says, **"And We certainly sent into every nation a messenger, [saying], 'Worship Allah and avoid the *Taaghoot* (i.e. false gods)."** (*Surat an-Nahl*, 16:36)

Thus, the basic message of all prophets and messengers was the same: to call to the Oneness of Allah (*tawheed*), to worship Him Alone and to shun false gods and powers of evil.

All the prophets and messengers were inspired by Allah. They all brought the same basic truth that there is only One God — Allah, who will reward the good and punish the wicked. They all had the same mission to call people to the Straight Path.

Difference between *Nabee* and *Rasool*

A '*rasool*' (messenger) is a man who was inspired with a new law or set of laws and sent to a transgressing people, conveying to them Allah's message.

A '*nabee*' (prophet) is a man who was inspired with a message, but the message was to follow the law of those who came before him. He was sent to apply a previously revealed law.

Stories of Prophets and Messengers in the Qur'an

The stories of prophets and messengers form a significant portion of the Qur'an. The Qur'an, however, does not tell the stories of the large number of prophets and messengers as mentioned in the *hadeeth*. There are twenty-five prophets mentioned in the Qur'an: Aadam, Idrees, Nooh, Hood, Saalih, Ibraaheem, Ismaa'eel, Is-haaq, Ya'qoob, Lot, Yoosuf, Shu'ayb, Ayyoob, Dhul-Kifl, Musaa, Haaroon, Yoosha, Ilyaas, Daawood, Sulaymaan, 'Uzayr, Zakariyyaa, Yahyaa, 'Eesaa, and Muhammad—May Allah's peace and blessings be upon them all!

The Qur'an speaks of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) as the Last of the Prophets – *Khaatam an-Nabiyyeen*. Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) once said, "My example and the example of the prophets before me is like that of a man who has built a house and he made it very good and very beautiful with the exception of one stone in the corner; so people began to go round it and to wonder at it and say, 'Why has the stone not been placed?'" The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "I am this stone, and I am the Last of the Prophets." (Al-Bukhaaree)

It is thus the same procession moving forward throughout human history since Aadam (عليه السلام). They brought the same guidance, warned people against Allah's punishment and gave them good news of a happy life in this life and eternal bliss in the hereafter. This procession includes noble men from various nations and various countries who lived at different times. Every one of them received revelations from Allah, and none of them invented anything in religion.

The Reason behind Raising Allah's Messenger (ﷺ)

The Prophet's (ﷺ) Mission:

The Qur'an states in several places the objectives of Prophet Muhammad's mission. It says in one place:

كَمَآ أَرۡسَلۡنَا فِيكُمۡ رَسُولٗا مِّنكُمۡ يَتۡلُواْ عَلَيۡكُمۡ ءَايَٰتِنَا وَيُزَكِّيكُمۡ
وَيُعَلِّمُكُمُ ٱلۡكِتَٰبَ وَٱلۡحِكۡمَةَ وَيُعَلِّمُكُم مَّا لَمۡ تَكُونُواْ تَعۡلَمُونَ ١٥١

"Just as We sent to you a messenger from among you, who recites to you Our revelations and purifies you and teaches you the Book and wisdom (i.e. the Prophet's *Sunnah*) and teaches you that which you did not know." (*Surat al-Baqarah*, 2: 151)

One of the Prophet's duties was to teach his followers how to understand and interpret the Qur'an, and translate it into a practical code for daily life. The Prophet's Mosque was the focal point of Muslim life and its centre of learning. It produced a unique and great civilization as well as a community of believers that has no parallel in human history.

Exercises

A. State whether these statements are true (T) or false (F).

1. All prophets and messengers were human beings. _____
2. Anyone can become a prophet. _____
3. Denial of one prophet is tantamount to the denial of all prophets. _____
4. All prophets and messengers Allah sent are mentioned in the Qur'an. _____
5. All the prophets gave the same guiding light. _____

B. Answer the following questions.

1. Why has Almighty Allah preserved Muhammad's message from corruption?

2. Why did people reject prophets and messengers even though they brought clear signs and proofs to them?

3. Mention some of the qualities of the prophets and messengers.

4. What was Allah's purpose for sending prophets and messengers?

5. What example did the Prophet (ﷺ) used to explain his position as the Last Prophet?

6. What was Allah's purpose in sending Muhammad (ﷺ)?

7. What's the difference between a '*nabee*' and a '*rasool*'?

8. Why, in your opinion, is Prophet Muhammad's message universal?

Surat al-'Asr (The Time)

6



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

وَالْعَصْرِ ﴿١﴾ إِنَّ الْإِنسَانَ لَفِي خُسْرٍ ﴿٢﴾ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالْحَقِّ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ ﴿٣﴾

In the Name of Allah, the Most Kind, the Most Merciful

1. By the time,
2. Truly, man is in a state of loss,
3. Except those who believe and do righteous deeds, and advise each other to [uphold] the truth, and advise each other to [observe] patience.

Explanation

The Arabic word *'asr* means time, that is measurable, consisting of succession of periods. Hence, *'asr* bears the significance of the passing or the flight of time – time that can never be recaptured.

Four Fundamental Points Concerning *Surat al-'Asr*

1. *Surat al-'Asr* was revealed to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) in the earliest period of his Prophethood in Makkah.

2. *Surat al-'Asr* is one of the shortest *surahs* of the Glorious Qur'an. It consists of only three verses. The first verse is composed of only two words: *wa* (by) and *al-'Asr* (the time).

3. *Surat al-Asr* is the most comprehensive *surah* of the Qur'an. Ash-Shaafi'ee said, "If Allah had revealed only this *surah* to His creatures, it would have been enough for them." He also once said, people were to reflect on this *surah*, it would certainly be enough for their guidance."

4. The wording of this *surah* is very simple and easy to understand. The Qur'an is unquestionably the greatest masterpiece of Arabic literature and in its totality can be understood easily, but this short *surah* is the best example of the most lucid *surahs* of the Qur'an. Although it is quite complete and comprehensive, not a single high-sounding or elusive word has been used in it. In fact, the words are familiar even to those who are acquainted with Urdu or Persian and do not know Arabic.

The Analysis of the Meaning of the Translation

Only three verses form one complete sentence in this *surah*. The first verse '*wal 'Asr*' is an oath. The second verse describes a general rule. The third verse describes an exception from that general rule. Combined together, all three verses firmly and clearly form a single statement in our minds. Pondering over it, we should deduce four conclusions, which are the basic lessons of this *surah*.

The Criterion of Success and Failure

The most important truth, which flows forth from this *surah*, is Allah's presentation of the real criterion of man's success and failure.

Every man keeps in his mind a criterion of success and failure, of gain and loss. All his efforts and the whole struggle of his life in this world are directed according to this criterion. Every intellectually mature person has an appointed goal or an ideal before him. Even teenagers keep before them a standard of achievement. If we were to look around in our society, we would find that, in our present time, the real criterion of success or failure according to a large number of people is wealth, property, status, honour, fame and show and worldly power. All but a few are running after these things.

They use their energies to achieve these goals. The minds of most of our students and parents are directed towards obtaining degrees in science or technology so that they may earn a lot of money or achieve status, position and power. The achievement of these things is their criterion of success or failure.

The foremost truth, which comes to our minds by studying *Surat al-'Asr* is very different from this! In other words, the criterion of man's success is not money, wealth, status, position, power or fame. Rather it is faith; the second thing is righteous deeds; the third thing is encouragement to uphold the truth and observe patience.

By this criterion, a person who does not possess the above four qualities is not successful and will never achieve his real goal, and in the end he will be a loser though he might be a millionaire or even a billionaire and might have power, position and status like Pharaoh. Conversely, anyone who has these four qualities will be successful and triumphant even if he may not have any worldly possessions whatsoever, and may be destitute, homeless, friendless or even unknown.

Changing our Criterion of Success and Failure is the Real Lesson of this *Surah*

The real lesson of this unique *surah* is that the correction of our attitudes and the goodness of our deeds depend upon changing our criterion of success and failure, gain and loss. If the simple truth stated in this great *surah* penetrates our souls and is engraved on our hearts, it will definitely bring about a revolution in our point of view. It will change our values and transform our day-to-day life radically. What was thought most important before will appear to be most trivial. What was insignificant before will become significant.

The Lives of the Prophet's Companions

The great transformation, which was brought about in the lives of the Prophet's companions was the result of this deep-rooted change in their point of view. In their sight, this world and whatever it contains seemed to them totally insignificant compared to the achievement of Allah's Good pleasure. This is the real lesson of this magnificent *surah*.

The Minimum Conditions and Essential Requirements of Success

This *surah* describes the bare minimum conditions and essential requirements of success in this life and the life to come. It explains the

minimum demands for our triumph. Anything less would undoubtedly result in failure. That is why, in this glorious *surah*, the most minimum demands of salvation have been described in the simplest of terms so that people may dedicate themselves to achieving it according to their capability.

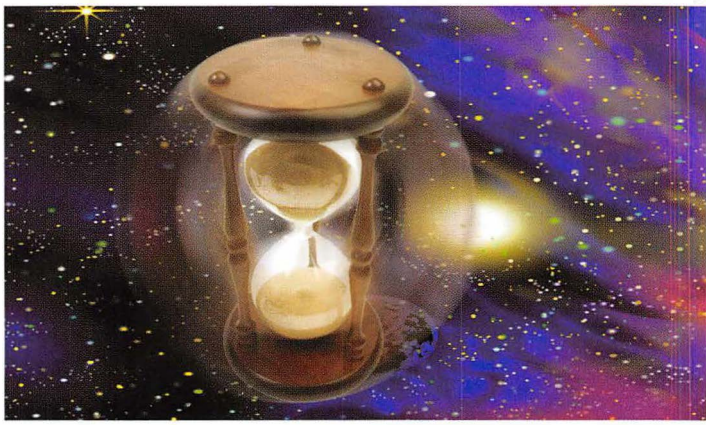
All the four Conditions are Essential

To achieve salvation, faith, good deeds, encouragement to uphold the truth and encouragement to patience and steadfastness are all necessary. None of them can be dropped. Four conditions have been laid down for saving us from utter loss or failure, and all four of them are essential.

If a medical expert prescribes four medicines for a patient, and the patient leaves out any of them according to his own judgment, then the medical expert will not be responsible for the incomplete medication. The patient himself will be accountable for this error. In the same way, if any of the four conditions prescribed is left out, then the guarantee of man's salvation will not rest on the Glorious Qur'an.

We must remember, however, that salvation does not depend on the mere utterance of words of faith. Rather, we Muslims should realize that the performance of righteous deeds is essential for salvation. The affirmation and declaration of truth and inviting others to accept it as well as remaining steadfast in the face of hardships and calamities for the sake of the truth is also essential.

This is the truth which has been stated in this rather short but most comprehensive *surah*.



The Significance of the Word *'Al-'Asr'*

The word *al-Asr* signifies not only time but also a period of time, which passes swiftly. It denotes time that is measurable, consisting of succession of periods. Hence, *al-'Asr* bears the meaning of the passing of time, which can never be recaptured.

One scholar reported that he understood the meaning of *'wal-'asri innal insaana lafee khusr'* (By the time, truly, man is in a state of loss) as follows: When he heard an ice-seller in the marketplace calling out, 'Have mercy on a man whose wealth is melting away!' meaning please buy my

ice before it melts, or I will lose all my investment and have no money left with which to feed my family! Of course, on a very hot day, even with the best of insulation, the ice would melt with every passing second. The scholar thought about this and concluded that our lives are just like blocks of ice: they pass away with every single second, and never to return.

Just as an ice-seller is a loser if he does not sell his merchandise before it melts away, we will certainly be losers if we do not make the most of our time by filling it with good deeds, which will without doubt pay off in the life to come. (Iman Torres-Al Haneef, *The Qur'an in Plain English*, The Islamic Foundation, UK)

The time is a witness to the entire human history. It has seen the rise and fall of human empires and kingdoms. It has witnessed powerful people come and go. It has seen cities, towns, castles, and palaces built and ruined. It seems that everything in this life is uncertain except the coming of death.

When death overtakes us, we leave everything behind. The only thing that will help us after our death is our sincere faith and good deeds. *Surat al-'Asr* is a clarion call for us to wake up from indifference and slumber. It reminds us that everyone in this life is a loser except those who

(1) sincerely believe,
(2) do righteous deeds,
(3) advise one another to uphold the truth by doing acts of obedience and avoiding everything that Allah has prohibited, and
(4) advise one another to observe patience as a result of calamities as well as harms caused to them due to enjoining others to do good and forbidding them from doing evil.

A believer must invite others to the truth of Islam. If he suffers any hardships while working for the cause of Islam, he must bear them with patience and constantly turn to Allah and seek His help!

Exercises

A. Fill in the blanks.

1. The *surah* has only _____ verses.
2. The *surah* describes the bare _____ conditions and essential _____ of success in our afterlife and present life.
3. Salvation does not depend on the mere _____ of faith.
4. The Arabic word '*asr* means _____.

B. Answer the following questions.

1. Mention Imam ash-Shafiee's views on the *surah*.

2. According to the *surah*, what is the real criterion of man's success?

3. What is the false criterion of success in our present times?

4. What is the real lesson of this *surah*?

5. All the four conditions are essential for salvation. Explain.

6. What do the words '*wal-'asr*' signify?

Belief in the Last Day

7

The Tremendous Event

While the world we live in continues its course through the ages, this will not go on forever. A day will come when time will come to an end, and our time of trial on the earth will be over. When will the world end? Only Allah (ﷻ) knows.

The Last Day

The Last Day is called as such because no new day will come after it. The word generally used in the Qur'an to indicate life after death is *al-aakhirah*. Death, in the light of the plain teaching of the Qur'an, is not the end of man's life. Rather, it only opens the door to another form of life.

The Last Day has a number of names, and there are many verses in the Qur'an which graphically depict this day. Some of these names are:

Al-Qaariah	the Calamity
Az-Zalzalah	the Earthquake
Al-Haaqqah	the Reality
Al-Yawm al-muheet	the Encompassing Day
Yawm al-Fasl	the Day of Separation
Al-Yawm ath-Thaqeel	the Hard Day
Yawm al-Ba'th	the Day of Resurrection
Yawm an-Nushoor	the Day of Rising
Yawm al-Qiyaamah	the Day of Judgment

It is also called *as-Saa'h* (the Hour). The Hour of Resurrection is so called because it hastens towards us (*tas'aa*) by passing through moments of time and our breaths.

The term 'Hour' also indicates the quickness with which its reckoning will be accomplished, or because it will come suddenly upon mankind, in a moment, and all creatures will die at one shriek.

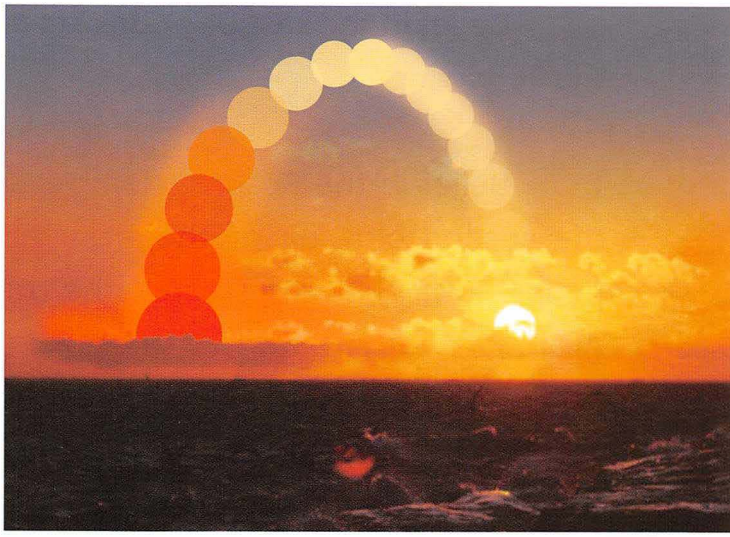
So when someone dies, his Hour has reached him and his resurrection has already begun.

Belief in the Last Day

Belief in the Last Day is one of the essential articles of faith. Belief in the Last Day consists of belief in everything that the Qur'an or the Prophet (ﷺ) has stated about the events of that day and the events that will take place thereafter. There are various aspects of the day like Resurrection, Judgment and Reward, Paradise and Hell, etc. that every Muslim should be aware of and believe in with certainty.

The Qur'an and the Prophet (ﷺ) have mentioned graphic details of this overwhelming day. The more one has knowledge of that day and its events, the greater effect this belief will have on him. Hence, it is necessary that every Muslim should learn about the events that would occur before and after the Last Day.

Imaam Muslim mentions an authentic *hadeeth* which states that before the Day of Judgment and the destruction of the earth, Allah (ﷻ) will send a cold wind from the direction of Syria which will take the souls of every individual who has even the slightest amount of faith in his heart. Therefore, the events of the end of the earth will befall on the worst of people, those having no faith at all.



One of the many events that will take place before this day is that the sun will rise from the west. At that time, all those people alive will declare their faith but it will be of no avail to them. Their coming to believe will not be accepted by Allah. Then the Trumpet will be blown and all those who are in the heavens and on the earth will swoon away, except him whom Allah wills. Then it will be blown a second time, and all the dead will be standing, looking on and waiting. Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said, "Between the two blowings of the Trumpet there will be forty." The people said, "Is it forty days, Abu Hurayrah?" I refused to reply. They asked, "Forty years?" I refused to reply, They asked, "Forty months?" I refused to reply and I added, "Everything of a human body will waste away except for the last coccyx bone, and from that bone Allah will reconstruct the whole body." (al-Bukhaaree)

Belief in the Last Day Consists of the Following

1. Belief in the Resurrection: After the second blowing of the Trumpet, people will be resurrected before Allah.

The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "O people! You will be gathered together before your Lord, barefooted, naked and uncircumcised. The first one to be clothed will be Ibraaheem (عليه السلام). Some of my followers will be taken to the left. I will say, 'O Lord! These are my followers.' Allah will say, 'You do not know what new things they introduced [in religion] after you.'" (al-Bukhaaree and Muslim)

2. Belief in the reckoning or weighing of the deeds and the reward or punishment for these deeds. Each descendant of Aadam (عليه السلام) will be brought on the Day of Arising and will have his deeds weighed on the Scales. If his balance is heavy with good deeds, he will be joyful and will never ever be sorrowful again. However, if his balance is light, then he will be extremely sorrowful. Allah has made it abundantly clear in the Qur'an that people's deeds will be weighed.

Allah says, **"And the weighing [of deeds] on that Day will be the truth. So those whose scales are heavy, it is they who will be the successful. And those whose scales are light, they are the ones who will find their souls in perdition for denying and rejecting Our Signs."** (*Surat al-'Araaf*, 7:8-9)

One might ask: How can actions be weighed? The answer is that Allah has the power over everything and so He can weigh them in a manner that He knows. He will surely weigh our deeds accurately and in a just way.

On that day, parts of the human body will be able to speak! They will give account of man's deeds individually before Allah, and there will be no one to help him.

Some people assume that the Day of Judgment is a long way away and thus there is no need to worry about it now. In fact, such people are greatly mistaken, for we do not know when death will overtake us. As soon as we die our time is over, and therefore we have to be ready to face our Lord.

Allah has the ability to recreate the bodies even after they have completely disintegrated. We may not be able to understand how this will happen exactly, but a believer knows it full well that it is true because He knows that the One who has created us out of nothing can easily bring us to life again.

Indeed, the Qur'an teaches us that all mankind will be raised from the dead. The resurrection of the dead will come about through the Almighty Power of Allah who has no difficulty whatsoever in creating us out of nothing and, likewise, He will have no difficulty in recomposing the elements of our bodies once again and give us life.

The Resurrection of the body will be a most powerful manifestation of the infinite justice and power of Allah. All mankind from Aadam (عليه السلام) to the last person to be born and die will stand on the Day of Judgment before Allah.

We should remember, however, that Allah's reward for His righteous servants will be out of His Infinite Mercy, and that His punishment for His disobedient slaves will be out of His Justice. In fact, His reward will be far greater than the reward the righteous slaves' mere deeds deserve; He will not punish anyone more than what he deserves. Each one's new life will be decided on that day and will mark a new beginning for each and every soul. This new beginning will either lead to everlasting joy in Paradise or to eternal punishment in the Hellfire.

3. Belief in Paradise and Hell. Paradise is the everlasting abode of bliss for the believers and Hell is the eternal abode of punishment for those who deny of truth. It is important to realize that both Paradise and Hell are in existence at the present time and they will exist forever. Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ) make mention of them and describe them in graphic details. A Muslim should not deny their existence or descriptions.

The Grave and the Two Angels: Munkar and Nakeer

Belief in the Last Day also includes belief in everything that will happen to a person after his death and before the Day of Judgment. This consists of the trial in the grave and the joy or punishment in it.

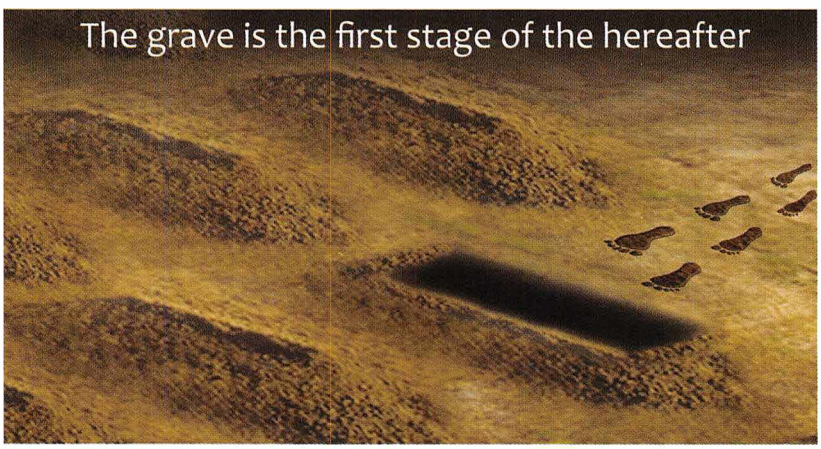
A *hadeeth* recorded by at-Tirmidhee states that the two angels, Munkar and Nakeer, come to the person in the grave and ask him three questions, "Who is your Lord? What is your religion? and Who is your Prophet?" Other narrations mention the two angels coming and asking him, "What did you use to say about this man?" (meaning Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ).

Is the punishment in the grave a punishment that smites the soul or is it one that also afflicts the body, which over time disintegrates? You will learn about such aspects of the grave in the years to come, *Inshaa Allaah*.

We will also discuss in some detail some other aspects of life after death, like the Pool or Basin (*al-Kawthar*) of the Prophet (ﷺ), the various kinds of Intercessors, the handing down of the scrolls of deeds, passing over the *Siraat* (the Bridge set over Hellfire and leads to Paradise) and Paradise and Hell and their descriptions.

We conclude this chapter with a *hadeeth* which presents a fearsome spectacle of Reckoning and should be sufficient to stir one to prepare now for then.

Whenever 'Uthmaan ibn 'Affaan (رضي الله عنه) stopped by a grave, he would weep until his beard soaked. He was once asked, "How is it that you weep when you stop by a grave?" He answered, "I once heard Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) say, 'The grave is the first stage of the hereafter. Should the one who occupies it be delivered therefrom, then what follows will be easier than it. But if he is not delivered therefrom, then what follows is to be severer.'" (at-Tirmidhee and Ibn Maajah)



Exercises

A. Fill in the blanks.

1. One day, man's time of _____ on the earth will be over.
2. _____ blowing from Syria will take the souls of every individual who has even the slightest amount of faith.
3. Two angels, _____ and _____ question the dead in their graves.

B. Answer the following questions.

1. Mention a few names that refer to the Last Day?

2. Why is the Last Day called 'the Hour'?

3. Is it difficult to believe in man's Resurrection after he is dead and mixed with the soil? Explain your answer.

4. Mention the three important elements of belief in the Last Day.

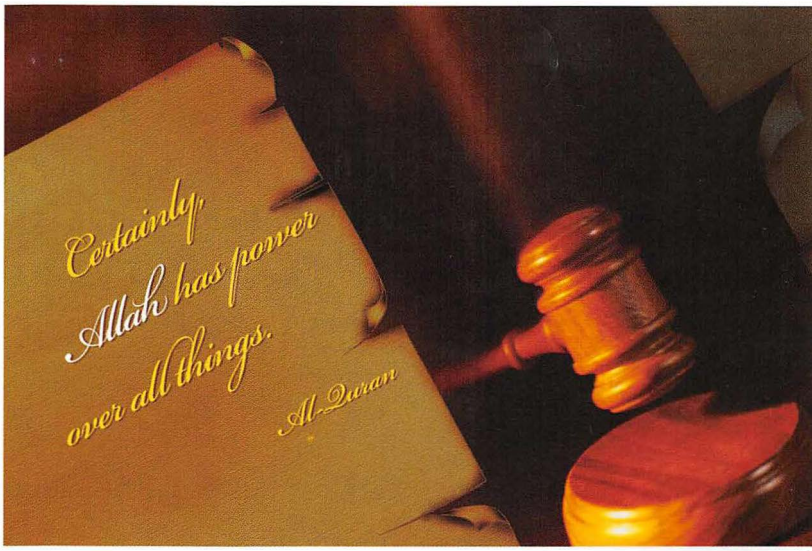
5. What questions will the two angels ask the dead in their graves?

6. Why would 'Uthmaan (رضي الله عنه) weep whenever he passed by a grave?

Belief in the Divine Decree (*al-Qadar*)

8

It is an essential part of *eemaan* to believe in *al-qadar*.



The word '*al-Qadar*'

Al-qadar is an Arabic word which originally means 'measure or amount whether of quantities or qualities'. The verb form of this word means, among other things, 'to measure or decide the quality, quantity, or position of something before one actually makes it.'

It is obligatory upon every Muslim to believe in *al-qadar*. Once 'Abdullah ibn 'Umar ibn al-Khattaab swore by Allah and said, "If anyone who does not believe in the Divine Decree had with him gold equal to the bulk of [Mount] Uhud of gold and then he should spend it [in the way of Allah], Allah would not accept that from him unless he affirms his faith in the Divine Decree." (*Saheeh Muslim*, English Translation, Vol. 1, p. 2)

The Levels of Belief in *al-Qadar*

There are four levels of belief in *al-qadar*.

1. **Knowledge:** This means to believe that Allah has knowledge of everything, no matter how small or big it is. He sees and has knowledge of even the smallest black ant upon a massive solid rock in an extremely dark night. The hidden for Him is visible and the secret is public. He knows what is secret and what is more hidden than a secret. He knows what is in a person's mind, conceived in his heart, which is not yet uttered by his lips. He even knows the intentions his heart has not yet formulated. He Knows that his creatures will formulate in their hearts such-and-such an intention at such-and-such a time. Thus Allah possesses foreknowledge of all the deeds of the creation according to His Ever-existing knowledge. This includes His knowledge of all their affairs with respect to obedience,

disobedience, sustenance, and lifespan. The Qur'an says,

وَعِندَهُۥ مَفَاتِحُ ٱلْغَيْبِ لَا يَعْلَمُهَآ إِلَّا هُوَ ۚ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا فِى
ٱلْبَرِّ وَٱلْبَحْرِ ۚ وَمَا تَسْقُطُ مِن وَرَقَةٍ إِلَّا يَعْلَمُهَا وَلَا حَبَّةٍ
فِى ظُلُمَٰتِ ٱلْأَرْضِ وَلَا رَطْبٍ وَلَا يَابِسٍ إِلَّا فِى كِتَٰبٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿٥٩﴾

"With him are the keys of the unseen. None knows them but Him. And He Knows whatever is on the land and in the seas. Not a leaf falls but He Knows it. And no grain is there in the darkness of the earth and no moist or dry [thing] but that it is [written] in a clear record." (*Surat al-An'aam*, 6:59)

أَنَّ ٱللَّهَ قَدْ أَحَاطَ بِكُلِّ شَىْءٍ عِلْمًا ﴿١٢﴾

"Allah has encompassed all things in [His] knowledge." (*Surat at-Talaaq*, 65:12)

2. **The Recording of Decrees:** This means to believe that Allah had recorded all the decrees regarding His creatures before He created the heavens and the earth. Hence, He not only knew and knows what will happen, but He had also recorded this information in minute detail in the Preserved Tablet (*al-Lawh al-Mahfoodh*). The Qur'an says,

مَآ أَصَابَ مِن مُّصِيبَةٍ فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ وَلَا فِىٓ أَنفُسِكُمْ إِلَّا فِى
كِتَٰبٍ مِّن قَبْلِ أَن نَّبْرَأَهَآ ۚ إِنَّ ذَٰلِكَ عَلَى ٱللَّهِ يَسِيرٌ ﴿٢٢﴾

"No calamity occurs on the earth or among yourselves but it is inscribed in the Book [of Decrees] before We bring it into existence. Indeed, that is easy for Allah." (*Surat al-Hadeed*, 57:22)

أَلَمْ تَعْلَمْ أَنَّ ٱللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِى ٱلسَّمَآءِ وَٱلْأَرْضِ ۗ إِنَّ ذَٰلِكَ
فِى كِتَٰبٍ ۚ إِنَّ ذَٰلِكَ عَلَى ٱللَّهِ يَسِيرٌ ﴿٧٠﴾

"Do you not know that Allah knows all that is in heaven and on earth? Surely, it is in the Book (i.e. the Preserved Tablet). Verily, that is easy for Allah." (*Surat al-Hajj*, 22:70)

3. **His Will:** This means to believe that Allah's Will is executed and that His Ability is Absolute. If He wills something, it will certainly happen; but if He does not will something, it will never happen. This refers to everything. It denotes Allah's action of giving life, sustenance, causing death and so on. It consists of the acts performed by human beings. Nothing can happen unless Allah wills it and allows it to occur.

A person may intend or try, for instance, to gun another person down, but such a thing can only happen if Allah decrees it. The shooter may take all the necessary steps, but if Allah does not will it to occur, it will not occur!

The Qur'an says,

إِنَّمَآ أَمۡرُهُۥٓ إِذَآ أَرَادَ شَيۡـًٔا أَن يَقُولَ لَهُۥ كُن فَيَكُونُ ﴿٨٢﴾

"Surely, His Command, when He intends a thing, is only that He says to it, 'Be,' and it is." (*Surat Yaa Seen*, 36:82)

4. **Allah's Creativity:** This means to believe that Allah has created everything and that there is no other creator except Him.

The Qur'an says,

ٱللَّهُ خَٰلِقُ كُلِّ شَيۡءٖۖ وَهُوَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيۡءٖ وَكِيلٞ ﴿٦٢﴾

"Allah is the Creator of all things, and He is the Disposer of all affairs." (*Surat az-Zumar*, 39:62)

Hence, everything is a creation of Allah. Even the deeds of mankind are creations of Allah although they are by man's own free will. The One Who created that ability and will is no one else but Allah. Therefore, all of the actions of human beings are created by Allah. You will, *inshaa Allaah*, learn about this interesting subject in greater detail in the years to come.

Exercises

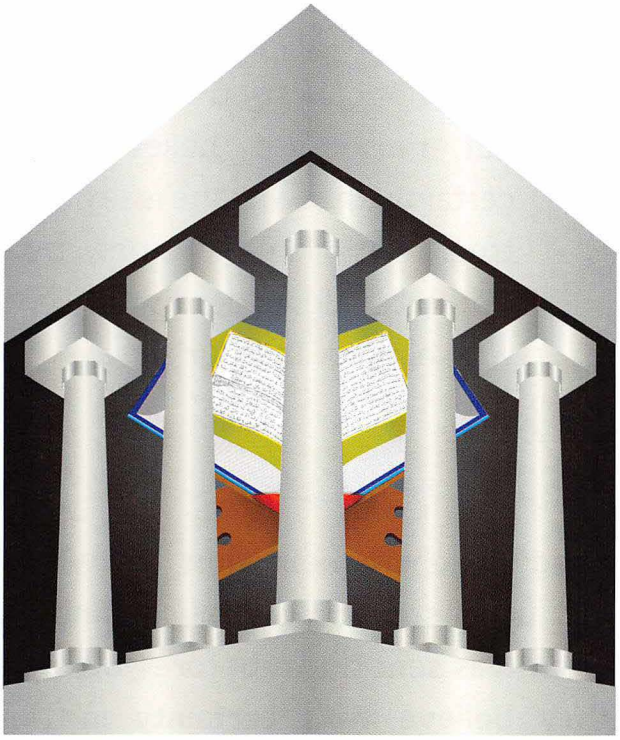
A. Answer the following questions.

1. Mention the original meaning of the word *al-qadar*.

2. List the four levels of belief in *al-qadar*.

Islam:
Meaning of the Five Pillars of Islam

9



The Word Islam

Islam is an Arabic term which literally means 'surrender or submission'. The religion sent down by Allah and brought into this world by His Prophets is called *al-Islaam* (Islam, for short). It is called as such for the simple reason that a Muslim surrenders himself completely and unconditionally to the power and will of the Lord of all the worlds. He obeys Him wholeheartedly, and obedience becomes the cardinal principle of his life.

[1] The word 'pillars' does not appear in the Arabic but has been supplied for clarity of meaning: An-Nawawee's Forty *Hadeeth*, Tr. Ezzedin Ibraheem and Denys Johnson Davies, p. 34.

Islam is built on Five Pillars[1]

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) once said, "Islam is built upon five [pillars]: "Testifying that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, establishing the [obligatory] prayers, giving the *zakaat*, making the Pilgrimage to the House, and fasting in *Ramadhaan*." (al-Bukhaaree and Muslim)

Importance of this *Hadeeth*

This *hadeeth* is of great significance. It lays down the fundamental aspects of outward surrender to Allah. This surrender is based on certain foundations, which are in a way similar to the foundations of a building. If a person carries out these outward obligations, he actually lays down a solid foundation for his religion as a whole. If any of these 'pillars' is missing, then the entire building will be exposed to danger.

In this *hadeeth*, the Prophet (ﷺ) likens Islam to a building. The foundations or pillars of this 'edifice' of Islam are five. If this building lacks all these five pillars, then it does not exist at all. If any of the pillars is missing, the building will stand but it will have a deficiency. It is significant to realize

that the main pillar is the testimony of faith. The first pillar leads to the fulfilment of the remaining pillars. The firmer the first pillar, the stronger the remaining pillars!

The Testimony of Faith

The testimony of faith, or the *shahaadah*, means: There is none worthy of worship except Allah. This belief in Allah is the cornerstone of Islamic faith. All of the other Islamic beliefs revolve round belief in Allah. It is, therefore, essential that a Muslim's beliefs about Allah are correct. If a person's beliefs about Allah are incorrect, then his entire faith may be ruined.

The Conditions of '*Laa Ilaaha Illallaah*'

The key to Paradise is the statement '*Laa Ilaaha Illallaah*' (There is none worthy of worship except Allah). This testimony has some conditions. Every key has teeth. If you come with the key that has the right teeth, the door will open for you.

1. **Knowledge:** This means knowledge that Allah is the only God who deserves to be worshipped and that to worship other than Him is sheer falsehood. The Qur'an says,

فَٱعْلَمْ أَنَّهُۥ لَآ إِلَٰهَ إِلَّا ٱللَّهُ

"So know that none has the right to be worshipped except Allah." (*Surat Muhammad*, 47:19)

2. **Certainty:** This means that one must not only say this statement but must also believe with certainty that what he is saying is true: that Allah is the only true God who alone deserves to be worshipped. The Qur'an says,

وَٱلَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ
بِمَآ أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ وَمَآ أُنزِلَ مِن قَبْلِكَ وَبِٱلْءَاخِرَةِ هُمْ يُوقِنُونَ ﴿٤﴾

"And those who believe in that which has been sent down to you and in what was sent down before you, and they believe with certainty in the hereafter." (*Suart al-Baqarah*, 2:4)

Allah describes the true believers as those who have belief in Allah and then their hearts do not waver . Allah says,

إِنَّمَا ٱلْمُؤْمِنُونَ ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ بِٱللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِۦ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَرْتَابُوا۟
وَجَٰهَدُوا۟ بِأَمْوَٰلِهِمْ وَأَنفُسِهِمْ فِى سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ ۚ أُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ هُمُ
ٱلصَّٰدِقُونَ ﴿١٥﴾

"The true believers are those who believe in Allah and His Messenger and afterwards doubt not, but strive with their wealth and their lives for the cause of Allah. They are the ones who are sincere." (*Surat al-Hujuraat*, 49: 15)

3. **Sincerity:** This means one must perform all actions sincerely and purely for Allah, seeking His

pleasure. As the Qur'an says,

﴿وَمَآ أُمِرُوٓاْ إِلَّا لِيَعۡبُدُواْ ٱللَّهَ مُخۡلِصِينَ لَهُ ٱلدِّينَ حُنَفَآءَ﴾

"And they were not commanded except that they worship Allah, [being] sincere to Him in religion." (*Surat al-Bayyinah*, 98:5).

The Prophet (ﷺ) once said, "Truly, Allah has forbidden for the Hellfire anyone who says *Laa ilaaha illallaah*, seeking Allah's pleasure alone." (Al-Bukhaaree)

4. **Love:** This means one must love Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ), giving preference to loving them over everyone and everything. It also means to love this statement and its implications and its adherents who act upon its dictates. The Qur'an says,

﴿وَمِنَ ٱلنَّاسِ مَن يَتَّخِذُ مِن دُونِ ٱللَّهِ أَندَادٗا يُحِبُّونَهُمۡ كَحُبِّ ٱللَّهِۖ وَٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوٓاْ أَشَدُّ حُبّٗا لِّلَّهِۗ﴾

And among the people are some who take others besides Allah as rivals [to Allah]; they love them as they should love Allah. But those who believe love Allah more." (*Surat al-Baqarah*, 2:165)

5. **Truthfulness:** This means one must be truthful in his belief in Allah, in his words and deeds as well as in the way one carries the message of Islam. The Qur'an says,

﴿يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ ٱتَّقُواْ ٱللَّهَ وَكُونُواْ مَعَ ٱلصَّٰدِقِينَ ١١٩﴾

O you who believe! Fear Allah and be with those who are true [in words and deeds]." (*Surat at-Tawbah*, 9:119)

6. **Submission:** This means one must submit completely to the dictates of this statement. Submission here compliance with Allah's commands. The Qur'an says,

﴿وَأَنِيبُوٓاْ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكُمۡ وَأَسۡلِمُواْ لَهُۥ﴾

"And turn in repentance to your Lord and submit to Him." (*Surat az-Zumar*, 39:54)

7. **Acceptance:** This means one must accept all the implications of this statement. The Qur'an says,

﴿قُولُوٓاْ ءَامَنَّا بِٱللَّهِ وَمَآ أُنزِلَ إِلَيۡنَا﴾

"Say, 'We believe in Allah and that which has been sent down to us." (*Surat al-Baqarah*, 2:136)

A Muslim must make certain that he is Muslim only for the sake of Allah. A Muslim cannot be a Muslim for the sake of his parents, friends, family, community or any worldly gains.

He must also make certain to adhere to the dictates of the *shahaadah* until he dies. This is essential if the testimony is to mean anything in the afterlife. The *shahaadah* must be a believer's banner until he departs this life. The Qur'an says,

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ ٱتَّقُواْ ٱللَّهَ حَقَّ تُقَاتِهِۦ وَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنتُم مُّسۡلِمُونَ ﴿١٠٢﴾

"O you who believe! Fear Allah in the manner He ought to be feared, and die not except as Muslims." (*Surat Aal 'Imraan*, 3: 102)

Muhammad (ﷺ) is the Messenger of Allah

The second part of the *Shahaadah* is to testify that Muhammad (ﷺ) is the messenger of Allah. This means to declare that Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) was chosen by Allah to be His final messenger to all mankind.

Indeed, Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) conveyed Allah's entire message to all mankind. Every prophet and messenger before him was sent to his own people, but Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) was sent to all mankind until the Day of Judgment. It is, therefore, obligatory upon everyone from the time of the Prophet (ﷺ) until the Day of Judgment to believe in and follow the Prophet (ﷺ). If the message of Islam reaches a person and he still arrogantly refuses to believe in and follow the Messenger of Allah, he is a disbeliever and will be in the Hellfire, unless he repents and embraces Islam.

The Prophet's clear guidance, in its complete form, is present before us. Hence, there is no need for one to turn for guidance to the corrupted books of the Jews and the Christians or indeed to any other man-made laws. When Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) once saw 'Umar ibn al-Khattaab (رضي الله عنه) holding a sheet with some verses from the corrupted version of the *Tawraah*, he said to him, "Were Prophet Moosaa (عليه السلام) alive, he would certainly follow me." (*Fath al-Baaree*)

Therefore, there is no need for any Muslim to turn to any religious or spiritual teachings of the disbelievers, for he will certainly find anything he needs in the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*. A Muslim bears witness that the Prophet (ﷺ) conveyed the entire message he received from Allah. When he declares that Muhammad (ﷺ) is the Messenger of Allah, he also declares that he is the final prophet and messenger sent by Allah. Thus, there is no Prophet after him. Anyone who claims Prophethood after Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) is a blatant liar and a deceiver. To accept anyone as a prophet after Prophet

Muhammad (ﷺ) is to negate one's declaration of the *shahaadah*.

One's Obligation towards the Prophet (ﷺ)

When a person says, "I bear witness that Muhammad (ﷺ) is the Messenger of Allah", it becomes obligatory upon him to love the Prophet (ﷺ) and follow his guidance. This love is not just any form of love. Indeed, true faith requires that he must love the Prophet (ﷺ) more than anyone or anything else in this world. Allah says in the Qur'an,

قُلْ إِن
كَانَ ءَابَآؤُكُمْ وَأَبْنَآؤُكُمْ وَإِخْوَٰنُكُمْ وَأَزْوَٰجُكُمْ وَعَشِيرَتُكُمْ
وَأَمْوَٰلٌ ٱقْتَرَفْتُمُوهَا وَتِجَٰرَةٌ تَخْشَوْنَ كَسَادَهَا وَمَسَٰكِنُ
تَرْضَوْنَهَآ أَحَبَّ إِلَيْكُم مِّنَ ٱللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِۦ وَجِهَادٍ
فِى سَبِيلِهِۦ فَتَرَبَّصُوا۟ حَتَّىٰ يَأْتِىَ ٱللَّهُ بِأَمْرِهِۦ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِى
ٱلْقَوْمَ ٱلْفَٰسِقِينَ ﴿٢٤﴾

"Say: If your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your spouses, your relatives, and the worldly goods, which you have acquired, commerce in which you fear decline, and the dwellings with which you are pleased are dearer to you than Allah and His Messenger and striving in His cause, then wait until Allah brings about His Command, and Allah does not guide those who are defiantly disobedient." (*Surat at-Tawbah*, 9: 24)

This verse offers a criterion by which everyone can plumb his faith and find out if he meets the requirements of it or not! This verse clearly rejects the tendency to regard ties of kinship and social affiliations as the decisive factors of behaviour. It shows the believers that Almighty Allah, His Messenger (ﷺ) and struggle in His cause represent the only valid basis on which their life should rest.

Moreover, when one makes the testimony of faith, he actually accepts the Messenger of Allah as his example of how to live and behave in a way that is pleasing to Allah.

The Qur'an says,

لَّقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِى رَسُولِ ٱللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ
حَسَنَةٌ لِّمَن كَانَ يَرْجُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ وَٱلْيَوْمَ ٱلْءَاخِرَ وَذَكَرَ ٱللَّهَ كَثِيرًا ﴿٢١﴾

"Indeed, in the Messenger of Allah, you have an excellent example to follow for anyone whose hope is in Allah and the Last Day and [who] remembers Allah often." (*Surat al-Ahzaab*, 33: 21)

Hence, it is very essential for one to understand what the *shahaadah* affirms and what it rejects. A believer, therefore, must deepen his knowledge of Islam through the authentic sources of his religion. He must be fully prepared to accept whatever implications of the *shahaadah* are. He should have a firm belief in whatever is stated in the Qur'an or stated by the Prophet (ﷺ), without any right whatsoever to choose what he wants to take and what he desires to reject.

It is worth mentioning here that when we obey the Messenger of Allah

(ﷺ) we actually obey Almighty Allah. The Qur'an says,

﴿ قُلْ إِن كُنتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ ٱللَّهَ فَٱتَّبِعُونِى يُحْبِبْكُمُ ٱللَّهُ ﴾

"Say, 'If you really love Allah then follow me; Allah will love you.'" (*Surat Aal 'Imraan*, 3:31)

A true believer must therefore obey Allah and His Messenger. The Qur'an says,

﴿ وَمَآ ءَاتَىٰكُمُ ٱلرَّسُولُ فَخُذُوهُ وَمَا نَهَىٰكُمْ عَنْهُ فَٱنتَهُوا۟ ﴾

"And whatever the messenger gives you take it, and whatever he forbids you abstain from it." (*Surat al-Hashr*, 59:7)

The Prophet (ﷺ) also said, "Whatever I command you to do, do it to the best of your ability; and whatever I forbid you to do, avoid it." (Muslim)

Exercises

A. State whether these statements are true (T) or false (F).

1. If a person's beliefs about Allah are wrong, then his entire faith may be ruined. _____
2. The Prophet (ﷺ) was sent only to the Arabs. _____

B. Fill in the blanks.

1. Literally, the word Islam means _____
2. The main pillar is the _____. The firmer it is the _____ the remaining pillars.
3. The believers strive with their _____ and _____ for the sake of Allah.
4. The Prophet's teachings and his _____ are valid and obligatory upon all mankind, until the Day of _____.
5. When a Muslim declares that Muhammad (ﷺ) is the Messenger of Allah, he also declares that he is the _____ Prophet sent by Allah.

C. Answer the following questions.

1. Islam is built on five pillars. What does the word 'pillars' signify?

2. How is *shahaadah* a testimony of one's heart, tongue, and deeds?

3. What did the Prophet (ﷺ) advise 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) to do when he saw him with a sheet with verses of the *Tawraah* written on it?

4. Explain briefly one's obligation towards the Prophet (ﷺ).

5. Briefly state the conditions of '*Laa ilaaha illallaah*'.

D. Think-up

A person testified to the *shahaadah* but later changed his mind. Does his initial acceptance of Islam hold any weight in the afterlife?

Salaat (The Prayer)

10



The Term '*Salaat*'

Salaat is an Arabic word which lexically means *du'aa*, or supplication. Its legal meaning refers to, among other things, the set of recitations and movements such as standing, bowing and prostrating in a certain manner in response to Allah's command to perform it and seeking to get closer to Him.

The Importance of the Prayer

The prayer is the first deed about which one will be questioned on the Day of Judgment. If one's prayer is sound and acceptable, then one will certainly achieve eternal success and eternal happiness. However, if one's prayer is incorrect, incomplete or corrupt in some way, one will not be successful on that day.

The Prophet (ﷺ) also said, "Allah has made five prayers obligatory. Whoever excellently performs their ablutions, offers them at their stated times and completes their bows and prostrations with humility (*khushoo'*) has a promise from Allah that He will forgive him. And whoever does not do that has no promise from Allah. He may either forgive him or He may punish him." (Abu Daawood and An-Nasaa'ee)

Once the Prophet (ﷺ) asked his companions, "If there was a river by the door of any of you in which he takes a bath five times a day, do you think that any of his dirt would remain?" They replied, "None of his dirt will remain." The Prophet (ﷺ) then said, "That is the example of the five [obligatory] prayers through which Allah wipes sins away." (al-Bukhaaree and Muslim)

Almighty Allah commands the believers to strictly establish them at all times. The Qur'an says, **"Guard strictly [the five obligatory] prayers."** (*Surat al-Baqarah*, 2:238)

He even clearly states that these prayers must be performed at their stated times. The Qur'an says, **"Indeed, the prayer is enjoined upon the believers at prescribed times."** (*Surat an-Nisaa'*, 4: 103)

He also severely warns those who neglect them: **"Then there succeeded them a posterity who neglected the prayers and followed lusts; so they will soon be thrown into Hell."** (*Surat Maryam*, 19:59)

The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "The five set prayers and the Friday prayers provide expiation for what occurs between them (i.e. sins) as long as the major sins are not committed." (Muslim)

He also said, "The key to Paradise is the prayer." (Abu Daawood)

Merits of the Congregational Prayer

The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "The prayer in congregation (*jamaa ah*) surpasses the prayer performed individually by twenty-seven degrees." (al-Bukhaaree and Muslim)

The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "To perform the late evening Prayer (*Ishaa'*) in congregation is equivalent to spending half the night in prayer, and to perform the dawn prayer (*Fajr*) in congregation is like spending the whole night in prayer." (Muslim)

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said, "Whenever a certain obligatory prayer becomes due and a Muslim performs ablution and prays with full humbleness, perfecting its bowing, this prayer will be expiation of whatever sins committed before it except for the major sins. This remains always true. (Muslim)

The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "Whenever a Muslim performs a prostration for Allah's sake, Allah raises him one degree and absolves him of one sin." (Muslim)

The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "If a human being prostrates himself at an appropriate point in his recitation of the Qur'an, the devil withdraws, weeping as he says, 'Alas! This man was bidden to prostrate himself and he has obeyed, so Paradise is his. I was also commanded to prostrate, but I disobeyed and so Hell is my lot.'" (Muslim)

The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "A man gets credit only for that part of his prayer of which he is conscious." (Abu Daawood) This is confirmed by the tradition, "When performing the prayer, one is conversing intimately with one's Lord." (al-Bukhaaree) Conversing in a state of heedlessness is certainly not meant by intimate conversation with the Lord.

According to an authentic *hadeeth*, Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said, "A person may complete [the prayer] and all that is recorded for him of his prayer is one-tenth of it, one-ninth, one-eighth, one-seventh, one-sixth, one-fifth, one-fourth, one-third, one-half." (Abu Daawood and Ahmad)

In short, conscious awareness is the very soul of the prayer.

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) once prayed while wearing a cloak with an ornamental border, a gift from Abu Jahm. He removed it after he had finished his prayer, saying, 'Take it back to Abu Jahm, for it distracted me from my prayer. Bring me Abu Jahm's cloak of coarse wool.' (al-Bukhaaree and Muslim)

It is related that Abu Talhah (رضي الله عنه) once prayed in his garden where there were trees. He was attracted by the sight of a honey-bird and spent a few moments following the movement of the bird, as it flew about seeking an opening in the foliage. Thus he forgot how many units of prayer he had completed. He told Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) about the temptation to which he had succumbed, and then said, "Messenger of Allah! I offer my garden as a charity. Dispose of it as you wish." (Maalik)

Such conduct was intended to remove causes of mental distraction to atone for deficiencies in prayer. The medicine tackled the root of the disease; indeed, it is the only effective remedy. This is a technique for quietening the mind. Mental agitations are stilled by these types of 'tranquilizers'. A man, who is normally a scatterbrain, full of pressing concerns, cannot suddenly switch off the noises within him and achieve full concentration and inner calmness. One has to learn the art of continuous inner silence.

Hence, when starting the prayer, you should come into the Presence of Allah, as you would on the Day of Resurrection, when you will stand before Him with no mediator between you and Him. You are in confidential communication with Him and you know in whose Presence you are standing, for He is the King of kings. When you have lifted your hands and said '*Allaahu Akbar*', then let nothing remain in your mind in the time of glorification except the Glory of Allah Most High.

When the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) was once asked about the true meaning of *ihsaan* (essence of worship), he replied, "*Ihsaan* is that you worship Allah as though you are seeing Him; for even though you do not see Him, He surely sees you." (al-Bukhaaree and Muslim)

If you continually remind yourself that Allah is watching you when you are praying, when you are studying, when you are doing your job, when you are with your family and friends, when you are playing games, when you are involved in sports, then you are well on your way to attaining *ihsaan* — the most excellent form of worship. *Ihsaan* raises us to the higher station of closeness to Allah. This is what gives real worth to everything we do. It makes our actions acceptable in the sight of our Creator and Sustainer.

Dhikr

Dhikr, or remembrance of Allah, is equivalent to awareness of His Presence. We are commanded in the above-mentioned famous *hadeeth* of the Prophet (ﷺ) to pray as if we are actually seeing Allah before us: 'for, though you see Him not, yet He sees you.' Awareness of Allah's Presence and of being seen at every moment of our lives is, in fact, a contemplative virtue. Islam requires us to be active as well as contemplative!

The First Pillar of Islam

The importance of the prayer cannot be over-stressed in Islam. In fact, it is the first pillar of Islam that the Prophet (ﷺ) mentioned after mentioning the testimony of faith, by which one becomes a Muslim. It was made obligatory on all the prophets and on all the peoples.

Salaat is the foremost form of *'ibaadah* (worship). Allah commands us thus, **"Indeed, I am Allah. There is no deity except Me, so worship Me and establish the prayer that you may remember Me."** (*Surat Taa Haa*, 20: 14)

The whole purpose of *salaat* is His remembrance. When we perform the *salaat*, we involve our whole body — our tongue, our heart, our mind and indeed our whole body. Hence, *salaat* is the most comprehensive form of *dhikr*.

It is unfortunate, though, that we do not always take full advantage of this gift. Many of us enter into *salaat* and come out of it the same person. We miss something; we miss the golden opportunity to achieve something great.

In reality, if the prayer is performed properly, with true remembrance of Allah and turning to His forgiveness, it will have a lasting effect on the person offering it. After he completes the prayer, his heart will be filled with the remembrance of Allah. Such a *salaat* will warm his soul, illuminate his mind and inflame his faith! After the experience, he will detest or strongly dislike stooping low, from his lofty position, wherein he disobeys Allah.

Hence, the most dreadful hurdle to overcome from the beginning, therefore, is absentmindedness. Absentmindedness destroys the quality of our prayer. But remeber that *salaat* is obligatory. Never give it up. But try to breathe into it the spirit of heedfulness.

The ability to concentrate in prayer may be improved by undertaking adequate mental and physical preparation before the prayer and by using certain techniques while performing the prayer.

Mental Preparedness

- Plan your daily activities in such a way that they revolve around the five daily prayers. Do not plan everything else and then try to fit prayer into your busy schedule.
- Research in-depth the Qur'anic verses and *hadeeth* relating to the virtues and obligation of *salaat*.
- Be punctual with your prayer.
- Always offer the obligatory prayers in congregation in the mosque.
- Keep your mind free of worldly worries and concerns.
- Learn the meanings of whatever verses or supplications you recite in *salaat*.

Physical Preparedness

- Fulfil all your personal needs before you begin your prayer.
- Always pray in the mosque or in an environment that is free of noises.
- Adorn yourself with nice and clean clothes. Allah says, **"O children of Aadam, wear your best clothes at every time and place of worship."** (*Surat al-A'raaf*, 7: 31)
- Give due regard to the performance of each posture.
- Pray as if it is your last prayer.

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) is your guide, so follow him.

Work on Perfecting your *Salaat*

Ask yourself: Is *salaat* a burden or is it a pleasure for me? Is it something I look forward to doing or something I leave to the last moment because it is a chore? Does my mind wander when I pray? Is my heart aware of the Presence of Allah? Or do I use *salaat* to balance my unfinished works?

If your *salaat* is falling short; if you cannot leave concerns of the world long enough to complete a single *rak'ah*, then there is work to be done!

Remember that *salaat* is both a protection as well as a litmus test of faith – a barometer of faith, as it were. When *salaat* is straight, your life outside *salaat* will be straight. When your life outside is straight and your priorities are in order, so too your *salaat* will be perfected. What captures your heart outside *salaat* will hold your heart inside *salaat*. Whatever concerns you most outside *salaat* will concern you most inside *salaat*. To modify an English saying: Tell me how you pray and I will tell you who you are!

Exercises

A. Fill in the blanks.

1. Lexically, the term *salaat* means _____ or _____.
2. "The prayer is enjoined upon believers at _____ times."
3. "The key to Paradise is the _____."
4. Performing prostrations for Allah's sake raises him one _____ and absolves him of one _____.
5. A man gets credit only for that part of his prayer of which he is _____.

B. Answer the following questions

1. How important is the *salaat*, according to one of the Prophet's statements in this regard?

2. What is the reward for congregational prayer as compared to individual prayer?

3. State the benefits of performing '*Ishaa*' and *Fajr* in congregation.

4. What is the reward for performing *salaat* in congregation?

5. What part of the prayer does a believer get actual credit for? Why?

6. Explain the word *ihsaan*.

7. How does Allah encourage us to remember and love Him?

8. What effect does a prayer that is performed properly have on a believer?

C. Think-up

What should a believer do when he finds that certain things distract him from *salaat*? Answer by giving examples.

2. Explain briefly how you would improve your ability to concentrate in *salaat*.

3. What are the major sins? Give some examples.

Zakaat (The Purifying Dues)

11

Zakaat is the Third Pillar of Islam

Zakaat is one of the five pillars of Islam. Some people wrongly think that the place of *zakaat* comes after *siyaam* (fasting), or even *Hajj* (the pilgrimage). *Zakaat* is actually the third pillar of Islam that comes immediately after *salaat*. Among the pillars of Islam, *zakaat* ranks very close to *salaat*. They are often mentioned together in the Qur'an, as in the following verses:

"Establish regular prayer and give *zakaat*." (*Surat al-Muzzammil*, 73: 20)

"Establish regular prayer and give *zakaat* and obey Allah and His Messenger." (*Surat al-Ahzaab*, 33: 33)

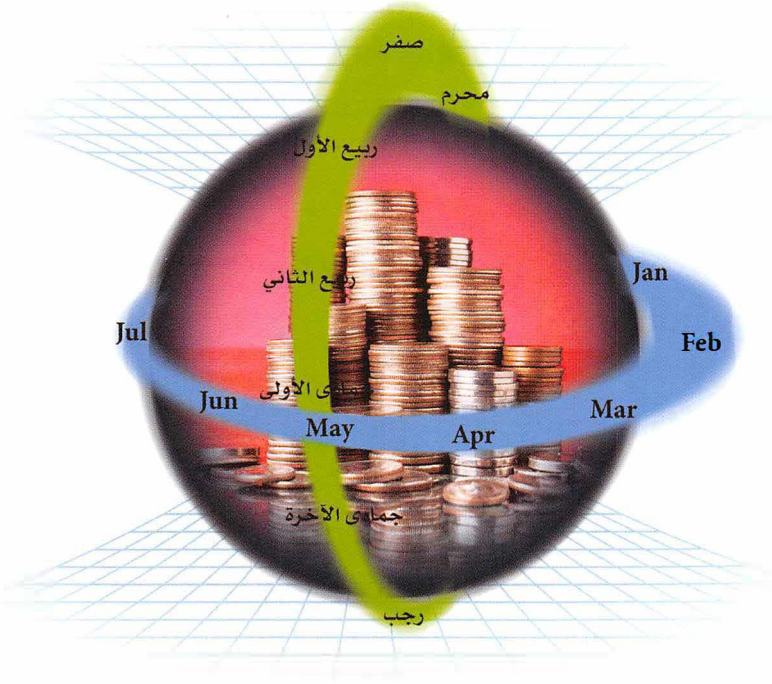
"Be steadfast in Prayer, give *zakaat*, and bow down in prayer with those who bow down [in worship and obedience]." (*Surat al-Baqarah*, 2: 43)

The Term '*Zakaat*'

Zakaat is an Arabic term. Lexically, the term denotes purification, blessing and growth. Another term used in the Qur'an and *hadeeth* for *zakaat* is *sadaqaat*(*Surat at-Tawbah*, 9:60). The term is derived from *sidq* (the truth). Both these terms are highly meaningful. The spending of wealth for the sake of Allah purifies the heart of man of the love of material wealth. Hence, the translation of the term *zakaat* as Purifying dues seems appropriate. The person who offers that as a humble gift before the Lord thus affirms the truth that nothing is dearer to him in life than the love of Allah, and this action of his clearly shows that he is fully prepared to sacrifice everything for His sake.

The payment of *zakaat* purifies the believer, his wealth and his soul by cleansing him of the diseases of miserliness. It also purifies his wealth by removing any evil effect on it. Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) once said, "Whoever pays the *zakaat* on his wealth will have its evil removed from him." (Ibn Khuzaymah and at-Tabaraanee)

If someone does not give to the poor and the needy what is their due, his wealth remains impure. Indeed, this person's inner self, too, is impure. His heart is too narrow and filled with thanklessness. He is too selfish and almost worships wealth. While Allah has been kind and generous to give him wealth in excess of his needs, it pains him to give what is His due. How can we expect such a person ever to do some good with the sole aim of pleasing Allah, or make any sacrifice for the sake of Islam, and his faith?



Zakaat in Islam

In *the Sharee'ah*, *zakaat*'s technical meaning is in reference to a specific portion of one's different type of wealth that one must give yearly to a specific group of recipients mentioned in the Qur'an. (*Surat at-Tawbah*, 9: 60)

The Importance of *Zakaat*

Social justice and compassion to fellow humans is one of the central themes of Islam. *zakaat*, like *salaat* and *siyaam*, had been enjoined on the people of messengers gone by.

Zakaat is obligatory on anyone who has wealth that reaches or exceeds a certain level called the *nisaab*, or scale — an mount on which *zakaat* becomes obligatory, unlike tax, which is levied by governments, *zakaat* is an act of worship for which one receives reward from Allah. Ignoring to pay the *zakaat*, on the other hand, is a major sin. According to the scholars, anyone who does not pay *zakaat* by denying its obligation is considered a disbeliever.

Zakaat Is the Right of the Poor

Zakaat is not a favour that is given to the poor by the rich. Rather, it is their right. It is the right of the poor on the wealth of the rich. Allah says, **"...And those in whose wealth is a known right for the [needy] who asks and him who is deprived."** (*Surat al-Ma'aarij*, 70: 24-25)

Zakaat, therefore, is unlike charity (called *sadaqah*) that is given to the needy voluntarily. To withhold *zakaat* is to deprive the poor of their rightful share. Thus the person who pays *zakaat* actually purifies his wealth by separating from it the portion that belongs to the poor.

The Fate of those who Refuse to Pay *Zakaat*

The Qur'anic verses and the *hadeeth* use the sternest terms to warn those who refuse to pay the *zakaat*. The Qur'an says, **"And those who hoard up gold and silver and do not spend it in the way of Allah, warn them of a painful suffering [in the life to come]. On that day when [the hoarded wealth] will be heated in the fire of hell and with it will be branded their foreheads, their sides and their backs, [and It will be said to them], 'This is the treasure which you hoarded for yourselves, so taste what you used to hoard.'"** (*Surat at-Tawbah*, 9: 34-35)

Abu Dharr (ﷺ) said, "Once I went to the Prophet (ﷺ) while he was sitting in the shade of the Ka'bah. When he saw me, he said, 'They are indeed the losers, by the Lord of the Ka'bah!' I came and sat down but could not rest and I soon stood up, saying, 'O Allah's Messenger, may I sacrifice my father and mother to save you! Who are they?' He replied, 'Those who have the largest wealth, except whoever does this, this, this and this [pointing in front of him and to his back and left]. Indeed, few who do this. Whoever has camels or cows or sheep and does not pay the *zakaat* on them, these animals will be brought on the Day of Resurrection far bigger and fatter than before. They will tread on him with their hooves, butt him with their horns and encircle him. When the last does its turn, the first will start again, and his punishment will go on until Allah has finished the judgment among the people.'" (al-Bukhaare and Muslim)

The Prophet (ﷺ) also said, "Whoever is made wealthy by Allah and does not pay the *zakaat* on his wealth, then on the Day of Resurrection his wealth will be made [into the shape] like a bald-headed, poisonous snake with two black spots over the eyes. It will encircle his neck and bite his cheeks and say, 'I am your wealth, I am your treasure.'" (al-Bukhaaree)

Ruling concerning those who Do not Pay *Zakaat*

Zakaat is one of the five pillars of Islam, and if a person denies the obligation of *zakaat* or says that it is not a part of Islam, then he is definitely a disbeliever, according to the agreement of scholars. The question once again is: What is the status of a person who accepts *zakaat* as an obligation but due to laziness, miserliness or carelessness, he does not give *zakaat*? Does he remain a Muslim? For the majority of scholars, this person is still a Muslim, but a severe punishment awaits him.

The Worldly Punishment for not Paying *Zakaat*

A person who does not pay *zakaat* will receive painful punishment in the afterlife for depriving the poor of their rights and for rejecting Allah's command to do so. In addition, he may also incur loss in his wealth and property or face some other forms of calamities in this world. The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "Whenever an amount of wealth is destroyed in the land or the sea, it could be because its *zakaat* was not given." (at-Tabaraanee)

The Prophet (ﷺ) also said, "*Zakaat* is never mixed with any amount of wealth without destroying or rotting it." (al-Bukhaaree)

***Zakaat* and Abu Bakr as-Siddeeq**

After the demise of the Prophet (ﷺ), some of the tribes refused to pay *zakaat*. Abu Bakr, the first caliph, fought them. He had no hesitation in taking up arms against Muslims who believed in Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ) and performed *salaat*, but refused to pay *zakaat*. Some of the Prophet's companions initially had some confusion whether they could wage war against them, but not Abu Bakr. He clearly announced, "By Allah! If these people withhold the *zakaat* they used to pay during the time of the Prophet (ﷺ), even if it be a piece of rope by which a camel is tied, I shall raise my sword against them." His arguments convinced the companions. (Abu Daawood)

Abu Bakr is also reported to have said, 'By Allah! I will fight anyone who distinguishes between prayer and *zakaat*. *Zakaat* is the obligatory right to be taken from the property. By Allah! If they refuse to give me even a young nanny goat, which they used to give at the time of the Prophet (ﷺ), I will fight them for withholding it.'

The *Nisaab* – or Scale on which *Zakaat* becomes Obligatory

Zakaat is not imposed unless the zakatable wealth reaches a minimum level, which is called the *nisaab*, or scale. For example, if one has thirty-nine goats then there is no *zakaat* on his goats. However, if he has forty goats, then *zakaat* is certainly due on them. The *Nisaab* on goats, therefore, is forty goats.

Different types of properties have different *nisaab*s. For example, the *nisaab* on money is 85 grams of gold, the *nisaab* on silver is 595 grams, the *nisaab* on camels is five camels, and the *nisaab* on grains is 653 kilograms. *Zakaat* on each type of wealth is calculated separately.

The *nisaab* must be in excess of the basic needs of the owner. Things used for satisfying the basic necessities are not considered zakatable. Basic

needs are food, shelter, clothes, household goods, utensils, furniture, money to pay back debts, basic transport, books of knowledge, etc. To clarify this, let us suppose that the *nisaab* on money is $1200 and a family of four needs $20,000 per year to fulfil its basic needs in a particular place. If the head of that family earns $21,000 in the *zakaat* year and he does not have any other wealth or money, then from the viewpoint of *zakaat*, he has only $1000. This is short of $1200 *nisaab* on money and consequently, there is no *zakaat* on that money. However, if, in addition to his income, he also has cash savings of $500 from the previous year, then his wealth from the viewpoint of *zakaat* is $1500 ($1000 + $500). This is at or above *nisaab* on money. *Zakaat*, therefore, will be due on $1500.

Zakaat Year

The passage of one lunar (according to *Hijrah* calendar) is required before *zakaat* can be imposed on certain wealth. Assets that remain with their owners for one full lunar year are zakatable. Rich Muslims, therefore, must establish their *zakaat* year. Many Muslims calculate *zakaat* during Ramadhaan for the added reward of worshipping during this blessed month. So, an example of the *zakaat* year may be from the 11th Ramadan 1427 to the 10th Ramadan 1428 (one full *Hijrah* lunar calendar year). Once the *zakaat* year is set, the same date range should be used for future *zakaat* years.

Conditions of *Zakaat*: Wealth Subject to *Zakaat*

1. The wealth or the property should be of a growing type. It should have the capability for growth and development, such as money, livestock and property.
2. One full lunar year should pass since the ownership of the wealth for *zakaat* to be due. This condition is limited to money that is saved, livestock and goods for sale. It does not include crops, fruits, minerals and treasure.
3. The asset must be at or above the *nisaab*. There is different *nisaab* for different types of wealth.
4. The assets should be in excess of the basic needs. What is needed by an individual to satisfy the basic needs for him and his family is not subject to *zakaat*.
5. One's debts, if any, should be deducted from one's wealth before calculating *zakaat*. If the owner is burdened by debt that exceeds the *nisaab*, then *zakaat* is not due.

People Subject to *Zakaat*

Zakaat is imposed on only Muslims. *Zakaat* is obligatory on wealth regardless of whether the owner is an adult or a minor. Therefore, *zakaat* is due on wealth owned by minors and the insane as well. Legal guardians should pay *zakaat* on behalf of minors and insane people.

There is no *zakaat* on Muslim reverts for the past period of disbelief.

The *Nisaab* or Scale for some Kinds of Wealth

Silver	**595 grams**
Gold	**85 grams**
Merchandise	**Equal to the value of 85 grams of gold**
Camels	**5 camels**
Goats	**40 goats**
Sheep	**40 sheep**
Cows	**30 cows**

Zakaat is compulsory on merchandise or trading goods. If a lunar year passes and the merchandise or the trading goods reach the *nisaab*, which is the value of 85 grams of gold, *zakaat* becomes due. *Zakaat* on them is 2.5% if their value reaches the *nisaab*.

Zakaat on livestock and their *nisaab* is different. *Nisaab* and the rates of *zakaat* on various animals is as follows:

Number of animals	***Zakaat* due**
1-4 camels	None
5-9 camels	1 sheep
10-14 camels	2 sheep
15-19 camels	3 sheep
1-29 cows	None
30-39 cows	1 one-year old cow
40-59 cows	1 two-year old cow
60-69 cows	2 one-year old cows
1-39 sheep	None
40-120 sheep	1 sheep
121-200 sheep	2 sheep
210-300 sheep	3 sheep

Jewellery

If gold and silver are in the form of jewellery, then *zakaat* is payable on them. It is reported that a woman came to the Prophet (ﷺ) with her daughter on whose wrists were two thick gold bracelets. The Prophet (ﷺ) asked, "Do you pay *zakaat* on this?' 'No,' she replied. Thereupon the Prophet (ﷺ) said, 'Would you prefer Allah to make you wear two bracelets of fire in place of these two on the Day of Judgment?' (Abu Daawood)

'Aa'ishah (﵂) said, "Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) entered my apartment and found in my hands a few rings of silver. He asked, 'What is this?' I said, 'I made them in order to use them as ornaments to please you.'' Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said, 'Do you pay their *zakaat*?' I answered, 'No,' He said, 'That would be enough for you of the fire.'" (Abu Daawood and al-Haakim)

Zakaat, thus, must be paid on gold and silver, even if they are in the shape of ornaments, just as on cash. According to some scholars, however, *zakaat* need not be given on jewels, pearls, diamonds, and precious stones used for beautification purposes. But if it is kept as a security if a financial need arises, it requires the *zakaat*. *Nisaab* on jewellery is 85 grams of gold or 595 grams of silver and the *zakaat* rate is 2.5%.

Zakaat on the Produce of the Earth

Agricultural produce, such as grains, fruits and vegetables is also zakatable. *Zakaat* is 10% if the land is watered by rain all or most of the period and 5% if it is watered by irrigation all or most of the period. The *nisaab* on crops is 653 kilograms. The *zakaat* on these becomes due at harvest time.

Those Entitled to Receive the *Zakaat*?

According to the Qur'an, eight categories of people are entitled to receive the *zakaat* (See *Surat At-Tawbah*, 9: 60).

1. ***Fuqaraa'*: the poor**
   The *fuqaraa'* are those who do have some money but not sufficient to meet their basic needs. They cannot make both ends meet; yet they do not ask for help due to modesty and self-respect. They live in great hardship and difficulties.
2. ***Masaakeen*: the destitute and the needy**
   The *masaakeen* are totally destitute. They have nothing to meet their needs.
3. **Workers in *zakaat* administration (*al-'aamileena 'alayhaa*)**
   Those who collect and distribute *zakaat* could be paid their salaries from *zakaat* funds, according to the verse 9:60. This follows that *zakaat* collection and administration is the function of an organized body of paid employees. These workers can receive wages regardless of whether they are poor or not.

4. **Those whose hearts need to be reconciled (*al-mu'allafatu quloobuhum*)**

This includes people who have recently become Muslim. They also include the people whose evil acts can be prevented. They are also those who require to be given money to seek their support for Islam or to prevent them from opposition. They may be given *zakaat* to reconcile them by showing at first hand the caring nature of Islam.

5. **Freeing from bondage (*fir-riqaab*)**

Zakaat money can be used to purchase a slave from his master in order to set him free. According to Sayyid Abul-A'ala Mawdudee, this category can also be extended to such people as those who have been imprisoned for their inability to pay fines imposed upon them. They can be helped with *zakaat* money to secure their release.

6. **Those in debt for personal reasons (*al-ghaarimeen*, the overburdened debtors)**

These are the people who are overburdened with debt that they cannot pay it on their own. The debt can be the result of buying a house for family use, medical expenses, marriage, or other lawful expenses. Some scholars, however, say that it is undesirable to give *zakaat* to people who have fallen into debt due to their wasteful habits. They argue that the hope of receiving help from *zakaat* will encourage them to continue with their wastefulness. Islam takes a very noble and understanding attitude towards people burdened with debt.

7. **For the Cause of Allah (*fee Sabeelillaah*)**

The seventh category where *zakaat* can be spent according to the Qur'an (9: 60) is spending in the way of Allah. This refers to *jihad*, or fighting for the sake of Allah. It means giving help to a struggle for making Islam supreme on earth. It is significant to realize that *jihad*, or striving, is not restricted to armed struggle only. It could also include writing, lecturing, and organizing work to support or defend Islam.

8. **The ravellers (*ibnus-sabeel*)**

A traveller may have any amount of wealth in his home, but if he is in need of money while travelling, he may be given *zakaat*. Certain conditions, however, apply, including the fact that the journey should not be made in disobedience to Allah but for a valid cause, such as seeking knowledge, searching for a lawful job or conducting business.

Zakaat money should be given to the above categories according to their priorities – things that are regarded as more important than others. It should be based on actual needs and public interest. But it is important to remember that the primary recipients of *zakaat* are the poor and the needy. Helping such people is the main objective of *zakaat*. Further, sinful Muslims may be given *zakaat* too. A person's sinfulness does not disqualify him from receiving help!

Who Cannot Receive *Zakaat*?

This category also includes the children of those who are rich and those whose living expenses are the responsibility of a rich person. Parents and children cannot give *zakaat* to each other, nor can husbands and wives. A distant relative, however, is beyond doubt entitled to it.

Can Non-Muslims Be Given *Zakaat*?

Only Muslims are entitled to receive *zakaat*. According to the majority of scholars, *zakaat* cannot be given to non-Muslims. The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "It will be taken from the wealthy among you and distributed to the poor among you." (al-Bukhaaree and Muslim)

This concerns *zakaat* with regard to non-Muslims. It is significant to realize, however, that all poor and needy people, regardless of their religious beliefs, can always be helped from other funds. They have a share in all other general charities or social security payments. It will be wrong to discriminate against them.

The Prophet (ﷺ) once said to Aa'ishah (رضي الله عنها), "Do not turn away a poor man, Aa'ishah, even if all you can give is half a date. If you love the poor and bring them near to you, Aa'ishah, Allah will bring you near Him on the Day of Resurrection." (at-Tirmidhee)

Other Important Considerations

- The intention is required when paying *zakaat*. This intention, however, must not be expressed in words. Intention is also needed so that payment of *zakaat* can be distinguished from other charitable donations. Remember *zakaat* is an act of worship.

- *Zakaat* does not have to be paid in kind but can also be paid in value. For example, if one is required to pay *zakaat* on his crops, then he is permitted to pay in cash the value of the crop that is to be given in *zakaat*.

- *Zakaat* is due immediately; payment of *zakaat*, therefore, should not be delayed unless there is a valid reason to wait in order to give it to needy relatives or anyone else in need. Pre-payment is allowed according to most jurists on assets that require the passage of one year, such as livestock, money, trading goods and jewellery, if the payer has the necessary *nisaab*. It is permissible to give *zakaat* even two years in advance.

Should the Receivers be Told it is *Zakaat*?

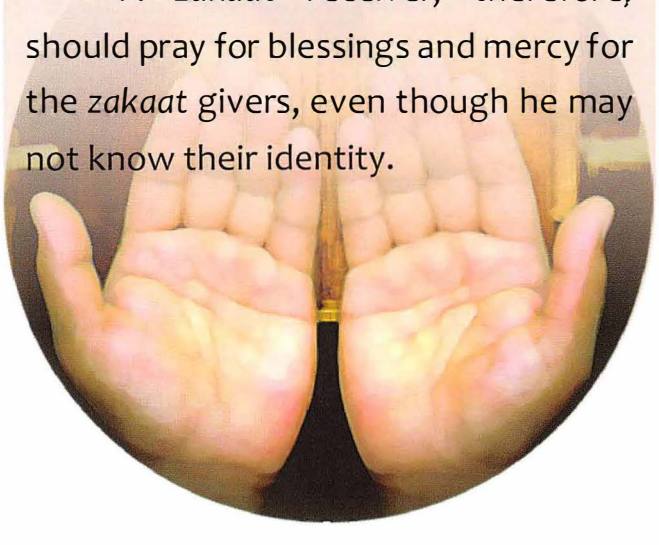
When *zakaat* is paid to those whom the giver thinks are poor, there is no need to inform the recipient that it is *zakaat*. There is no need to humiliate the recipient by saying so. He should pay him and remain silent. One should not humiliate the believers. There are people who would hesitate to receive *zakaat* due to their self-respect and modesty. Some even may feel uncertain about whether they are qualified to receive *zakaat*. If the giver considers the receiver to be poor and deserving of *zakaat*, then this will be enough. There is no need to further check or confirm it.

Du'aa* by the Recipient for the Giver of *Zakaat

Thankfulness is a trait of all good-hearted people. This is more so for a believer. He is ever grateful for all the bounties of life granted to him by Allah. Such a person never fails to appreciate any help, however small, given to him by others. In this modern time of ours people live for themselves. Self-cantered lifestyle has become the norm these days. To come forward and help the needy is indeed a sign of love and compassion. This is exactly what the *zakaat* giver does. He gives part of his wealth to his needy brothers and sisters. He does not want to receive any worldly benefits by his *zakaat*.

Moreover, he does not offer this sacrifice just once or twice, but he continues it year after year so long as Allah blesses him with a certain amount of wealth.

A *zakaat* receiver, therefore, should pray for blessings and mercy for the *zakaat* givers, even though he may not know their identity.



Exercises

A. State whether these statements are true (T) or false (F).

1. *Zakaat* is a favour that the rich do the poor. _____
2. *Zakaat* is imposed on only Muslims. _____
3. It is all right to give *zakaat* to wasteful spendthrifts. _____
4. A sinful person should not be given *zakaat*. _____
5. The intention for paying *zakaat* need not be expressed in words. _____
6. There is no need to inform the recipient of the *zakaat*. _____

B. Fill in the blanks.

1. *Zakaat* is the _____ pillar of Islam and ranks very close to *salaat*.
2. "...And those in whose _____ is a known _____ for the [needy] who asks and him who is deprived."
3. The passage of _____ is required before *zakaat* can be imposed on certain types of wealth.
4. Many Muslims calculate *zakaat* during _____ for added rewards.
5. _____ should pay *zakaat* on behalf of minors and insane people.
6. *Zakaat* is _____ if the land is watered by rain and _____ if the land is watered by irrigation.
7. The primary recipients of *zakaat* are the _____ and the _____.

C. Answer the following questions.

1. How can the phrase 'purifying dues' be considered the appropriate translation of the term *zakaat*?

2. How can we say that a person's inner self is impure when he does not give *zakaat*?

3. On whom is *zakaat* obligatory?

4. List a few punishments in this life and in the afterlife that await those refuse to pay *zakaat*.

5. Explain the term *nisaab* in detail.

6. Mention the condition of wealth that is subject to *zakaat*.

7. List the people who are entitled to receive *zakaat*.

8. What are the conditions of giving *zakaat* to travellers?

9. Pre-payment of *zakaat* is allowed; what about delayed payment?

D. Think-up

1. Distinguish between the terms *zakaat* and *sadaqah*.

2. How can we help non-Muslims if giving *zakaat* to them is forbidden?

Aayat al-Birr (The Righteousness Verse)

12

There is no book that quickens the hearts, transforms lives and it leads whole people from glory to glory like the Qur'an. Indeed, the Qur'an is the final answer to man's eternal quest for existence. For Muslims, it is the ultimate arbiter of their destiny, be it their rise to the heights of glory and civilization or their fall into the bottomless pits of decay and disgrace.

The Qur'an has untold, priceless treasures to offer. It has the endless joys of communication with our Creator. It has the immense riches of knowledge and wisdom that guide on the path of our Lord. It has the healing that cures our inner and social illnesses. It offers support, aid and comfort so that we can carry the burdens of life joyfully and reach salvation and success both in this life and in the life to come.

These treasures are for all the wayfarers and seekers. They are available to us today now as they were available to their seekers yesterday, more than fourteen centuries ago.

Surat al-Baqarah is the second and, indeed, the longest *surah* of the Qur'an. It consists of 286 verses and covers about two and a half parts (*juz'*) out of the thirty parts into which the Qur'an has been divided, to facilitate its regular reading.

In this unit, we are going to study Verse 177 of *Surat al-Baqarah*. This verse, or *aayah*, is not known by any particular name, such as *aayat al-kursee* is. However, we will call it *Aayat al-Birr* for the purpose of study. It is one complete *aayah*. The word *al-birr* occurs in its beginning. The *aayah* has in it one of the most beautiful summaries of essential Islamic beliefs and practices.

Aayat-ul-Birr: The Righteousness Verse

لَّيْسَ ٱلْبِرَّ أَن تُوَلُّوا۟ وُجُوهَكُمْ قِبَلَ ٱلْمَشْرِقِ وَٱلْمَغْرِبِ وَلَٰكِنَّ
ٱلْبِرَّ مَنْ ءَامَنَ بِٱللَّهِ وَٱلْيَوْمِ ٱلْءَاخِرِ وَٱلْمَلَٰٓئِكَةِ وَٱلْكِتَٰبِ
وَٱلنَّبِيِّۦنَ وَءَاتَى ٱلْمَالَ عَلَىٰ حُبِّهِۦ ذَوِى ٱلْقُرْبَىٰ وَٱلْيَتَٰمَىٰ
وَٱلْمَسَٰكِينَ وَٱبْنَ ٱلسَّبِيلِ وَٱلسَّآئِلِينَ وَفِى ٱلرِّقَابِ وَأَقَامَ
ٱلصَّلَوٰةَ وَءَاتَى ٱلزَّكَوٰةَ وَٱلْمُوفُونَ بِعَهْدِهِمْ إِذَا عَٰهَدُوا۟ ۖ
وَٱلصَّٰبِرِينَ فِى ٱلْبَأْسَآءِ وَٱلضَّرَّآءِ وَحِينَ ٱلْبَأْسِ ۗ أُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ ٱلَّذِينَ
صَدَقُوا۟ ۖ وَأُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ هُمُ ٱلْمُتَّقُونَ ﴿١٧٧﴾

Translation of its Meaning

"It is not righteousness that you turn your faces towards the east or the west, but [true] righteousness is to believe in Allah, the Last Day, the angels, the Books, and the prophets, and to give wealth in spite of love for it, to the relatives, the orphans, the needy, the traveller and those who ask [for help], and for freeing slaves; and to establish the prayer and give

zakaat; to keep promises and be patient in poverty and hardship and during battle. Those are the ones who are, of truth, the God-fearing." (*Surat al-Baqarah*, 2: 177)

Explanation

What does the term *al-Birr* mean?

Al-Birr is an Arabic word which is very significant and comprehensive. It is used for what is good in the absolute sense. It combines in itself all acts of righteousness and obedience, inward and outward.

According to Lane, it means "benevolent and Solicitous (showing great concern for another person's welfare, interests, etc.), regard or treatment or conduct (to parents and others, i.e. righteousness to parents and towards God), and goodness, or beneficence, and kindness, or good and affectionate and gentle behaviour, and regard for the circumstances of another." (E.W. Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*, 2003, Vol. 1, p. 176)

Deep Relationship between *Surat al-'Asr* And *Aayat-ul-Birr*

Aayat al-Birr is one of the longest *aayaat* (plural of *aayah*) of the Qur'an. There is a close relationship between *Aayat al-Birr* and *Surat al-'Asr*, and this closeness is quite apparent. If *Surat al-'Asr* is a rosebud, *Aayat al-Birr* is the flowering of that rosebud. *Surat al-'Asr* gives us four conditions for salvation, and *Aayat al-Birr* discusses three of these main conditions in some detail.

The rosebud of *Surat al-'Asr* opens up, as it were, into five beautiful petals of *Aayat al-Birr*. *Surat al-'Asr* mentions *eemaan* (faith), *Aayat al-Birr* describes its five principal articles:

1. Belief in Allah,
2. Belief in the Last Day,
3. Belief in the Angels,
4. Belief in the Books of Allah,
5. Belief in the Prophets.

The verse also describes three main categories of good deeds:

1. Mercy towards fellow beings,
2. The rights of Allah – *al-'ibaadaat*,
3. *Mu'aamalaat* (social dealings, human relations)

The verse also mentions three occasions which need steadfastness in the life of a believer:

1. Hunger,
2. Physical and mental torture, and
3. Times of peril and strife.

The verse also portrays a full, comprehensive model of a believer's character.

Righteousness is not attained by merely turning One's Face towards the East or the West

The Qur'an stresses that *mere* obedience to outward appearance does not fulfil the requirements of righteousness. The reference to turning one's face in prayer in this or that direction flows from the question of *qiblah*.

The purpose behind the *qiblah* and all aspects of worship and rituals has never been *merely* the direction people face or indeed only any outward form. Although the outward forms are essential, these are not what give worship its value or meaning. It does not make people good or righteous. Righteousness is the result of a total feeling. It is an attitude. Righteousness is made up of behaviour which shapes the individual and the collective conscience of human beings. Righteousness is, in fact, a discipline.

Mere Appearances are not enough

It is also important to realize that both directions, the east and the west, have been held sacred by many pagan religions. The Righteousness Verse strikes at the root of direction-worship. It says very clearly that there is no merit at all in merely turning towards any particular direction. Islamic worship is not directed towards any direction as east, west, north or south, but towards a particular House, on whatever side of the worshipper it may happen to be!

It is also significant to note that Muslims do not worship the House, or the Ka'bah. Rather, they worship Allah Alone, the Lord of the House.

Then who are the truly righteous?

The truly righteous are those who believe in Allah, the Last day, the angels and revelation, (In this context, the term revelation (*al-Kitaab*) carries a generic significance: it refers to the whole group of revealed books, the last of which is the Qur'an) and the Prophets.

The *Aayah* Continues to further Describe the Righteous

"...and to give wealth in spite of love for it, to the relatives, the orphans, the needy, the traveller and those who ask [for help], and for freeing slave..."

The virtues mentioned here are in fact gateways to success in this world as well as in the hereafter.

The expression *'alaa hubbihee* (in spite of love for it) means however much one may cherish it; the expression can also be understood to mean 'out of love for Allah'. Thus the expression can be read to speak of giving goods and money out of love for

Allah (as opposed to giving for personal motives), or of giving goods or money in spite of holding them dear, rather than just giving away what you don't care about.

Abu Hurayrah (ﷺ) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said, "The most superior [kind of] *sadaqah* (charity) in reward is the one you give while you are healthy, unwilling to spend and afraid of poverty and wish to become rich." (al-Bukhaaree)

However, one's family members have priority over others as far as charity is concerned, as the Prophet (ﷺ) said, "Giving charity to the needy is one *sadaqah* but giving it to relatives is twofold *sadaqah* — It is *sadaqah* as well as joining ties of relationship, for they are the people in need of your generosity." (al-Bukhaaree)

The orphans are those who have lost their fathers or both parents, are weak, very young, immature and unable to earn a living. However, once they attain maturity they are no more orphans.

The needy: Abu Hurayrah (ﷺ) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said, "*Al-miskeen* (needy) is not the one who goes round asking people for a morsel or two of food or one date or two, but rather one who has not enough money to satisfy his needs and whose condition is not known to others, that others may give something in charity." (al-Bukhaaree and Muslim)

The expression *ibn as-sabeel* (traveller, wayfarer) refers to any person "who is far away from his home, especially one who, because of this circumstance, does not have sufficient means of livelihood at his disposal". (Lane, Vol. 1, p.1302) In its wider sense, it describes a person who, for any reason whatsoever, is unable to return home either temporarily or permanently. He should, therefore, be given sufficient provision to enable him to return to his country.

Ibn as-sabeel also signifies the guest. Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) is reported to have said, "He who believes in Allah and the Last Day should honour his guest according to his right." People asked, "And what is his right?" He replied, "One day and one night, and hospitality is for three days. Beyond that it is *sadaqah*." (al-Bukhaaree and Muslim)

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) also said, "It is a part of the *Sunnah* that a man goes with his guest to the door of the house." (Ibn Maajah)

"... and those who ask [for help]..." means those who ask for help should be given charity. Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said, "The asker (literally, beggar) is entitled to charity even if he comes begging on horseback." (Ahmad and Abu Daawood) *As-saa'il* signifies anyone who asks for help.

The word *raqabah* (pl. *riqaab*) literally means 'the neck' but refers to the entire human person. The expression *wa fir-riqaab* means "and for freeing slaves". This applies to both the ransoming of captives and the freeing of slaves. By including this kind of expenditure within the essential acts of righteousness, the Qur'an implies that the freeing of people from bondage – and thus, the abolition of slavery – is one of the social objectives of Islam.

The Verse adds that the regular observance of *salaat*, prayer, is another important aspect of righteousness. *Salaat* is much more than a sequence of bodily movements and recitations. There is more to it than facing a certain direction, east or west. *Salaat* is an act of total submission. It is a total dedication to Allah and a perfect example of Islam's whole outlook on life.

The prayer is a source of strength for the believers. It keeps their faith (*eemaan*) alive and active. The prayer purifies the soul of many diseases, such as despair and cowardice. Indeed, the prayer is so essential to a person's faith that it is similar to the role of one's beliefs and creed. The Prophet (ﷺ) once said, "The covenant between us and them (i.e. the disbelievers) is the prayer; hence whoever abandons the prayer will be a disbeliever." (Ahmad, at-Tirmidhee and Nasaa'ee)

In fact, the prayer is the hallmark of a Muslim. Paying the *zakaat* – the purifying dues – is another aspect of righteousness. It is clear from the text of the *aayah* that *zakaat* is separate from, rather than an obligation for, the desirable charitable act mentioned earlier.

While giving to those causes is voluntary, paying *zakaat* is a religious duty in its own right, and both are essential factors in attaining righteousness. Unless this was the case, there would be no meaning in giving *zakaat* a separate mention in the same Verse.

Keeping one's promises is another aspect of righteousness. The Qur'an frequently highlights it as a feature of true faith. It is a quality which stems from the fulfilment of one's promise to Allah. It is an essential requirement for creating a climate of mutual trust and confidence among individuals, societies and nations. Islam has given a matchless example of honesty that can never be surpassed.

Steadfastness and perseverance in times of misfortune and hardship, and in the face of danger, are necessary qualities for the education and development of strong individuals with sterling character who will stand firm come what may. Under such conditions, the faithful never lose hope or confidence in Allah, nor will they

seek help from any source other than from Allah. All the believers should have resilience (the ability to recover quickly from shock, injury, etc.) to withstand poverty, weakness, loss of friends and companions, shortage of resources, and rigors and consequences of struggle in the way of Allah.

Thus we see how, in the unique style of the Qur'an, a single brief verse, combines the essentials of faith and personal and financial Islamic obligations and presents them as a complete code under the all-embracing title of *al-birr* (righteousness). *Al-birr* is essentially a concise and complete statement of the basic philosophy of Islam and its principles.

The verse ends with the words: **"Those are the ones who are, of truth, the God-fearing."**

In reflection on the contents of this verse, one can clearly form a mental picture of the great heights to which Allah is aiming to raise human beings through Islam. But as one looks at those who ignore Islam, or those who resist it and suppress or persecute its followers and supporters, and those who simply turn away from it, one cannot help being filled with sorrow. Yet we must not despair. Our faith and trust in Allah fill our hearts with hope and confidence. The day will come when humanity will come around to seeing the profound value, universal beauty and eternal qualities of Islam.

Exercises

A. Fill in the blanks.

1. For Muslims, the Qur'an is the _____ of their destiny.
2. Mere obedience to outward forms does not fulfil the requirement of _____.
3. The Righteousness Verse strikes at the root of _____.
4. Once they attain maturity, they are no longer _____.
5. Mere appearances are not _____.

B. Answer the following questions.

1. What is *Aayat al-Birr*? Explain the term *al-birr*.

2. Mention some similarities between *Surat al-'Asr* and *Aayat al-Birr*.

3. What is the essence of righteousness?

4. Do Muslims worship the Ka'bah? If not, then who do they worship?

5. Mention some of the qualities of the truly righteous.

6. Explain the term *'alaa hubbihee*.

7. What is the most superior type of *sadaqah*?

8. Who is a real *miskeen*, according to the *hadeeth* mentioned above?

9. What is the right of one's guest?

10. How is *zakaat* different from *sadaqah*?

C. Think-up

1. The kinsfolk have priority over others in charity.

2. Hardships and tribulations are essential for Muslims.

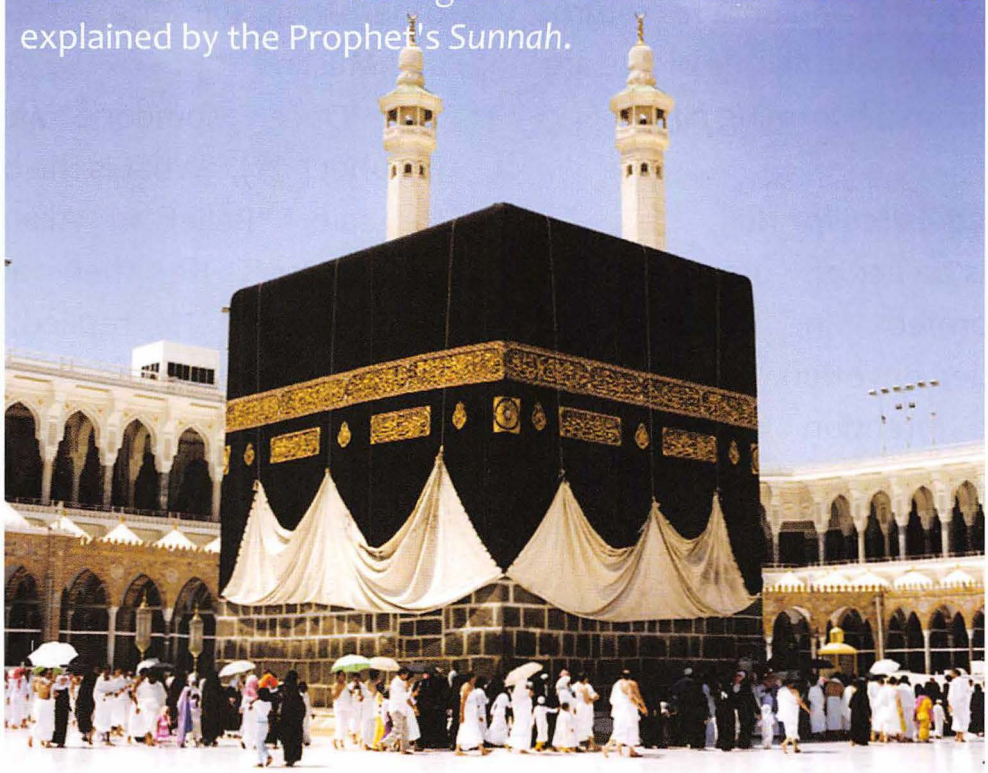
The Pilgrimage to the House (The *Hajj*)

13

The Meaning of *Hajj*

Hajj is the fifth pillar of Islam mentioned in the narration of the *hadeeth* [mentioned in Unit 9: Islam has been built on five (Pillars)] is making the Pilgrimage to the House. *Hajj* is an Arabic term which literally means 'to head towards something.' As E.W. Lane states, it means 'he repaired, or betook himself to, or towards a person or towards an object of reverence, veneration, respect or honour.*

In the *Sharee'ah*, it means travelling to Makkah during the months set for the performance of *hajj* to perform certain rituals that Allah has legislated in His Book and were explained by the Prophet's *Sunnah*.



The Importance of *Hajj*

The *hajj* is an obligation upon every adult Muslim who is physically fit and has the financial means to perform it. It is, however, much more than an obligation. It is one of the pillars of Islam itself.

* E. W. Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*, 2003, Cambridge, England: The Islamic Texts Society, Vol. 1, p.513.

Who Must Perform *Hajj*?

Every Muslim who fulfils the following conditions must perform *hajj* at least once in his lifetime:

1. He must be an adult – sufficiently mature to understand the import and significance of what he is setting out to do.
2. He must be of sound mind and full control of his mental faculties.
3. He must be sound enough financially to be able to not only bear all of his expenses for *hajj* but also to provide adequately for his dependents during his absence and until his return. Children who have not come of age are exempted from performing *hajj*.

Prerequisites for *Hajj*

Hajj is an act of worship. It must be performed in peace and single-minded devotion.

1. Your intention must be to perform *hajj* purely for the sake of Allah. It should not be for pleasing, impressing others or showing off.
2. The *hajj* expenses must be met with money obtained through lawful (*halaal*) means.
3. All of your debts and financial obligations must be settled before you start your journey.
4. You must make a sincere effort to resolve your outstanding differences with others and seek forgiveness from those you may have hurt in any way in the past.

Virtues of *Hajj*

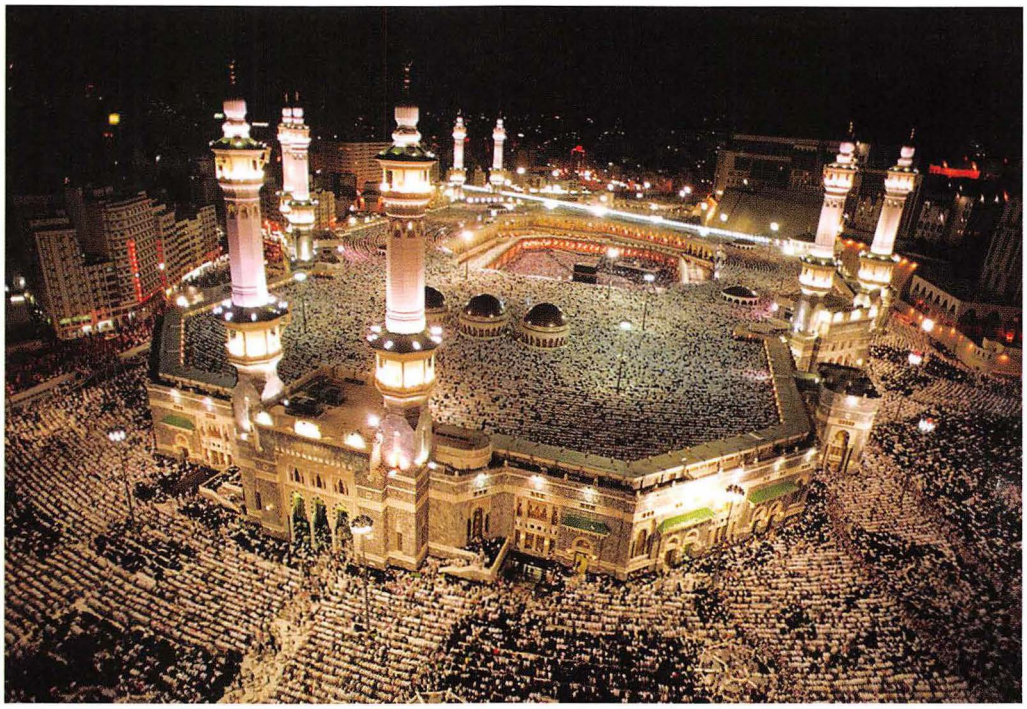
The reward for the performance of *hajj* is great. Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said, "Whoever performs *hajj* and does not commit any indecency or any sins during it returns as he was on the day his mother gave birth to him." (Al-Bukhaaree and Muslim)

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) also said, "One *'umrah* (to the next *'umrah* is expiation (*kaffaarah*) for [the minor sins committed] between them, and the *hajj* that is accepted by Allah and performed properly has no reward other than Paradise." (Al-Bukhaaree and Muslim)

Once someone asked the Prophet (ﷺ), "What is the best deed?" He said, "Belief in Allah and His Messenger." He then asked him, "What next?" He replied, "The *hajj* which is performed correctly and accepted by Allah." (A-Bukhaaree and Muslim)

He also said, "Make frequent circumambulations (*tawaaf*) around the House, for this will be among the glories of your records on the Day of Resurrection as well as the most fortunate action credited to you." (Al-*Haakim*: *Saheeh*)

Doing *tawaaf* (circumambulation, going round the *Ka'bah*) is therefore commendable in itself, not only as a part of *hajj* (pilgrimage) or *'umrah* (lesser pilgrimage). We read in a *hadeeth*, "To go around [the House]



seven times is as meritorious as freeing a slave, while the person who goes around [it] seven times in the rain will have all his past sins forgiven." (At-Tirmidhee)

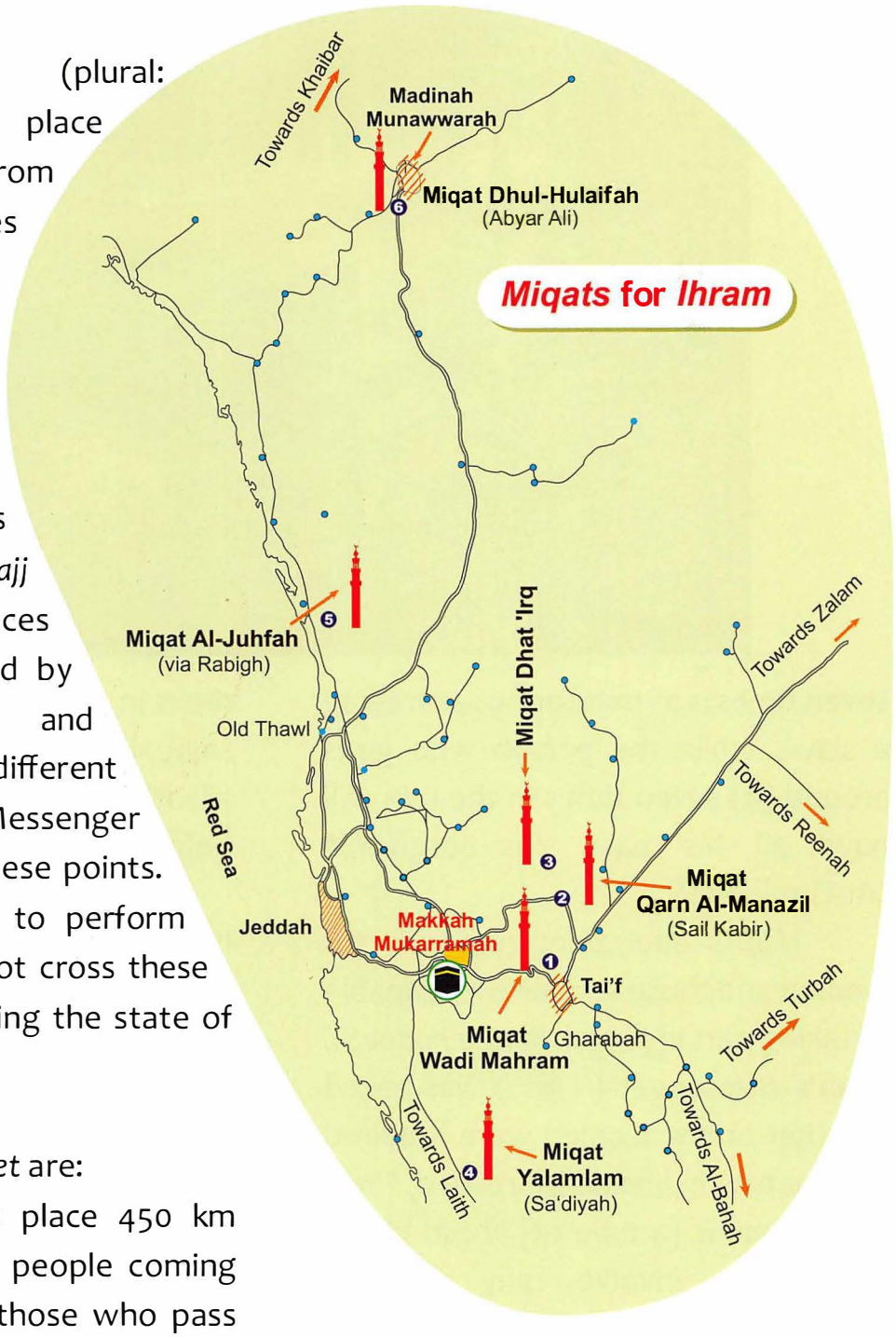
Hajj is equivalent to *jihaad* for women and those who are not capable of taking part in *jihaad*. In one *hadeeth*, Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) was asked whether or not women were required to take part in *jihaad*. He replied, "Yes, upon them is [a type of] *jihaad* which does not involve any fighting whatsoever: *hajj* and *'umrah*." (Ahmad and Ibn Maajah)

Moreover, *hajj* has many benefits. Indeed, it provides a meeting place for Muslims from all over the world to come and worship Allah together. This provides an excellent opportunity for them to meet one another, understand one another and get closer to one another. They all dress in a similar way and perform the same rituals. The wealthy, the poor and all others stand in the same manner before Allah.

The *hajj* is a perfect sign of faith. It combines in itself all the outstanding qualities of other obligatory acts. It represents the quality of *salaat*, since a pilgrim offers prayers towards the *Ka'bah*. It encourages spending of one's material wealth for the sake of Allah, which is the chief characteristic of *zakaat*. When a pilgrim sets out for *hajj*, he leaves behind his hearth and home, his dear and near ones to please Allah. He suffers hardships and sometimes suffers a lack of basic comforts and things necessary for life – the lesson we learn from fasting and *i'tikaaf*. In fact, the pilgrimage is an act of worship of a lifetime. It represents the completion of surrender and perfection of one's religion.

The *Meeqaat*

The *meeqaat* (plural: *mawaaqeet*) is the place around Makkah from which a pilgrim assumes the state of *ihraam*. Here, the pilgrim changes into *ihraam* clothing if he has not done so before and pronounces his intention to perform *hajj* or *'umrah*. These places (*mawaaqeet*) are fixed by different townships and localities in different directions. Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) himself fixed these points. Anyone who intends to perform *hajj* or *'umrah* must not cross these points without assuming the state of *ihraam*.

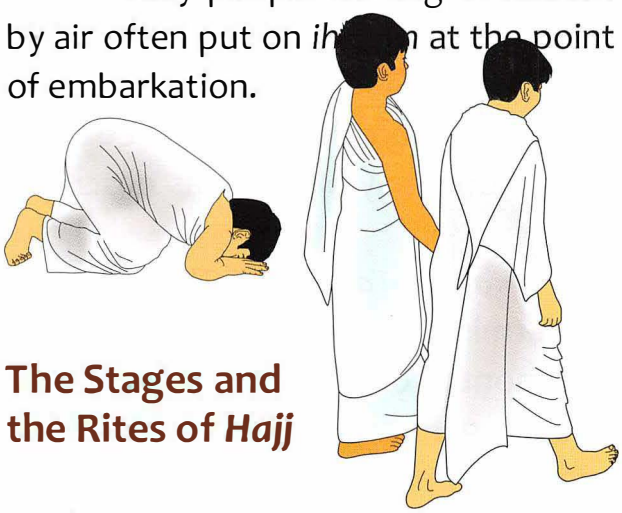


These *mawaaqeet* are:

- *Dhul-Hulayfah*, a place 450 km north of Makkah, for people coming from Madeenah and those who pass by it.
- *Dhaat 'Irq*, a place 94 km to the northeast of Makkah, for people coming from Iraq and those passing through Iraq by land or air.
- *Al-Juhfah*, a place 187 km to the northwest of Makkah, for people coming from Egypt and Ash-Shaam (i.e. Syria, Palestine, Lebanon and Jordan). These days, pilgrims coming from Egypt, Ash-Shaam and those coming through these areas by land, sea or air assume their *ihraam* from Raabigh instead of Al-Juhfah.
- *Yalamlam*, a place (a mountain) 54 km to the south of Makkah, for people coming from Yemen and those passing through Yemen.

- *Qarn al-Manaazil*, a place 94 km to the east of Makkah (now called As-Sayl), for people coming from Najd by land or air.
- Those who live between these *mawaaqeet* and Makkah assume the state of *ihraam* for *hajj* and *'umrah* from their homes. As for those who live in Makkah, they go out of Makkah's Sacred Area to assume their *ihraam* for *'umrah*. As for *hajj*, they assume the state of *ihraam* from their homes.

Today people coming to Jeddah by air often put on *ih*[illegible]*m* at the point of embarkation.



The Stages and the Rites of *Hajj*

At the *Meeqaat*:

On arrival at the *meeqaat*, the pilgrim must attend to the following:

1. He is recommended to perform a major ablution (*ghusl*), if possible, and make himself clean and tidy. *Ghusl* is not obligatory, though.

2. *Ihraam*: Having divested himself of all his clothes, he must now change into the *ihraam* clothing. A man wears a white seamless piece of cloth (*izaar*) around his waist and the lower part of the body, and another seamless piece of cloth (*ridaa'*) over his shoulder. He should not cover his head even for *salaat*, while in the state of *ihraam*. Both these pieces of unsewn cloth should be white and clean. He may freshen his body with perfume before changing into the *ihraam* clothing.

Ihraam for women consists of their simple and modest clothing of daily wear. They are required to keep their hands and faces uncovered, while in the state of *ihraam*.

A pilgrim must intend the consecration (*ihraam*) with his heart. He is now a *muhrim* (i.e. in a state of *ihraam*; a woman is called *muhrimah*) and is subject to certain obligations and prohibitions, which are discussed at the end of this unit.

While in the state of *ihraam*, he may use certain things for comfort and convenience. He may wear flip-flops or similar slippers, provided that they cover as little of his feet as possible. He may also wear a watch, sunglasses, use an umbrella, take a shower or bath, wash and change his *ihraam* clothing, use unscented soap, use a belt and a pillow, and cover himself with a blanket during cold weather, leaving his head and face uncovered. Women may continue to wear their modest garments but may not use gloves.

3. He should now perform two units of prayer and pronounce his intention to perform *hajj* or *'umrah* as the case may be. He should then start reciting the *talbiyah* loudly and frequently and continue to do so until he arrives at *al-Masjid al-Haraam* (the Sacred Mosque). A woman must not

Obligations and Prohibitions of *Ihraam*

Once the pilgrim has entered the state of consecration (*ihraam*), he must not cover his head, and he may wear neither stitched cloth nor shoes. Women though keep their heads covered. He should not apply any kind of perfume to his body or clothing. He should neither clip his nails nor shave his head – nor cut his hair.

He may not have sexual relations with his wife. He should avoid suggestive or provocative talk or gestures. He should remain focused on his mission of *hajj*.

He must not perform a marriage contract (*nikaah*) for someone else or enter into it for himself. He may not hunt or kill an animal of any kind for any reason unless it poses a danger to him or other people around him. If he does any of these things, he will have to expiate for this (*dam* or *kaffaarah*). A *dam* is not designed to punish the pilgrim. It simply reminds him of his special state and offers him an opportunity to renew his commitment to perform the *hajj* according to the commands of Allah and the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (ﷺ).

The Expiation (*Dam* or *Kaffaarah*)

Should a Muslim violate the sanctity of the *ihraam* knowingly and wilfully, he is required to offer a *dam* by way of expiation and of renewing his commitment to *hajj*. There are three ways he may offer this *kaffaarah*:

1. By sacrificing a sheep and distributing its meat among the poor in Makkah,
2. By feeding six poor people,
3. By fasting for three days.

A Muslim must offer the *dam* as soon as possible. If, however, he has sexual intercourse during this state of *ihraam*, his *hajj* becomes void, and so he has to perform the rest of the *hajj* rituals, sacrifice a camel and repeat the *hajj* the following year.

Types of *Hajj*

Hajj is one of the five pillars of Islam. There are, however, three types of *hajj* one may perform as described below:

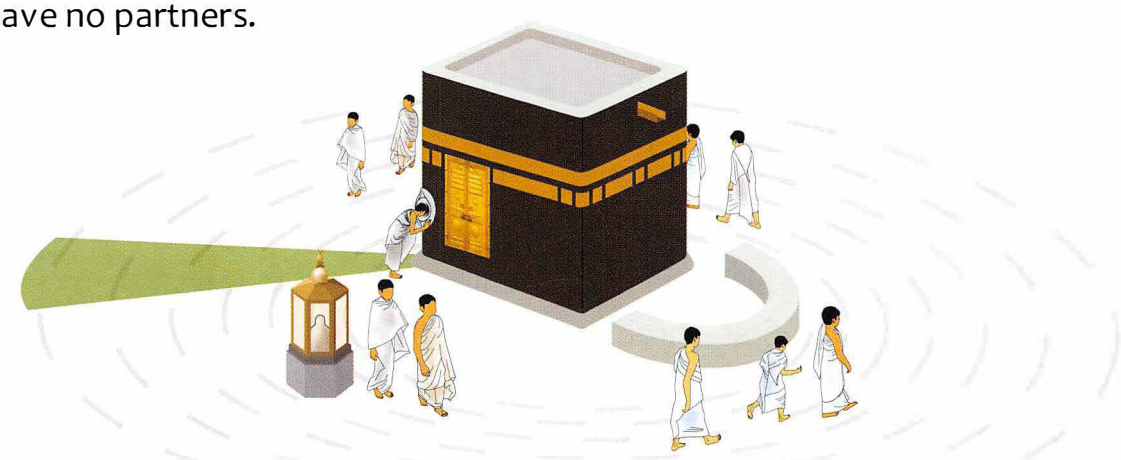
1. ***Hajj at-Tamattu'***: This involves performing *'umrah* first during any of the months of the *hajj*, removing the *ihraam* garments after *'umrah*, and then assuming the state of *ihraam* again for *hajj* on the eighth day of *Dhul-Hijjah* of the same year.
2. ***Hajj al-Ifraad***: This involves assuming the state of *ihraam* for *hajj* only and remaining in this state until *hajj* is finished. No *'umrah* is required.
3. ***Hajj al-Qiraan***: This involves assuming the state of *ihraam* for both *'umrah* and *hajj*.

It is worth noting that the killing of a sacrificial animal is obligatory only on those who perform *hajj at-tamattu'* and *hajj-al-qiraan*. Those performing *hajj-al-ifraad* are not required to slaughter a sacrificial animal.

The *Talbiyah*

Labbayk-Allaahumma labbayk.	لَبَّيْكَ اَللَّهُمَّ لَبَّيْكَ،
Labbayka laa shareeka laka labbayk.	لَبَّيْكَ لاَ شَرِيكَ لَكَ لَبَّيْكَ،
Innal-hamda wanni'mata	إِنَّ الْحَمْدَ وَالنِّعْمَةَ
laka wal-mulk, laa shareeka lak	لَكَ وَالْمُلْكَ لاَ شَرِيكَ لَكَ

Here I am at Your service, O Allah! Here I am! Here I am at Your service! You have no partners. Yours alone is the praise and all bounty, and Yours is the kingdom! You have no partners.



The *Tawaaf*: Going around the *Ka'bah*

Tawaaf is the act of going around the *Ka'bah* seven times. It forms the essential part of *hajj* and *'umrah*.

The *tawaaf* is done anticlockwise with the *Ka'bah* on the left hand side seven times. It is the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (ﷺ) to kiss the Black Stone on every round. However, if this is impossible due to the large crowds of pilgrims, one can simply touch it or even point at it with one's hand while saying *"Allaahu Akbar"*.

There are mainly five different types of *tawaaf*:

1. Tawaaf al-Qudoom: The *tawaaf* of arrival

The opening *tawaaf* of *hajj* is called *tawaaf al-qudoom*: the *tawaaf* of arrival. This initial *tawaaf* is performed by the pilgrim upon entering the Sacred Mosque for the first time, following his intention for *hajj*.

Each turn is called a round (*tawfah*, plural: *tawaaf*), or a circuit or a course (*shawt*, plural: *ashwaat*). One complete cycle of seven turns is an Usbu (a sept). Each circuit or *shawt* starts from *al-Hajar al-Aswad* (the Black Stone).

In order for you to recognize the point of start of the *tawaaf*, there is a green light on one of the walls to show the location. Like any other act of worship, the *tawaaf* starts with the intention (*niyyah*) to perform the act for the sake of Allah. Each *shawt* or circuit ends at *al-Hajar al-Aswad*. The pilgrim begins a new *shawt* after reciting *Bismillaah, Allaahu Akbar* as before from this point.

The first three circuits of the *tawaaf al-qudoom* are done with the quickened step known as *ramal*. The pilgrim walks briskly with his chest thrust forward and his shoulders slightly rolling during the first three rounds of the *tawaaf al-qudoom*. Ladies are not required to practise *ramal*. *Ramal* is performed only in *tawaaf al-qudoom*. It is not required in other types of *tawaaf*.

The male pilgrim drapes the *ridaa'* (wrapper for the upper part of his body) in such a way that his right shoulder is exposed and his left shoulder is covered. This is called *idhtibaa'*. *Idhtibaa'* is practised only while actually performing the *tawaaf al-qudoom*. Since female pilgrims wear no such *ihraam* clothing, the question of *idhtibaa'* does not arise.

2.Tawaaf al-'Umrah

Tawaaf al-'umrah is the *tawaaf* which the pilgrim performs as part of the rites of *'umrah*. It is identical in its essentials except for the intention (*niyyah*).

3.Tawaaf al-Ifaadhah

This is the *tawaaf* the pilgrim performs on the 10th of *Dhul-Hijjah*.

4.Tawaaf al-Wadaa' (The Farewell *Tawaaf*)

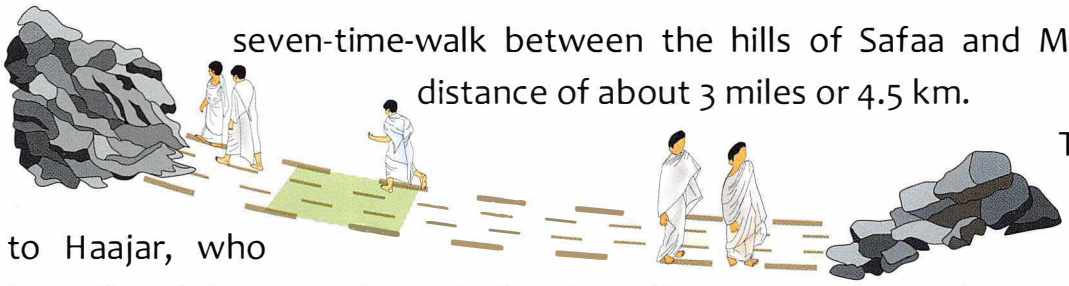
Tawaaf al-wadaa is the *tawaaf* the pilgrim performs immediately before leaving Makkah for his next destination. This is the last act the pilgrim performs in Makkah.

The Various Acts and Stages of the *Hajj* at a Glance

The acts and stages of the *hajj* as a whole are as follows:

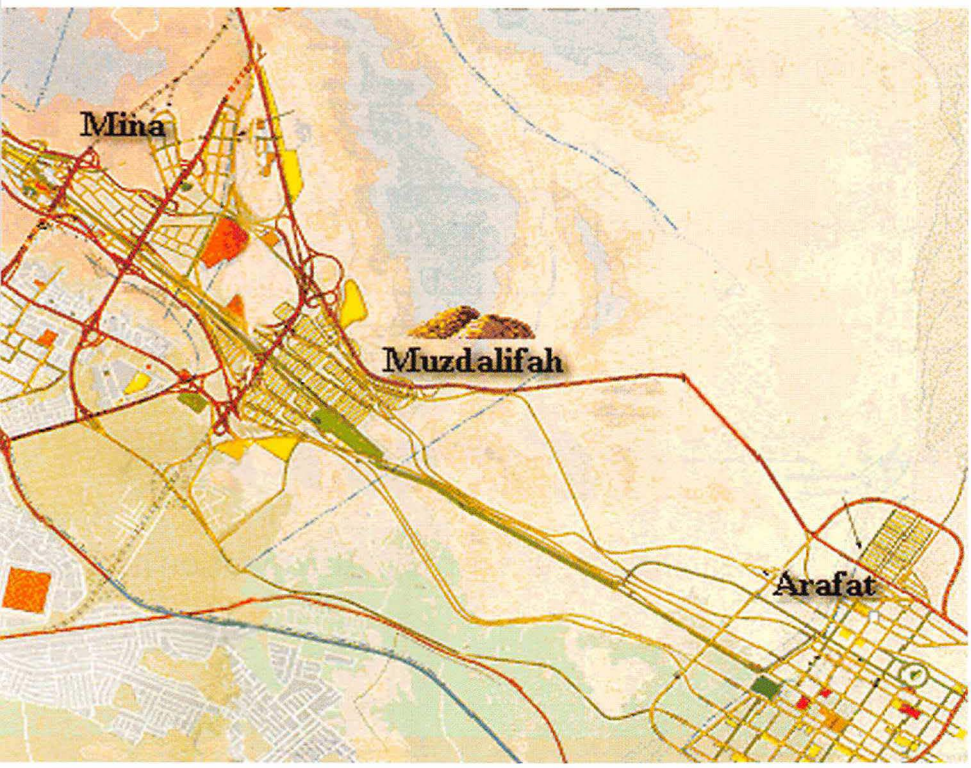
1. The *ihraam* at the *meeqaat*.
2. *Tawaaf al-Qudoom*.
3. The *Sa'ee* – The walking at a pace seven times between the two hillocks Safaa and Marwah in Makkah. This is one of the rites of *hajj*, and *'umrah*. It is performed immediately after the *tawaaf* around the Ka'bah is completed by the prayer at the Station of Ibraaheem (*Maqaam Ibraaheem*) and the drinking of Zamzam water.

The *sa'ee* is performed walking except for a portion in the middle, today marked by green lights, where the pace is quickened. The fast pace consists of a distance of some twenty meters. The covered course of the *sa'ee* is called the *mas'aa* and is today paved and enclosed within the bounds of the Sacred Mosque. Its length is about 293 m/ 927 ft. The entire



seven-time-walk between the hills of Safaa and Marwah covers a distance of about 3 miles or 4.5 km.

The origin of this rite goes back to Haajar, who despairing for the life of her son Ismaa'eel, when the goatskin of water that Prophet Ibraaheem (عليه السلام) had given them was spent, ran back and forth between the two hills. Then suddenly water gushed forth from the well of Zamzam.



4. Spending the night of 8th *Dhul-Hijjah* at Mina. Mina is about 4.5 km from Makkah.

5. *Wuqoof*, or the halt at 'Arafah, on the 9th *Dhul-Hijjah*. 'Arafah is about 13.5 km away from Makkah.

6. The nightly stay at Muzdalifah: From after the sunset on the 9th of *Dhul-Hijjah* to after *Fajr* on the 10th of *Dhul-Hijjah*.

7. *Ramiy*: Stoning the Jamrat al-'Aqabah in Mina on the 10th of *Dhul-Hijjah*. Seven pebbles are pelted at the Biggest Pillar, called Jamrat al-'Aqabah.

8. *Yawm an-Nahr*: (Day of Sacrifice) The Sacrificing of an animal in Mina, on the 10th of *Dhul-Hijjah*.

9. *Halq* or *Taqseer*: *Halq* is the act of shaving the head by the male pilgrim. This is the last thing a pilgrim does before getting out of the state of *ihraam*. The *taqseer* means shortening or clipping of the whole head of hair by the male pilgrim. Either *halq* or *taqseer* may be performed to fulfil the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (ﷺ). Female pilgrims, however, are only required to cut a fingertip's length of their hair.

10. *Tawaaf al-Ifaadhah*: going round the Ka'bah seven times, and performing the *sa'ee* between Safaa and Marwah, according to the type of *hajj* chosen by the pilgrim.

11. *Ramy al-Jimaar*: Stoning the three pillars in Mina, for two or three days, in memory of Ibraaheem's rejection of Satan (*Shaytaan*).

12. The Farewell *tawaaf*.

Exercises

A. Fill in the blanks.

1. *'Umrah* is called the _____ Pilgrimage.
2. The *hajj* that is accepted has no reward but _____.
3. The three types of *hajj* are _____, _____ and _____.
4. Each circuit of the *tawaaf* starts from the _____, with the pilgrim reciting _____.

B. Answer the following questions.

1. According to E. W. Lane, what is the meaning of the term *hajj*? Also mention its *Sharee'ah* meaning.

2. Mention the conditions that make *hajj* obligatory on a Muslim.

3. State what the Prophet (ﷺ) said regarding making frequent *tawaafs*.

4. If not actual war, what is the *Jihaad* for women?

5. How is *hajj* a completion of one's Religion?

6. Explain the term *meeqaat*. What is the purpose of *meeqaat*?

7. What should a pilgrim do if he commits any of the prohibited acts while still in the state of *ihraam*? Also mention the expiation.

8. How many different types of *tawaaf* are there? Explain them.

9. What should one do if he cannot hold and kiss the Black Stone?

C. Think-up

Draw a chart indicating the various rites of *hajj*.

Fasting in the Month of *Ramadhaan*

14



The Word *as-Siyaam*

As-Siyaam (*siyaam*, for short, or *sawm*) is an Arabic word which means "to keep away or abstain from something". In the *Sharee'ah* it refers to abstaining from food and drink from dawn to sunset of the month of *Ramadhaan* with intention of seeking Allah's pleasure. Indeed, performing *siyaam* in the month of *Ramadhaan* is a pillar of Islam.

The Importance and Virtues of Fasting

Fasting is a source of self-discipline, self-control, piety and heedfulness of Allah. Allah the Almighty prescribed it for the prophets who came before Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ). Allah points out its goal and purpose, thus: **"O you who believe! Fasting is prescribed to you as it was prescribed to those before you that you may become righteous."** (*Surat al-Baqarah*, 2: 183)

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) once said that fasting is a protection from the Hellfire:

"The fast is a shield from Hellfire just like the shield you use while fighting." (Ahmad and an-Nasaa'ee)

He also said, "There is a gate in Paradise called *Ar-Rayyaan* from which only those who fast will enter on the Day of Judgment, and no one else will enter from it. When they all enter, the gate will be closed, and no one else will enter from it." (Al-Bukhaaree and Muslim)

Concerning the fast of *Ramadhaan*, the Prophet (ﷺ) said, "Whoever fasts *Ramadhaan* with faith and hopeful of Allah's reward will have all his previous sins forgive," (Al-Bukhaaree and Muslim)

Furthermore, it will also appear as an intercessor on the Day of Judgment. Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said, "The fast and the Qur'an shall come as intercessors (*yash fa'aan*) on the Day of Resurrection. The fast will say, 'O Allah, I prevented him from his food and drink, during the day, so let me intercede for him.' The Qur'an will say, 'I kept him from sleep during the night, so let me intercede for him.' Then they will be allowed to intercede." (Ahmad)

Fasting Shows one's Sincerity to Allah

Fasting is an act that shows one's sincerity to one's Lord. Only Allah is aware if a person has truly fasted or not. No one may know if he secretly breaks his fast. Therefore, Allah has a special reward for those who fast. Allah says, "He leaves his food, drink and desires for My sake. Fasting is for My sake and I will reward it. And every good deed will be rewarded ten-fold." (Al-Bukhaaree)

Who Must Fast?

Fasting in the month of *Ramadhaan* is obligatory for every sane, adult, healthy Muslim who is not travelling at the time and is able to fast without hardship. It is also obligatory for women who are not having menses or not during post-delivery bleeding.

Those who should not Fast

Women during menstruation should not fast. However after the month of *Ramadhaan* they should fast an equal number of days to those missed.

Those who Have a Valid Reason to Postpone Fasting

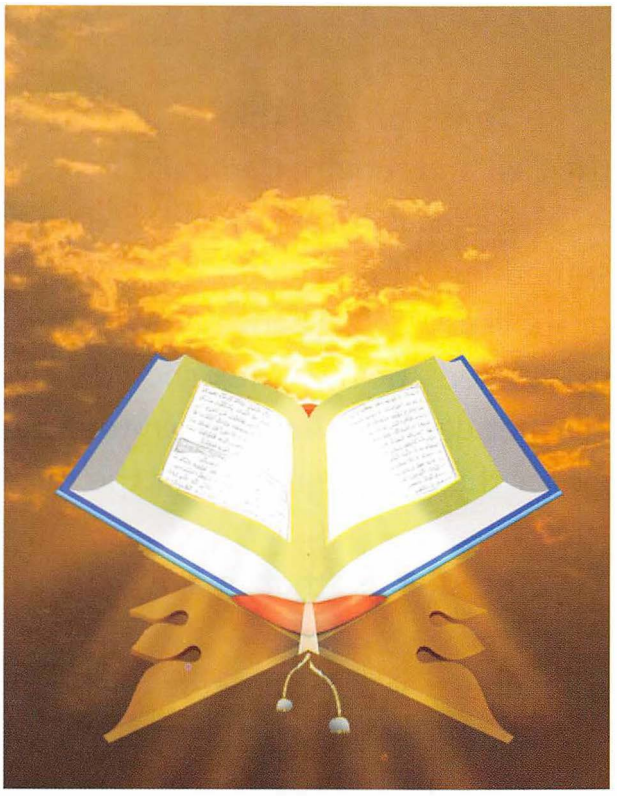
The following are permitted, if they find it necessary, to suspend fasting. However, they should fast an equal number of days after the end of *Ramadhaan*.

1. The sick person who is not terminally ill may break the fast and make up for the days he missed. However, if he is able to fast, then he is allowed to do so.
2. The traveller who travels as far as the distance that requires shortening the prayers (more than 77 km) may break the fast and make up for the days he missed.
3. A pregnant woman and breastfeeding woman may also break the fast and make up for the day she missed if fasting is likely to harm the health of the mother or her unborn baby, and/or prevent her from having enough milk for her baby.

Those who are Excused from Fasting altogether

1. The terminally ill: Those who suffer from a terminal, serious illness that is likely to become worse if they fast.
2. The permanently insane.
3. The very old: Those who are too old and feeble to fast at any time of the year.

   These people do not have to make up for the days they missed but are required to feed one poor person for everyday of fasting that they miss.



When the Month of *Ramadhaan* Arrives

When the month of *Ramadhaan* comes, it is obligatory for Muslims to fast. The Qur'an says, **"The month of *Ramadhaan* in which was revealed the Qur'an, a guidance for mankind and clear proof of guidance and criterion; and whoever sights [the new moon of] the month, let him fast it."** (*Surat al-Baqarah*, 2: 185)

When the new moon is sighted, the fast becomes obligatory on the following day from dawn to sunset. In fact, the testimony of one competent Muslim is sufficient to decide the beginning of the month of *Ramadhaan*. However, if there is no direct sighting of the new moon, *Ramadhaan* is presumed to have begun when *Sha'baan* has lasted for thirty full days.

The Intention to fast

Once the advent of *Ramadhaan* has been established, one should make the intention to keep the fast on the coming day of the month of *Ramadhaan*. This intention may be formulated at anytime during the night, until just before the dawn. One may formulate the intention to fast the whole month of *Ramadhaan*, or he may make the intention to fast for a day at a time. If he does this, this intention should be renewed each night until the month comes to an end.

If one eats one's pre-dawn meal (*suhoor*) with the intention of fasting for the sake of Allah, then one has formulated the intention. If one determines that one will fast on the next day for the sake of Allah, then one has performed the intention even if he does not eat the pre-dawn meal.

When the daybreak comes, the person keeping the fast must abstain throughout the entire period of daylight from eating and drinking and other things that spoil the fast.

The Pre-Dawn Meal: The *Suhoor*

The *suhoor* is an Arabic word which means the meal one takes during the last part of the night before dawn with the intention of fasting. The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "Truly, that which distinguishes our fast from the fast of the People of the Book (i.e. the Jews and the Christians) is the pre-dawn meal (*suhoor*)." (Muslim)

Eat the meal of *suhoor*, for indeed there is a blessing in the *suhoor*." (al-Bukhaaree and Muslim)

Delaying *Suhoor* until the very Last Part of the Night

The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "My *ummah* (followers) will continue to remain upon goodness as long as they hasten to break the fast and delay the *suhoor*." (Ahmad)

The time of *suhoor* begins from the last half of the night and it ends a few minutes before *Fajr*— the first crack of dawn.

Pillars of Fasting

1. The *niyyah* (The intention). However, one must not express the intention loudly.
2. *Al-imsaak*: Abstaining from eating and drinking from dawn until sunset

The *Sunan* (The *Sunnah* Acts of Fasting)

1. Taking the pre-dawn meal, or *suhoor*.
2. Delaying the *suhoor* until the very last part of the night.
3. Hastening to break the fast (*iftaar*) immediately after it is confirmed that the sun has set.
4. Breaking the fast with fresh dates, dried dates or water.
5. Supplicating upon breaking the fast.

Some of the Things that Spoil the Fast and require *Qadhaa'*

Qadhaa' means 'making up for something'. If a person does not fast, or spoils his fast, for any of the reasons mentioned below, he should fast another day after *Ramadhaan* to make up for the days he missed or the fasts spoilt.

The things that make *qadhaa'* necessary are:

1. **Illness:** When one gets well, one should, after the end of *Ramadhaan*, fast the number of days equal to the number of fasts of *Ramadhaan* one has missed.
2. **Travelling:** After *Ramadhaan*, one should fast the number of days equal to the number of fasts one has missed.

They also include the following:

1. Intentional vomiting
2. Eating or drinking, thinking that the sun has set only to discover later that one was mistaken.
3. Swallowing water as a result of exaggerating while rinsing the mouth or the nose during the ablutions (*wudhoo'*) on condition that one has not forgotten one is fasting
4. Intending to break the fast even if one does not actually eat or drink anything.

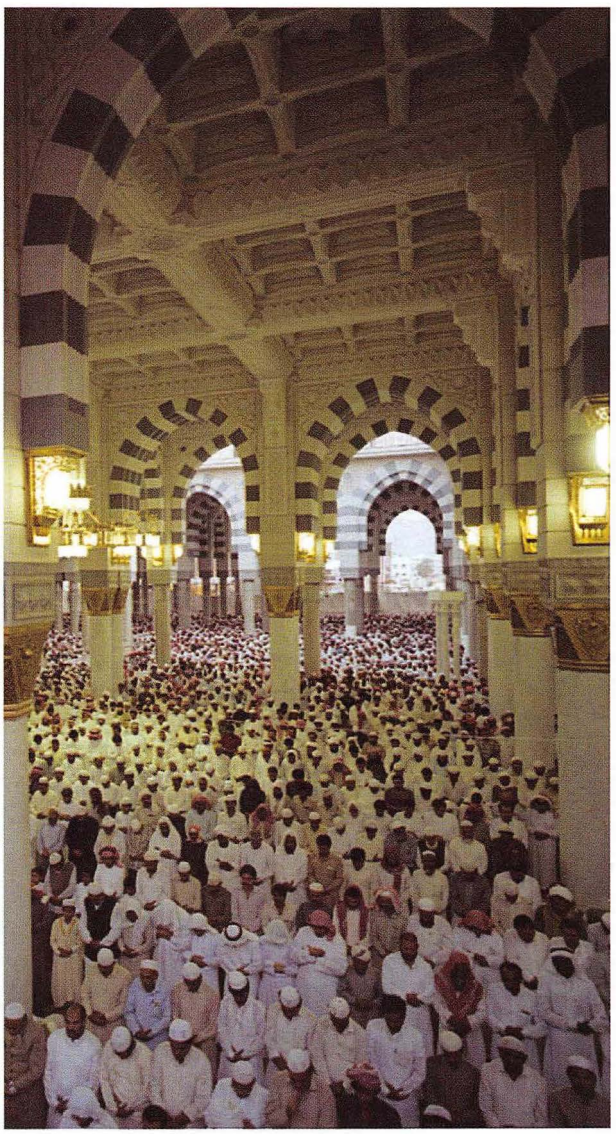
The Act that spoils the Fast and require *qadhaa'* and *Kaffaarah* (Expiation)

If a man has sexual intercourse with his wife intentionally during the day in *Ramadhaan*, he must not only make up for this day but also expiate for disobeying Allah's command by doing the following things:

1. To set a slave free.
2. If he can't find a slave or he finds him but cannot afford to set him free, then he must feed sixty poor or destitute Muslims with more or less the same food as he feeds his own family.
3. If he cannot afford to do so, then he must fast continuously for two lunar months for each day that he has intentionally spoilt his fast.

Types of Fasts

Fasts are of two kinds: Obligatory fasts and voluntary fasts. The word *nafl* (plural: *nawaafil*) denotes addition beyond one's duty or something given in excess of one's obligation. The term *salaat-un-nafl* is derived from it, which means additional prayer performed voluntarily.



1. **The Obligatory Fasts**

a. Fasting throughout the month of *Ramadhaan*.

b. Fasting for expiating for a sin (*kaffaarah*).

c. Fasting for vows (*nadhr*): If someone vows to fast, the fast becomes obligatory for him.

2. **Voluntary Fasts**

Fasting is recommended on the following days:

a. The day of *'Arafah* for those who are not performing *hajj*. This is on the 9th of *Dhul-Hijjah*.

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said, "Fasting the day of 'Arafah expiates the sins of two years, the previous year and the following year." (Muslim)

b. The Day of *'Aashuraa'* and the Day of *Taasuaa'* are the 10th and the 9th of the month of Muharram.

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) fasted the Day of *'Aashuraa'* and ordered the people to fast it. He also said, "When the next year comes, if Allah Wills, we shall fast the ninth day [of Muharram] as well." (Muslim)

c. Six days of the month of *Shawwaal*

The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "Whoever fasts *Ramadhaan* and follows it up with six days of *Shawwal*, it is like fasting the entire year." (Muslim)

d. *Al-Ayyaam al-Beedh*

Al-Ayyaam al-Beedh (Literally the white days) are the days when you can see all of the moon as a complete circle. These are the 13th, 14th and 15th days of the lunar calendar. The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "Fasting three days of every [lunar month] month, is equal to fasting the entire year." (An-Nasaa'ee)

e. Fasting Mondays and Thursdays: Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) said, "Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) used to fast Mondays and Thurdsdays frequently. When he was asked about this, he said, 'The deeds ascend [to Allah] every Monday and Thursday, and Allah forgives every Muslim (or every believer) except those quarrelling, for He says: Delay them (that is forgiveness will not be granted to them until they end their dispute).'" (Ahmad)

The Forbidden Fasts

It is forbidden to fast on the following days:

1. The day of *'Eed*, whether it is *'Eed-ul-Fitr* or *'Eed-ul-Adh-haa*
2. The three days of *at-tashreeq*: These are the three days following the Festival of Sacrifice (*'Eed-ul-Adh-haa*), which takes place on the 10th of *Dhul-Hijjah*. Precisely, they are the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth days of *Dhul-Hijjah*.

Exercises

A. Fill in the blanks.

1. The Arabic word for fasting is _____ or _____.

2. According to a *hadeeth*, _____ and _____ shall come as intercessors on the Day of Resurrection.

3. The beginning of the month of *Ramadhaan* is marked by sighting the _____.

4. _____ distinguishes our fast from that of the People of the Book.

5. _____ and _____ are the pillars of fasting.

6. There are two kinds of fasts: _____ and _____.

7. It is recommended to fast two days of the week; that is _____ and _____.

B. Answer the following questions.

1. What is fasting? What is its purpose?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. Fasting shows one's sincerity to Allah. How?

3. Who may postpone the fasts of *Ramadhaan*?

4. Who are excused from fasting altogether?

5. What are the *Sunnah* acts of fasting?

6. When should a person give *kaffaarah*? Mention the three types of *kaffaarah*.

7. List the obligatory fasts and the days on which fasting is forbidden.

C. Explain these Arabic terms

1. *Niyyah*

2. *Suhoor*

3. *Imsaak*

4. *Qadhaa'*

Prophet Moosaa (عليه السلام) (1)

Prophet Ya'qoob and his sons move to Egypt

Prophet Ya'qoob (عليه السلام) and his sons came to Egypt from Can'aan at the invitation of Yoosuf (عليه السلام), who was the then ruler of Egypt.

Yoosuf (عليه السلام) warmly welcomed them and was extremely delighted to see them. The people of Egypt had also welcomed the family of their noble king. They loved this noble family because they loved Yoosuf. They had known Yoosuf (عليه السلام) to be a very compassionate man gave them good counsel, took great care of them and looked after their needs well. They had also seen that Ya'qoob (عليه السلام) was a noble and generous person.

Ya'qoob (عليه السلام) enjoyed great respect in Egypt whose people were to him like his own children. Indeed, the people of Egypt were pleased that Ya'qoob (عليه السلام) and his sons had come to settle down in Egypt.

Israa'eel, which means 'servant of Allah', was the name that Allah had given to Prophet Ya'qoob (عليه السلام). His children, therefore, were called Banu Israa'eel (the Children of Israa'eel). They were the descendants of Prophet Is-haaq and Prophet Ibraaheem.

Banu Israa'eel lived peacefully in Egypt. However, after the death of Yoosuf (عليه السلام), things began to change. The morals of the Israelites became corrupted and they stopped worshipping Allah and calling other people to worship Him. They fell into the evil ways of the world. The Egyptians also changed their behaviour towards the Children of Israa'eel. They began to look at them in a different way.

The Egyptians believed that they were the people of the land and that Egypt belonged to them alone. Some of them considered Yoosuf (عليه السلام) a foreigner who had been brought from Can'aan after having been purchased by the Azeez of Egypt. They thought it was not right that a Canaanite had become the ruler of Egypt.

The Pharaohs of Egypt

The kings of Ancient Egypt, who came to the throne to rule the nation, were called pharaohs, the plural of pharaoh, or *Fir'awn*.

Many years had gone by since Yoosuf (عليه السلام) passed away, and the Children of Israa'eel, as his household was called, had prospered and increased.

Pharaoh's Persecution of the Children of Israa'eel

Now, there arose a new Pharaoh who feared and hated the Children of Israa'eel. He made their life miserable with harsh labour. He passed terrible laws to keep them in slavery. 'The Children of Israa'eel are in great number. They are strong and perhaps one day they will rise against us and drive us out of our land,' thought Pharaoh.

The Killing of their Newborn Baby Boys

Pharaoh had a dream that a fire had come from the direction of Jerusalem and burnt all the Coptic people and their houses and did not harm the Israelites. When he woke up, he was very frightened that he gathered all priests, soothsayers and sorcerers and asked them about the interpretation of this dream. They said, "There will be born a boy from these people who will destroy the people of Egypt." The Pharaoh then ordered that all newborn baby boys be killed and baby girls be spared.



He bore a deep hatred towards the Children of Israa'eel. He thought that his people, the Copts, were far better than the Children of Israa'eel. The Copts, he thought, were a kingly race and that they were there only to rule while the Children of Israa'eel were a race of slaves who were only there to serve.

Fir'awn (Pharaoh) was an arrogant tyrant. He believed that no one was higher than him. He did not believe in Allah. He used to say, "I am your most exalted lord." He was dazzled by his vast kingdom and the plentiful provisions which Almighty Allah had bestowed upon him.

He ordered his people to worship him and to prostrate before him, and they obeyed. But the Israelites refused to do so. They believed in Allah and His Messengers. The Pharaoh therefore became very angry indeed with Banu Israa'eel.

The Pharaoh made them into slaves. He made them to toil all day in the scorching desert heat. If someone fainted or lagged behind in their work, the cruel task-masters would severely whip them to drive them on. Many people died under the scorching heat and the terrible beatings.

By giving orders to his soldiers to kill every baby boy born among the Children of Israa'eel, he hoped to make certain that no baby boys were

allowed to grow up into men who might then fight against him. There was mourning among the children of Israa'eel when Pharaoh's orders were carried out. The Pharaoh thought that he was the people's lord and master who could put to death whomever he pleased and let alive whomever he pleased! His soldiers searched out throughout Egypt, and whenever they learnt that a baby boy had been born among the Israelites, they would seize him and kill him right away.

Hundreds of children were killed in front of their mothers and fathers. Indeed, the day on which a baby boy was born to the Israelites was a day of great grief and sorrow. Sometimes hundreds of baby boys were killed on the same day.

The Birth of Moosaa (عليه السلام)

But Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) willed that what the Pharaoh dreaded and had been warned about would happen. The child that Allah had destined to destroy the Pharaoh's kingdom and to bring people out of darkness of idol-worship into light of true faith was born. In spite of Pharaoh's arrogance and the cruelty of his strong armies, Moosaa ibn 'Imraan (عليه السلام) was born and survived. He was a lovely child, and his mother felt she had to try to save him; so she told no one of his birth and warned her children not to speak of their baby brother.

Baby Moosaa (عليه السلام) survives

For a couple of months, Moosaa's mother managed to keep him safely hidden. Then she became afraid. The baby boy was getting older. Any day someone might hear him crying and would then tell the soldiers about him. What could she do? She became frightened. She had seen the soldiers dragging scores of baby boys from their mothers' laps. How could she hide her gorgeous baby from the eyes of the cruel guards?

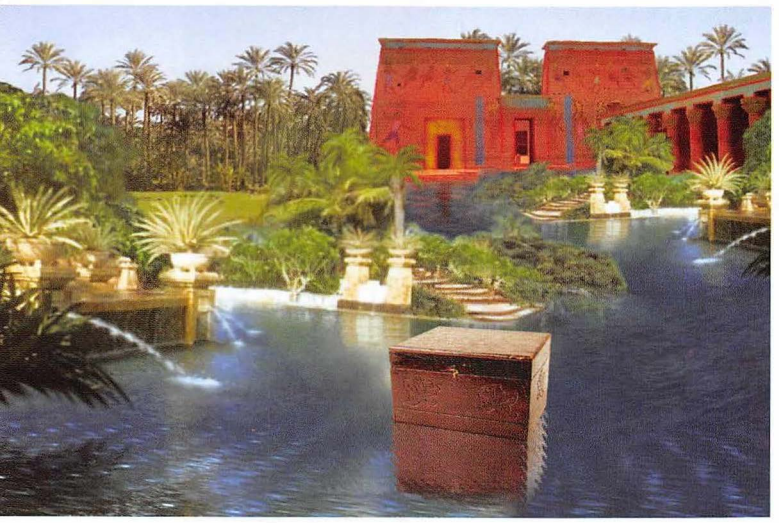
Allah the Almighty then inspired her, **"Suckle him for a time, but when you fear for his life, cast him into the river and do not fear nor grieve; indeed, We will bring him back to you and make him one of the messengers."** (*Surat al-Qasas*, 28:7)

It was not Allah's Command that the child be cast into the river immediately. Instead, until there was a real threat to the child's life, he was to be suckled by his mother. Only when she feared that Moosaa's birth was known to the enemy either by his crying or through some informer, was she to put the baby into a chest and cast it into the river. Thereafter, she should have no fear or worry!

Moosaa's mother put her trust in Allah. Her household was not able to protect the child any more. There were soldiers and guards everywhere. There were spies seeking out the newborn baby boys.

Moosaa's Extraordinary Survival as a Baby

So Moosaa's mother did what Allah had commanded her to do. She put her lovely child into a chest. When she realised that no one was about, she went down to the Nile River, laid the chest with Moosaa (عليه السلام) in it on the water and set it floating on the Nile River. She was very anxious, but then she grew calm because she had put her trust in Allah Most High and knew that Allah would not disappoint her. She had been assured that by doing so she would not expose her baby to any danger, for Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) would certainly restore her baby to her and make him one of His messengers.



In th Palace of Pharaoh

The chest went on with baby Moosaa inside it until it passed by the Pharaoh's palace. One of Pharaoh's slave-girls saw it and picked it up. When it was brought before Pharaoh's wife Aasiyah, she opened it and, to her great amazement, she saw a very handsome boy with a radiant face whom she loved instantly.

Pharaoh's Wife adopts Moosaa (عليه السلام)

When Pharaoh found out about the new baby boy, he commanded that he be killed, but his virtuous wife looked at the child, her heart filled with love and affection, wrapped her hands around him and began to kiss him. She pleaded with the king, **"[He will be] a comfort of the eye for you and me! Do not kill him, for he may well be of use to us, or we may adopt him as a son."** (*Surat al-Qasas*, 28:9)

Thus Moosaa (عليه السلام) entered Pharaoh's palace and survived in spite of Pharaoh's opposition and his soldiers' cruelty. Allah willed that Pharaoh bring up the very baby at whose hands his kingdom would be lost. How wrong he and his chief advisor Haamaan were!

Distress of Moosaa's Mother

Moosaa's mother was very worried, but Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) gave her comfort. He gave her heart enough strength to keep alive her faith in Allah's promise. Moosaa's elder sister had kept an eye on the floating chest. She had done so while walking along the bank of the river. She kept the chest in view without giving any hint that her walk along the bank had anything to do with the chest. The chest was floating on the river.

Moosaa's sister was probably ten or twelve of age at that time. She was intelligent. She successfully traced her brother's arrival into the palace of Pharaoh.

Who will suckle the Baby?

Pharaoh's wife looked for a wet nurse to suckle the child. She called several wet nurses but the baby would not take milk from any of them. In fact, Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) had from the very beginning caused him to refuse the breasts of Egyptian wet nurses, and so they looked for someone who could foster the baby. Moosaa (عليه السلام), however, did not take milk from any foster mother. They sent him with wet nurses and in the escort of other women to the market, so that they might find someone who could possibly breastfeed him.

While they were waiting there, Moosaa's sister spotted him. Without giving any hint that she was his sister, she said to them, "Shall I direct you to a family that might rear him for you, and look after him in a good manner?" They readily accepted it and went to her house. When Moosaa's mother took him and put him to her breast, he immediately started suckling. They felt overjoyed and sent a messenger to inform Aasiyah. Aasiyah soon summoned her to her palace and offered her to stay in it, but she refused. She said that she had a husband and children. She could not stay in the palace to suckle him with her. Aasiyah agreed and sent the baby with her along with all the expenses for him.

Moosaa's mother happily returned home with her baby, knowing full well that Allah's promise always comes true.

The result of Allah's grand plan was that Moosaa (عليه السلام) did not become a Pharaonic prince in the true sense of the expression. Rather he spent his early childhood among his own kith and kin. However, it was agreed that Moosaa (عليه السلام) would be brought to the palace whenever the queen wanted to see him.

Allah's promise was thus fulfilled and Moosaa (عليه السلام) returned to his mother safely.

Exercises

A. Fill in the blanks.

1. Banu Israa'eel means _____.
2. Banu Israa'eel were the descendants of Prophet _____(عليه السلام) and Prophet _____ (عليه السلام).
3. Allah caused Moosaa (عليه السلام) to refuse the milk of _____ nurses.
4. _____ was Pharaoh's wife.

B. Answer the following questions.

1. Who was Israa'eel (عليه السلام)? What does the name mean?

2. Why were the Egyptians fearful of Banu Israa'eel?

3. Why was Pharaoh particularly hateful towards the Israelite baby boys?

4. In what way was Pharaoh an 'arrogant' tyrant?

5. How were the Israelites tortured at the hands of Pharaoh?

6. Why did Moosaa's mother wait for two months before casting him into the river?

7. What do you think made Pharaoh spare Moosaa's life even though he was bent on killing him?

8. How did Allah fulfil His Promise to Moosaa's mother?

C. Match the following.

1.	Pharaohs	a.	and put her trust in Allah
2.	Allah wanted	b.	Haamaan
3.	Moosaa's mother grew calm	c.	the rulers of ancient Egypt
4.	The Pharaoh's chief advisor	d.	an eye on the chest
5.	Moosaa's sister kept	e.	what Pharaoh dreaded

Prophet Moosaa (عليه السلام) (2)

16

After Moosaa (عليه السلام) was weaned and he no longer needed his mother's milk, she returned him to the palace. As time passed by, Moosaa (عليه السلام) grew up in the king's palace as a prince. The awe of kings, emperors and the wealthy was thus erased from his heart. He saw with his own eyes the luxury that Pharaoh and his family enjoyed.

He also saw how the Israelites were oppressed for the sake of that luxury. He realized how the Israelites were made to toil like donkeys, how they were abused and humiliated. Moosaa (عليه السلام) witnessed this everyday, but he remained silent. This made him angry. How could he not feel anger and grief at the humiliation of his people and his household when they were the sons of Prophets?

Moosaa (عليه السلام) lived in the king's palace as a prince. Moosaa (عليه السلام) was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians. He lived a royal lifestyle and was honoured and respected by all. A handsome young man, clad in princely attire! He often went to the land where the Children of Israa'eel lived. He himself saw the harsh treatment meted out to them by the king's Coptic officers.

When Moosaa (عليه السلام) reached manhood, Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) bestowed upon him wisdom and knowledge.

Moosaa (عليه السلام) Hated Injustice

Moosaa (عليه السلام) hated injustice. He always supported the weak and those who were wronged and oppressed. In fact, every prophet was like that!

Once, he entered the city when most of its people were resting in their houses, unaware of what was going on in the streets.

The words 'entered the city' used by the Qur'an (*Surat al-Qasas*, 28:15) suggest that the royal palaces were outside the city; since Moosaa (عليه السلام) lived in one of these palaces, it is thus appropriate to say that he entered the city.

Moosaa (عليه السلام) Kills an Egyptian

In the city he encountered two men fighting with each other; one of them was from his own people (Israelites) while the other of his enemy (Coptic). The Israelite pleaded with Moosaa (عليه السلام) to help him against his enemy. Moosaa (عليه السلام) struck him with his fist and killed him. He did not intend to kill him. He only wanted to restrain him and rebuke him. That is why Moosaa (عليه السلام) exclaimed, "This is of Satan's doing! Surely, he is a plain

misleading enemy." (*Surat al-Qasas*, 28: 15) Satan had planned the mischief which prompted Moosaa (AS) to act violently. Satan's purpose was to raise a storm of enmity against Moosaa (AS). By killing a Copt in the course of helping an Israelite, the storm was directed not only against Moosaa (AS) but against all the Israelites.

Moosaa (AS) was filled with regret. He then turned to Allah and prayed, "My Lord, I have wronged myself, so forgive me." Allah (SWT) forgave him and blessed him. Moosaa (AS) vowed never to help wrongdoers. This clearly suggests that the Israelite whom Moosaa (AS) had helped was in the wrong. Moosaa (AS) resolved never to support the guilty.

The dead Copt was one of Pharaoh's servants. The guards began to search for his killer. Moosaa (AS) was afraid he would be caught and taken before the tyrant Pharaoh. Pharaoh was an arrogant and extremely unjust disbeliever who deliberately suppressed the truth in order to arrogate to himself the rights and powers that are properly Allah's. He sought to rule in his own name and stubbornly ignored the divine laws of Heaven.

The dead man became the talk of the town, but nobody knew who had killed him. Only Moosaa (AS) and the Israelite knew what had happened. Pharaoh was furious about the killing of his servant. He told the guards that they must find out the man responsible for this killing. When Moosaa (AS) got back to the palace he found that the story was being whispered everywhere.

The next day, Moosaa (AS) again saw the same Israelite involved in a fight with another Coptic Egyptian. The Israelite again cried out to Moosaa (AS) for help. Moosaa (AS) hurried to try to part them. He said to the Israelite, "You are a misleading fellow indeed." When Moosaa (AS) saw the same person engaged in fights, he became convinced that the Israelite was a quarrelsome person. He regularly picked on others. A day before he had quarrelled with one person, and the next day he was quarrelling with another.

Moosaa (AS) wanted to stop the two men from fighting. After scolding the Israelite, when Moosaa (AS) turned to strike the Egyptian, the Israelite thought that Moosaa (AS) was going to hit him so he cried out, "O Moosaa ! Would you kill me as you killed another man yesterday? You only want to be a tyrant in this land and you do not wish to set things aright." Thus the Israelite foolishly let the secret out. Moosaa (AS), however, did not support him. He had taken a pledge not to support the wrongdoers.

In the meantime, the Copt ran away and told the guards what had happened. When the news reached Pharaoh, he became wild with anger and yelled, "Is this the same boy who was our foster son in the palace and who was brought up by the queen?" Moosaa (عليه السلام) had not meant to kill the Egyptian, but Pharaoh and his guards were not prepared to accept any excuse from Moosaa (عليه السلام).

Allah (سبحانه وتعالى), however, wanted to rescue Moosaa (عليه السلام) from the tyrant king and his soldiers. He willed that Pharaoh would lose his kingdom and to rescue the Children of Israa'eel through Moosaa (عليه السلام). He willed that Moosaa (عليه السلام) would bring the Children of Israa'eel out of the worship of tyrants into the worship of Allah the One.

When Pharaoh's ministers held a council and resolved to have Moosaa (عليه السلام) put to death, a man came running from the farthest end of the city and said, "O Moosaa! The nobles are deliberately about you that they may put you to death. So go away from here. I am one of your well-wishers." Soon after hearing this, Moosaa (عليه السلام) departed in a state of fear. He accepted the man's advice. He looked around dreadfully and prayed, **"My Lord, save me from the unjust people."** (*Surat al-Qasas*, 28: 21)

Moosaa goes to Madyan

Allah revealed to Moosaa (عليه السلام) to go to Madyan (English Median). In those days, Madyan was not a part of Pharaoh's kingdom. Egypt did not have control over the entire Sinai Peninsula but only over its western and southern parts. The region of Madyan extended from the present-day Gulf of 'Aqabah westwards deep into the Sinai Peninsula and to the mountains of Moab, east of the Dead Sea. Its inhabitants were Arabs of the Amorite group of tribes and were not under Egyptian control. This is why Moosaa (عليه السلام) headed towards Madyan, by Allah's leave, which was the nearest territory independent of the Egyptian territory. But to reach there, he had to pass through the country of Egypt and had to cross various checkpoints mounted by the cruel Pharaoh. He, therefore, earnestly prayed to Allah to lead him to the path, which would safely take him to Madyan. He said, **"It may well be that my Lord will guide me to the right path!"** (*Surat al-Qasas*, 28: 22)



In Madyan (Median)

Allah (ﷻ) guided Moosaa (عليه السلام) to the right way leading to Madyan. However, even though the terrible journey was over, Moosaa (عليه السلام) did not know anyone in Madyan. Where could he then find shelter or spend the night? He was very worried.

He was sure, however, that Allah (ﷻ) would come to his help. Not far away a few palm trees showed that there was a well. Moosaa (عليه السلام) was tired and thirsty. The trees would give a welcome shelter from the scorching heat. So he made his way towards it. At some distance from the well, he saw two girls holding back their goats and sheep and waiting for the others to finish watering their flocks so that they could have their turn.

According to Arab traditions, the place where Moosaa (عليه السلام) had arrived was a few miles south of Maqna on the Western Coast of the Gulf of 'Aqabah. It is precisely called al-Bad'. *Sheikh* Abul-A'laa Mawdoodee writes, "I visited it in December 1959 on my way to 'Aqabah from Tabook. The residents of the town told me that they had heard from their elders that this is where ancient Madyan was located... About a mile or a mile and a half away, there are a few ruins among which we saw two dirty wells. The locals told us, though with some uncertainty, that one of the two wells was located at the spot where Moosaa (عليه السلام) had watered the animals." (*Towards Understanding the Qur'an*, Vol. VII p. 209, the Islamic Foundation, UK)

Moosaa (عليه السلام) asked the two women, **"'What is the matter with you?' The women answered, 'We cannot water [our flocks] until the shepherds drive theirs home, and our father is a very old man.'"** (*Surat al-Qasas*, 28: 23)

In other words, they were weak and so they could not be involved in any dispute with the shepherds in securing water for their flocks. Furthermore, their father was too old to water the animals and there was no male member in the family. Moosaa's heart was filled with compassion and tenderness. So he watered their flocks for them, and then he withdrew into the shade and prayed earnestly, **"My Lord! I am in need of any good which you may bestow upon me."** (*Surat al-Qasas*, 28: 24)

Moosaa (عليه السلام) had left Egypt suddenly without taking any provisions, and the journey he had made had taken several days. Therefore, he was hungry, thirsty and worn out. He was a stranger in Madyan where he had no friends or relatives, nor any shelter. So he prayed to Allah for help. According to Ibn Katheer, the journey on foot between Egypt and Madyan was eight days long, as far as between Koofah and Basrah.

Meanwhile, when the two women returned home with their flocks sooner than expected, their father was surprised. When he asked them why they were home so early that day they related the incident to him. He then realized that it must have been a noble stranger who offered to help his daughters, and so he asked one of them to go and bring him home.

Soon thereafter one of the two women went to Moosaa (عليه السلام), walking modestly. Her face was covered with a part of her outer garment. She said, "My father invites you so that he may duly reward you for your having watered our flock for us."

Moosaa (عليه السلام) was in dire need of compassion and a kind person to provide him with protection and shelter. Moosaa (عليه السلام), therefore, did not hesitate to go to that man's house even after hearing that he would receive some reward for the little service he had rendered. He realized that Allah had answered his prayer. So he made his way towards the house, walking ahead of the woman out of modesty.

When Moosaa (عليه السلام) later reached the old man's home and met him, he told him about himself and narrated to him his story. The old man listened intently. When Moosaa (عليه السلام) had finished, the old man said, "Do not be afraid; you are now safe from those evildoers."

Moosaa's Marriage

Moosaa (عليه السلام) sayed with the old man as an honoured guest who treated Moosaa (عليه السلام) like his own son. One of his daughters suggested to her father to hire him as he was both strong and trustworthy.

After some time, the father said to Moosaa (عليه السلام), "I intend to give you one of these two daughters of mine in marriage provided that you serve me for eight years. However, if you complete ten years, that would be an act of grace from you, for I do not want to impose any hardship on you. I assure you that you will find me, if Allah so wills, a righteous man in all my dealings." Moosaa (عليه السلام) agreed and said, "This is agreed between me and you. Whichever of the two terms I fulfil, let there be no injustice to me, and Allah is witness to all that we say."

Moosaa (عليه السلام) agreed to the terms of the agreement. He knew that Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) would surely bless it for him. Hasan ibn 'Ali ibn Abee Taalib(رضي الله عنه) said, "Moosaa (عليه السلام) completed ten instead of eight years." 'Abdullaah ibn 'Abbaas narrated that the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said, "Moosaa (عليه السلام) completed the longer of the two terms and the one that was more agreeable to his father-in-law (i.e. ten years)." (al-Bukhaaree)

There are various popular traditions which identify the father-in-law of Moosaa (عليه السلام) with Prophet Shu'ayb (عليه السلام). However, there is nothing in the Qur'an directly or indirectly, which would justify such identification. The Traditions, which mention Shu'ayb (عليه السلام) in Prophet Moosaa's story are not sound!

Exercises

A. State whether these statements are true (T) or false (F).

1. The Copt was in the wrong. _____
2. No one knew about the secret of the killing except Moosaa (عليه السلام) and the Israelite. _____
3. Moosaa (عليه السلام) was a stranger in Madyan. _____
4. The kind man in Madyan, who sheltered Moosaa (عليه السلام), was Prophet Shu'ayb. _____
5. Moosaa (عليه السلام) stayed in Madyan for 10 years. _____

B. Answer these questions.

1. What do the Qur'anic words 'entered the city' mean?

2. What kind of a king was Pharaoh? Explain in detail.

3. Why did Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) choose Madyan for Moosaa (عليه السلام) to travel?

4. How did Moosaa (عليه السلام) help the women?

5. How did Allah's help eventually come to Moosaa (عليه السلام)?

C. Refer to context

1. "This is of Satan's doing! Surely, he is a plain misleading enemy."

2. "You only want to be a tyrant in this land..."

3. "My Lord, save me from the unjust people."

D. Think-up

Who is Ibn Katheer?

Luqmaan's Advice to his Son
(*Surat Luqmaan*, 31: 12-19)

17

Surat Luqmaan was revealed in Makkah and owes its title to an ancient sage whose words of advice to his son form a major part of the *surah*. In fact, such advice is directed to all the believers, and that is why Almighty Allah mentions it in the Qur'an.

Sage Luqmaan

Very little is known of Luqmaan's life, but he was very well-known for the wisdom and the great knowledge Almighty Allah had granted him, as the Qur'an says, **"And indeed We bestowed upon Luqmaan wisdom."** Some scholars say that he was an Ethiopian slave who worked as a carpenter, and that he was a righteous servant but not a prophet.


وَلَقَدْ ءَاتَيْنَا لُقْمَٰنَ ٱلْحِكْمَةَ أَنِ ٱشْكُرْ لِلَّهِ ۚ وَمَن يَشْكُرْ فَإِنَّمَا
يَشْكُرُ لِنَفْسِهِۦ ۖ وَمَن كَفَرَ فَإِنَّ ٱللَّهَ غَنِىٌّ حَمِيدٌ ﴿١٢﴾ وَإِذْ قَالَ
لُقْمَٰنُ لِٱبْنِهِۦ وَهُوَ يَعِظُهُۥ يَٰبُنَىَّ لَا تُشْرِكْ بِٱللَّهِ ۖ إِنَّ ٱلشِّرْكَ
لَظُلْمٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿١٣﴾ وَوَصَّيْنَا ٱلْإِنسَٰنَ بِوَٰلِدَيْهِ حَمَلَتْهُ أُمُّهُۥ
وَهْنًا عَلَىٰ وَهْنٍ وَفِصَٰلُهُۥ فِى عَامَيْنِ أَنِ ٱشْكُرْ لِى وَلِوَٰلِدَيْكَ
إِلَىَّ ٱلْمَصِيرُ ﴿١٤﴾ وَإِن جَٰهَدَاكَ عَلَىٰٓ أَن تُشْرِكَ بِى مَا لَيْسَ
لَكَ بِهِۦ عِلْمٌ فَلَا تُطِعْهُمَا ۖ وَصَاحِبْهُمَا فِى ٱلدُّنْيَا مَعْرُوفًا ۖ
وَٱتَّبِعْ سَبِيلَ مَنْ أَنَابَ إِلَىَّ ۚ ثُمَّ إِلَىَّ مَرْجِعُكُمْ فَأُنَبِّئُكُم
بِمَا كُنتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٥﴾ يَٰبُنَىَّ إِنَّهَآ إِن تَكُ مِثْقَالَ حَبَّةٍ مِّنْ
خَرْدَلٍ فَتَكُن فِى صَخْرَةٍ أَوْ فِى ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ أَوْ فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ يَأْتِ
بِهَا ٱللَّهُ ۗ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ لَطِيفٌ خَبِيرٌ ﴿١٦﴾ يَٰبُنَىَّ أَقِمِ ٱلصَّلَوٰةَ وَأْمُرْ
بِٱلْمَعْرُوفِ وَٱنْهَ عَنِ ٱلْمُنكَرِ وَٱصْبِرْ عَلَىٰ مَآ أَصَابَكَ ۖ إِنَّ ذَٰلِكَ
مِنْ عَزْمِ ٱلْأُمُورِ ﴿١٧﴾ وَلَا تُصَعِّرْ خَدَّكَ لِلنَّاسِ وَلَا تَمْشِ فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ
مَرَحًا ۖ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ كُلَّ مُخْتَالٍ فَخُورٍ ﴿١٨﴾ وَٱقْصِدْ فِى مَشْيِكَ
وَٱغْضُضْ مِن صَوْتِكَ ۚ إِنَّ أَنكَرَ ٱلْأَصْوَٰتِ لَصَوْتُ ٱلْحَمِيرِ ﴿١٩﴾

Translation of the meanings of these verses (*aayaat*):

12. And indeed We bestowed upon Luqmaan wisdom [and said]: "Be thankful to Allah. And whoever is thankful is only thankful for his own benefit; but whoever chooses to be ungrateful, then Allah is free from all needs, worthy of all praise."
13. And when Luqmaan said to his son, admonishing him, "O my son! Do not associate anything with Allah [in worship]; for associating others with Allah [in worship] is a great wrong indeed!"
14. And We have enjoined upon man [to be good] to his parents: his mother bore him with strain upon strain, and in two years was his weaning. [So] be grateful to Me and to your parents. To Me is the final destination.
15. Yet should they endeavour to make you associate with Me [in worship] that of which you have no knowledge, then do not obey them [in this], but keep company with them in this world's life with kindness, and follow the path of those who turn to Me. Then to Me will be your return, and I will inform you of what you used to do.
16. "O my son! [continued Luqmaan] Indeed, if there be but the weight of a mustard-seed and it were [hidden] in a rock or anywhere in the heavens or in the earth, Allah will bring it forth, for Allah is All-Subtle, All-Aware.
17. "O my son! Establish regular prayer, enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong, and patiently bear whatever may befall you. This, indeed, is of the matters [that require] determination.
18. "And do not turn your cheek away [in contempt] towards people, nor walk haughtily on earth, for Allah does not love anyone who is self-deluded and boastful."
19. "And be moderate in your pace and lower your voice, for the most disagreeable of sounds is the braying of the donkey."

Explanation

On reflection, it would appear that in many respects, there is a striking relationship between *Surat al-'Asr* and the verses 12-19 of *Surat Luqmaan*. Though short and compact, both of these *surah*s are extremely rich in meaning relating to their respective themes. The same four preliminary and essential points of *Surat al-'Asr* find expression in *Surat Luqmaan* with

Primarily the subject matter of these verses is *hikmah*, or wisdom.

Surat al-'Asr affirms that each human being is at a loss, except those who engage in four activities. The first activity is holding the faith (*eemaan*). The word *eemaan* is often translated as 'belief', but *eemaan* (faith) includes not only intellectual acceptance of certain beliefs but also engagement in just actions. These actions include, among other things, (1) defending belief in the face of persecution or ridicule; (2) sharing wealth; (3) protecting those 'who are in need'; (4) respecting parents and performing *salaat*, the second activity explicitly mentioned in the above verses. The word *eemaan* has also underlying meanings of being secure or protected. In other words, to keep the faith alive by counselling each other to hold on to the truth and counselling each other to steadfastness is the teaching of the Qur'an.

Almighty Allah is free from all Needs, worthy of all Praise

Allah is not in need of praise and service from humanity; humanity is in need of praising and serving Allah.

What is thankfulness? What is its reward? The true meaning of thankfulness (*shukr*) is acknowledging the Giver's gift with humility. The Qur'an says, **"If you are grateful, I will give you more [favours]!"** (*Surat Ibraaheem*, 14:7)

The servant's thankfulness is, in reality, only to tell with the tongue and confirm in the heart the blessings of the Lord. Thankfulness means that you do not disobey Allah with what He has given you! This means it is not right to make use of any blessing of Allah Most High in order to disobey Him. In the simplest terms, thankfulness is the conscious awareness of the fact that you are incapable of thankfulness — not capable of thanking Allah enough. How can we thank Him when doing so is itself a blessing from among His gracious favours? The answer lies in following the example of the Prophet (ﷺ) who has taught us several supplications to express our gratitude to Allah. We should memorize them, comprehend their meaning, and practise them in our daily life. Remember that whoever is thankful is only thankful for the good of his soul. Those who choose to be ungrateful must remember that Allah the Almighty is free from all needs and wants.

Associating Others with Allah in Worship is a great Wrong

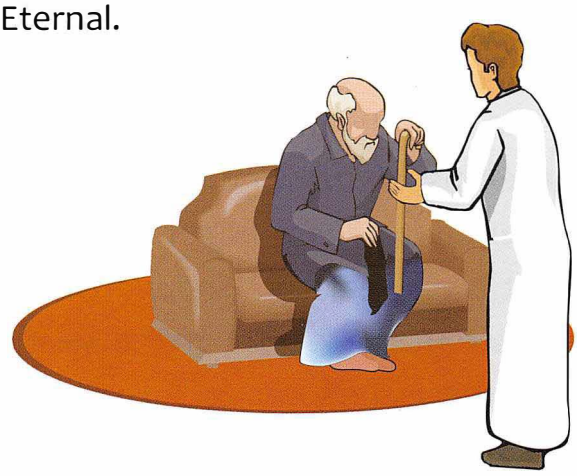
Throughout the Qur'an, *shirk*, or association of anything or anyone with Allah in worship is a cardinal sin, because it is the essential expression of

the heedlessness of the absolute Power of Allah. When someone tries to liken Allah to any created thing, or to suggest that other beings in the universe somehow share Allah's creative power, or have His knowledge or ability to guide or to forgive, then such a person is guilty of committing the sin of *shirk*.

Polytheism (*shirk*) is not merely the worship of idols. It is also polytheism to yield to your passionate desires. It is to equate with your Lord anything whatsoever besides Him. What is besides Him is other than He. So when you rely on anything other than Him, you are associating something else with Him.

Allah is beyond the world of matter. The idea of His somehow mingling with matter to become the father of a human being, or produce a being that is half human half divine is blasphemy. Those who believe Jesus (Prophet 'Eesaa عليه السلام) to be the Son of God and that there are really three gods in one (the so-called Father, Son and the Holy Spirit) are making a grave mistake.

Jesus was a prophet of Allah. In fact, a prophet cannot be God. No prophet ever made such a claim. Prophet 'Eesaa (عليه السلام) would have recoiled in disgust from the suggestion that he was God. Allah is Supreme. He is Alone. There is nothing that can rival Him. There is nothing remotely like Him. He Alone is the Creator. He is the Only Power behind the universe. He is the Sole source of its guidance. Being the sole Creator, Allah exists outside and beyond everything that He has created. Allah is outside time. Things, which are part of time, have beginnings and ends. Not so with Allah! He is the First and the Last. He is Eternal.



Respect for the Parents

Good treatment of one's elders, especially one's parents, is an obligation in Islam. In fact, it is indicative of special stress that the duty of respect for parents appears in the text (verse 14 above) next to the worship of Allah. Indeed, it is not just respect but cherishing kindness and humility to parents that is recommended. The verse enjoins duty towards one's parents and significantly enough, it is mentioned immediately after one's duty to Allah. Children are required to be obedient and respectful to their parents. They should do all they can to be of assistance to them.

A man came to the Prophet (ﷺ) and asked, " Allah's Messenger, who is most entitled to the best of my companionship among the people?" The Prophet (ﷺ) replied, "Your mother." He asked again, "Who next?" He replied, "Your mother." The man again asked, "Who next?" The Prophet (ﷺ) replied, "Your mother." The man then asked, "Who next?" The Prophet (ﷺ) replied, "Your father." (Al-Bukhaaree and Muslim)

In fact, the most beautiful word on the lips of mankind is the word 'mother'. It is a word full of hope and love. It is a sweet and kind word that comes from the depth of the heart. The mother is the source of love, mercy and sympathy. The mother is our consolation in sorrow, our hope in misery and our strength in weakness. The word 'mother' is hidden in our hearts. It rises to our lips in times of sorrow and happiness as the perfume comes from the heart of the rose and mingles with clear and cloudy air. He who loses his mother loses a pure soul who blesses and guards him constantly. He who loses his mother, a door of supplications closes down upon him.

Abu Hurayrah narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said, "May he be disgraced! May he be disgraced! May he be disgraced, he who finds his parents [in old age], either one of them or both, but does not enter Paradise [by not rendering due services to them]!" (Muslim)

Another verse of the Qur'an eloquently guides Muslims to the best way of treating their parents:

"And your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him, and that you be dutiful to your parents. If one or both of them attain old age in your life, do not say to them a word of disrespect, nor shout at them, but address them in terms of honour and lower to them the wing of submission and humility through mercy, and say, 'My Lord, bestow on them mercy as they brought me up when I was young.'" (*Surat al-Israa'*, 17:23-24)

We should remember, however, that obedience to Allah comes first. If the parents order the children to do something which Allah has forbidden, then the children should obey Allah and not the parents. They should, however, politely explain to their parents that they cannot obey them in doing something which Allah has forbidden but should still continue to show them respect and kindness.

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said, "The father is one of the splendid doors to Paradise. If you wish, you may pull it down, or if you wish, you may preserve it." (A fragment of a *hadeeth* reported at-Tirmidhee on the authority of Abud-Dardaa')

Some of the most unpleasant features of the secular western lifestyle include, among other things, its worship of youth and its indifference to the elderly. It is common practice in western societies that the elderly are sent to old-people's homes where they live and are cared for as their own children ignore them and arrogantly prefer to 'live their own lives in peace'. In fact, Islam warns against such a terrible practice and urges its followers to show utmost respect to the parents, regardless of religion, physical condition or social status.

"To Me is the final destination"

This part of the *aayah* is very significant as it cautions us against committing acts of disobedience and reminds us that one day we will die and return to Almighty Allah for judgment.

Indeed, our time on earth will certainly be over one day. Even the entire universe will come to an end. The resurrection of the body will come about through the almighty Power of Allah who has no difficulty whatsoever in creating us out of nothing, let alone resurrecting us from the dead. He will give us life again, not to live on earth again, but rather to stand before Him for judgment and then He will inform us of what we used to do on earth.

Preparing Now for Then

The true concept of life is that Allah the Almighty created us and we will surely return to Him. We are all on a journey towards our final abode: Hell or Paradise, depending on what type of actions we have done in this world. When, how and where we will die is Allah's secret. We do not know how much longer we have to live. We, however, do know that we must always be ready to die. In other words, we have to think of our afterlife more than we think of the present life, which is rather fleeing! Therefore, we must work hard to please Allah, follow in the footsteps of the Prophet (ﷺ) in all aspects of life. This does not mean, however, that we give up our jobs and withdraw from social life. We also need to work for this life. 'Ali ibn Abee Taalib (رضي الله عنه) once said, "Work for your present life as though you are going to live forever, and work for your hereafter as though you are going to die tomorrow."

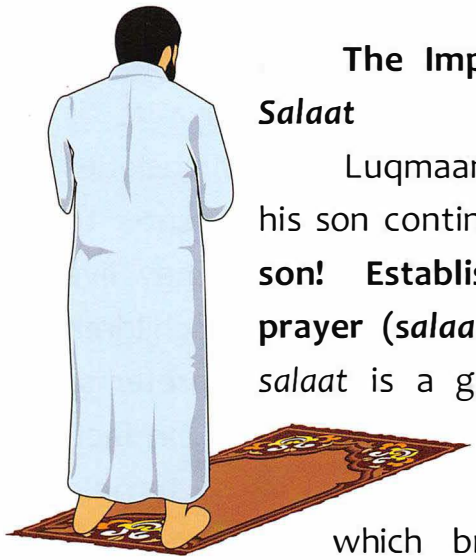
Allah is All-Subtle, All-Aware

Verse 16 draws our attention to some of Allah's lofty attributes. The verse is very beautiful and inspiring. *Eemaan* is not a mere verbal confession. It also means making Allah the centre of life and thus direct all acts of worship to Him alone. This encourages us to establish a deep and

strong relationship with Him as the Creator, and only Lord and Master. Holding fast to this relationship provides all the strength we need to walk on the Straight Path.

In fact, we can deepen this relationship by pondering over His Attributes. The two divine attributes mentioned here are easy to remember: Allah's knowledge and power extends to everything in the heavens and on earth. His knowledge extends to what is concealed and beyond what is hidden. He knows and understands the hidden conscience. He knows secret thoughts. He knows the evil intentions and ambitious aspirations. He is All-Aware of the wicked temptations and motions. He knows the blink and the wink.

He is subtly aware of the click in the throat as well as everything which is too subtle for us to identify and too sublime for us to describe. It does not matter whether they have already happened or have yet to come into being. Even if a wrong action or a sin is equal to the size of a mustard-seed, Allah will bring it forth on the Day of Judgment, and everyone will be rewarded or punished for their actions. Nothing escapes His Absolute Knowledge. This understanding encourages us to be aware all the time that He knows everything about us and prompt us to do good, which is only good for us and our fellow human beings.



The Importance of *Salaat*

Luqmaan's advice to his son continues: **"O my son! Establish regular prayer (*salaat*)."** Indeed, *salaat* is a great act of worship, or *'ibaadah*, which brings those who properly observe it at the stated times closer to Almighty Allah. In fact, *salaat* is obligatory on every believer and it will be the first act about which he will be questioned on the Day of Judgment. The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "The first deed about which a person will be called to account on the Day of Judgment will be *salaat*. If it is in order, he will be successful and saved, but if it is not, then he will be ruined and lost." (At-Tirmidhee)

Salaat purifies the soul and qualifies the servant for salvation in this life and in the hereafter. It also keeps him away from immorality and doing evil deeds. Those who regularly offer it establish a deep relationship with their Lord. The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "When one of you offers *salaat*, he actually speaks confidently to his Lord." (Al-Bukhaaree and Muslim)

Salaat is an important source of strength in times of hardship and the Qur'an enjoins us to seek help in patience and in *salaat*. Through it Allah will wipe away the sins of those who establish it regularly with all its requirements, and it will also be a light, proof and deliverance on the Day of Judgment for them.

The Obligation of Commanding Good and Forbidding Evil

Luqmaan further advises his son, **"Enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong, and patiently bear whatever may befall you. This, indeed, is of the matters [that require] determination."**

The Prophet (ﷺ) once said, "Whoever sees something evil should change it with his hand; if he cannot do so, then with his tongue; and if he cannot do even that, then in his heart; and that is the weakest degree of faith." (Muslim)

Commanding good and forbidding evil is one of the major themes of the Glorious Qur'an. This is presented as an individual responsibility as well as a collective obligation on the whole *ummah*. The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "Convey [to others what I teach you] even if it is a single verse (*aayah*)." On the occasion of his last *Hajj*, he told the assembled companions to convey his message to those who were not present. Thus we see from the lives of his companions that they conveyed the message to the farthest corners of the world. Indeed, *dawah* — calling people to Islam — is a long process which requires patience and perseverance.

Hence, if someone witnesses an evil action, which violates the commands of Allah, it is up to that individual to prevent or denounce it to the extent of his or her capability. This should, of course, be done gently and with respect for people's feelings. There is a story that Imam al-Husayn ibn 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) once saw a man performing his *wudhoo'* incorrectly. Instead of telling him directly, which would have embarrassed him, the Imam simply told him that he himself was going to do *wudhoo'* and would like him to see whether or not he was doing it properly. When the man saw the Imam doing *wudhoo'*, he realized that *he* had been mistaken, and he started doing it correctly from then on.

Bearing patiently whatever misfortunes befall us in this world is a good characteristic that the believers should have. When we realise that whatever befalls us comes from Allah and only happens because of His divine will, we feel reassured because we know that He only decrees what is good for us. The Prophet (ﷺ) once said, "How wonderful the case of the believer is! There is good for him in

everything, and this is only the case of a believer. If prosperity attends him, he expresses gratitude to Allah and that is good for him; and if adversity befalls him, he endures it patiently, and that is also good for him." (Muslim)

Allah does not Love those who are Proud and Boastful

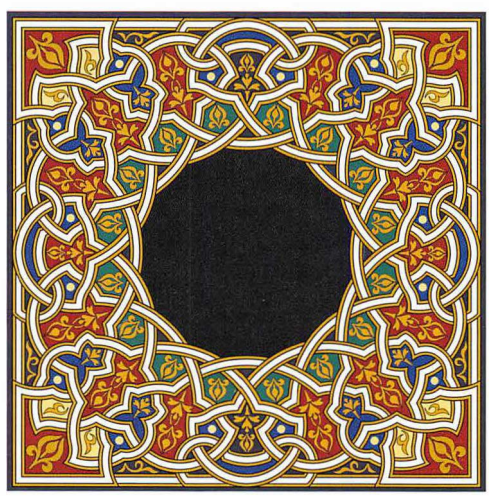
Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said, "Whoever has an atom's weight of pride in his heart will not enter Paradise." Someone said, "How about a person who likes to wear beautiful clothes and fine shoes?" The Prophet (ﷺ) replied, "Allah is Most Beautiful and likes beauty. Indeed, pride means rejecting the truth and looking down on other people." (Muslim)

He (ﷺ) also said, "On the Day of Judgment, Allah will not look at him who trails his garment out of arrogance." (Al-Bukhaaree and Muslim)

The believers are to wear a cheerful expression on their faces and not to turn their faces away when they speak to people. They should not show off and admire themselves, feeling that they are better than others.

The Command to be Moderate in one's Pace and to lower one's Voice

Luqmaan goes on advising his son to walk in a moderate manner and not to raise his voice unnecessarily. Mujaahid and other scholars said about the verse, **"The most disagreeable of all sounds is the braying of the donkey",** "The ugliest of voices is that of the donkey; that is when a person raises his voice, the resulting voice is like that of the donkey in its loudness. Moreover, this is hateful to Allah. In fact, likening a loud voice to that of a donkey implies that it is extremely blameworthy."



Exercises

A. Fill in the blanks.

1. The subject matter of these verses is _____.
2. _____ is a cardinal sin.
3. The most beautiful word on the all of mankind is _____.
4. We are on a journey towards our final _____.
5. The weakest degree of faith is _____.
6. *Eemaan* is not a mere _____ confession.
7. Whoever has pride will never enter _____.

B. State whether these statements are true (T) or false (F).

1. Luqmaan was a prophet. _____
2. Allah is beyond the world of matter. _____
3. Disobedience to parents is a minor sin. _____
4. We must disobey our parents if they tell us to disobey Allah. _____
5. We should enjoin Allah's commands without embarrassing anyone. _____
6. If our parents tell us to do something bad, we should be rude to them. _____

C. Answer these questions.

1. The word '*eemaan*' is often translated as 'belief'. But it is a very comprehensive word. Explain.

2. In what respects is *Surat Luqmaan* similar to *Surat al-'Asr*?

3. What does thankfulness mean? How should we show our thankfulness to Allah?

4. Why is association others with Allah in worship a major sin?

5. Polytheism is not merely the worship of idols. Explain.

6. Is Allah time-bound?

7. State briefly the importance of the mother in our lives.

8. What solution does Islam have for the issue of 'old people's homes'?

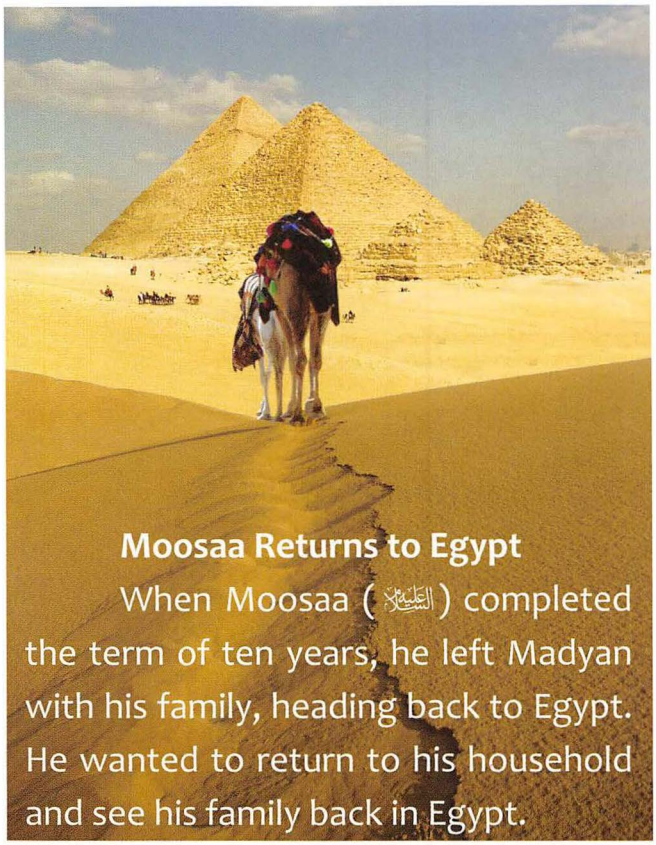
9. Mention a few of the things we learn from the attributes of Allah.

10. Mention some of the benefits of *salaat*.

11. How important is commanding good and forbidding evil?

12. What is the true meaning of pride?

Prophet Moosaa (ﷺ) (3)



Moosaa Returns to Egypt

When Moosaa (ﷺ) completed the term of ten years, he left Madyan with his family, heading back to Egypt. He wanted to return to his household and see his family back in Egypt.

As the journey happened in a very dark and cold night, they lost their way in the desert. Moosaa (ﷺ) grew worried. What would they do if they could not find a fire to warm themselves or some light to guide them?

While Moosaa (ﷺ) was wondering about, he spotted a fire in the distance in the direction of Mount Toor. He told his family, **"Wait here. I perceive a fire far away; perhaps I may bring you from there some information or at least a burning brand of fire, so that you might warm yourselves."** (*Surat al-Qasas*, 28: 29) Moosaa (ﷺ) went towards the fire to which he was drawn by a powerful longing.

But when he came close to it, he found it burning brightly in a green thorny tree. Moosaa (ﷺ) was in a valley called Tuwaa and was facing the *qiblah*. The tree was on his right side from the western direction. Then his Lord called him out in this valley. First he commanded him to take off his shoes to show respect to that blessed place. Then Allah spoke to him, saying: **"O Moses! Indeed, it is I — Allah, the Exalted in Might, the Wise."** (*Surat an-Naml*, 27:9) and **"Indeed, I am Allah; there is no god [worthy of worship] but I. So worship Me and establish prayer to remember Me."** (*Surat Taa Haa*, 20: 14)

Then He informed him that the Day of Judgment is inevitably going to happen so that **"everyone may be judged in accordance with what for which they strive."** (*Surat Taa Haa*, 20: 15)

Almighty Allah supports Moosaa (ﷺ) with Miracles and Signs

Moosaa (ﷺ) had a staff which he used for various purposes. Allah Most High asked, "What is in your right hand, O Moosaa? Moosaa (ﷺ) replied,

"This is my staff; I lean on it, with it I beat down leaves to feed my sheep and in it I have other uses."

Allah Most High said to him, "Throw it down, O Moosaa!"

But when Moosaa (عليه السلام) threw it down, it turned into a slithering snake, and he drew back in terror. Allah Most High then reassured him, "Draw near and have no fear. You are perfectly secure. Take hold of it, and fear not. We shall restore it to its former state." Moosaa (عليه السلام) obeyed. When Moosaa (عليه السلام) took hold of it, it turned back into a staff. Allah then gave Moosaa (عليه السلام) a second sign. He said to him, **"Place your hand into your bosom, it will come out shining white without stain [or harm]. And draw your hand close to your side [to guard] against fear. These are two signs (*burhaanaan*) from your Lord to Pharaoh and his chiefs; for truly they are a rebellious and wicked people."** (*Surat al-Qasas*, 28: 32)

Moosaa's hand would become white as bright as the sun, but this would happen without causing him any harm. The word used by the Qur'an in this context is '*baidhaa*", which means shining white. Thus as soon as Moosaa (عليه السلام) took out his hand from his bosom, the whole court of Pharaoh would become radiant as though the sun had risen.

The Qur'an says, **"Now put your hand into your bosom, it will come forth shining white, without blemish. [These are two of the] nine Signs to be carried to *Firawn* and his people. They are surely a wicked people."** (*Surat An-Naml* 27: 12)

In addition to these, Moosaa (عليه السلام) was given seven other clear signs, or miracles. In *Surat al-'Araaf*, these miracles are mentioned with some detail:

(1) The staff which would turn into a snake,
(2) Moosaa's hand which would shine brightly without any harm when he took it out of his bosom,
(3) the years of draught or shortage of water,
(4) short crops,
(5) epidemics among men and beasts,
(6) locusts swarming all over the country,
(7) lice pestering humans and animals,
(8) a storm of frogs, and
(9) water turning into blood.

Almighty Allah makes Moosaa's Duty clear to him

Allah then commanded Moosaa (عليه السلام) to begin the task for which he had been created. *Fir'awn* (Pharaoh) was very arrogant and rejected Allah's

Signs. In fact, he and his chiefs spread mischief and corruption in the land. As Allah does not like his slaves to refuse to believe in Him and does not like corruption in the land, He Commanded Moosaa ( ) to go to Pharaoh and his subjects, for **"they are a rebellious and wicked people."** (*Surat al-Qasas*, 28: 32)

Moosaa ( ) said, **"**My Lord! I have killed one of them, and I fear that they will kill me. And my brother Aaron is more eloquent in speech than me, so send him with me so that he may support me. I fear they will reject me."

Almighty Allah reassured him again: "We will certainly strengthen your arm with your brother, and We shall give you both such an authority that they will not be able to harm you. So by Our Signs you and whoever follows you shall be the victors."

How could Moosaa ( ) return to Egypt and confront the tyrant? He had killed a Coptic Egyptian before and now they might take revenge for him and so they would kill Moosaa ( ). Moreover, he was well-known to the guards and the people of the palace.

Moosaa ( ) prayed that he might be given the inner strength and courage needed to shoulder his responsibilities as a prophet, for his task called for enormous courage, fortitude and fearlessness. He was aware of not being eloquent. In fact, it was because of the impediment in his speech that *Firawn* denounced him, saying that he could scarcely express himself clearly. (*Surat az-Zukhruf*, 43:52)

He also feared that if he had to speak in the course of his discharging duties as a prophet, he would perhaps be overcome by the impediment in his speech. Therefore, he prayed that Allah might endow him with eloquence that he might express himself effectively. He also prayed to Allah to appoint his brother Haaroon as his helper. Haaroon ( ) was more eloquent in speech than Moosaa ( ).

Moosaa ( ) prays to Allah for Assistance

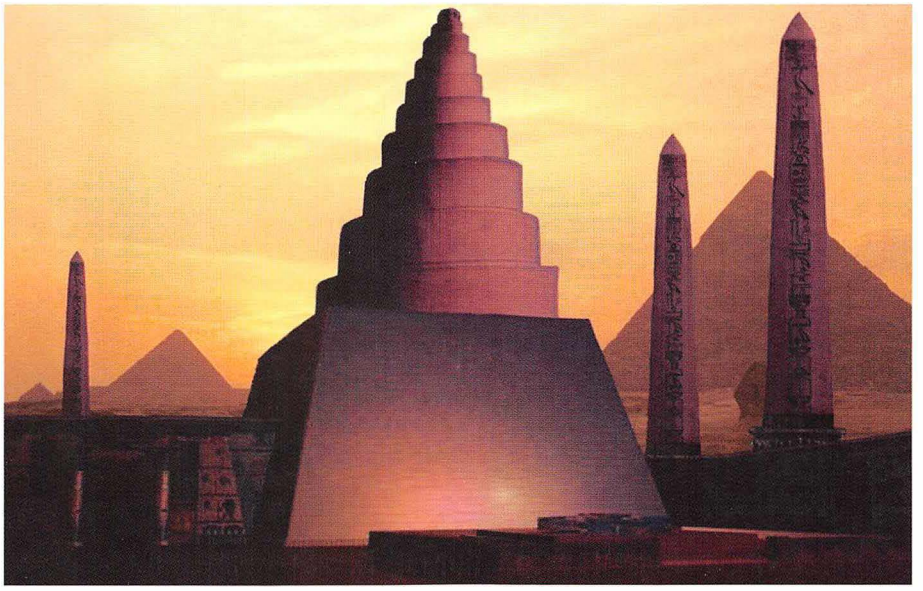
Moosaa ( ) prayed, **"O my Lord! Expand my chest, make my task easier for me and remove the impediment from my speech so they may understand what I say. And give me a helper from my family, Haaroon my brother; add to my strength through him, and make him share my task so that we may abundantly glorify You and frequently remember You. Surely, You are ever Seeing of us."** (*Surat Taa Haa*, 20: -29-35)

In all Moosaa ( ) made eight requests, and he was granted them all. Allah's true servants should always be prepared to help others when asked.

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) never said 'no' to anyone who asked him for something. When he did not have anything to give, he promised he would give it whenever he had it.

Allah said to Moosaa (عليه السلام), "You are granted all that you have asked for O Moosaa!" (*Surat Taa Haa,* 20: 36)

The family of 'Imraan — Moosaa's father — already had two children before Moosaa's birth: a daughter and a son named Haaroon. Haaroon was probably born before the tyrant Pharaoh's decree to have all the male infants of Israa'eel killed had come into effect, and so he survived.



Allah Commands Moosaa and his Brother to go to *Fir'awn*

Allah Commanded, "Go, both of you, to Pharaoh, for he has transgressed all bounds; but speak to him mildly so that he might take warning or fear [Allah]." They (Moosaa (عليه السلام) and Haaroon) said, "We are afraid that he might hasten [punishment] against us or transgress all bounds."

Almighty Allah said, "Have no fear, for I am with you; I hear and see [everything]. So go to him and say, 'Truly, we are messengers sent by your Lord. So let the Children of Israel go with us and do not persecute them. We have come to you with a Sign from your Lord, and peace be upon all those who follow guidance. Indeed, it has been revealed to us that punishment is for those who reject [the truth] and turn away [from it].'" (*Surat Taa Haa,* 20: 42-47)

Exercises

A. Fill in the blanks.

1. Moosaa (عليه السلام) travelled to _____ after he left Madyan.
2. Moosaa (عليه السلام) prayed to Allah to appoint _____ as his helper.
3. _____ was born before the Pharaoh's decree to have all male infants killed had come into effect.

B. Answer the following questions.

1. What drew Moosaa (عليه السلام) towards the fire?

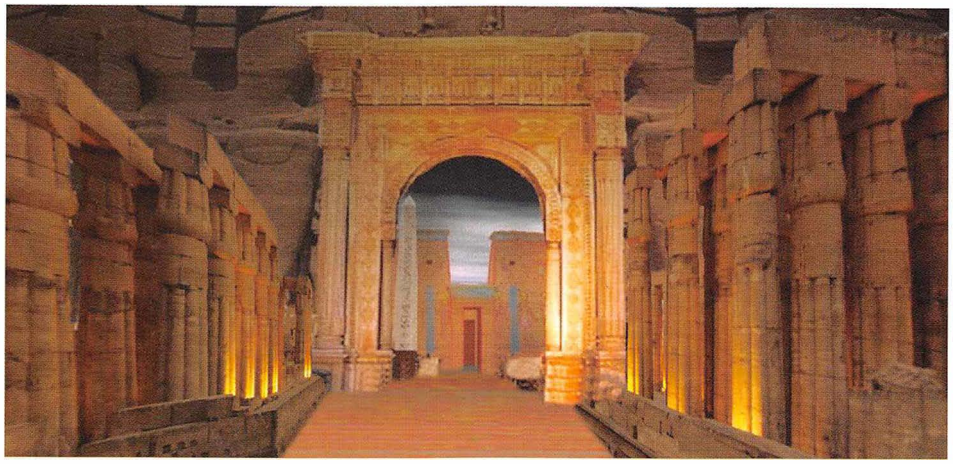
2. Why was Moosaa (عليه السلام) asked to take off his shoes?

3. What are the nine signs Allah gave to Moosaa (عليه السلام)?

4. What was the purpose of Moosaa's creation?

Prophet Moosaa (عليه السلام) (4)

19



Moosaa (عليه السلام) and Haaroon Go to the Court of Pharaoh

Obeying Allah's Command, Moosaa (عليه السلام) and Haaroon (عليه السلام) went to Pharaoh and stood in his Council, calling him to Allah and conveying to him Allah's Message. They conveyed to him the purpose of their mission, namely to invite him and his people to worship Allah alone and to release the Children of Israa'eel and let them go.

The tyrant Pharaoh became angry at Moosaa's boldness and said with contempt and arrogance, "Did we not bring you up among us when you were a child and did you not stay in our midst many years of your life? And then you committed that deed of yours (that is Moosaa's unintentional killing of a Coptic Egyptian) [which you know] you did, and you are very ungrateful indeed."

Moosaa (عليه السلام) replied, "I committed that act when I was in error (i.e. ignorant). Then I fled for fear of you, but my Lord bestowed wisdom and knowledge and understanding on me and made me one of the messengers. And as for that favour of which you so tauntingly remind me – was it not due to your having enslaved the Children of Israa'eel?"

Moosaa (عليه السلام) did not get angry, nor did he deny Pharaoh's favours. He spoke plainly and with dignity. He said, "It is true that you brought me up and you were kind to me, but you do not want to consider why I fell into your hands. If you had not given the command for the baby-boys of Banu Israa'eel to be killed, my mother would not have put me into the River Nile, and I would not have come into your hands. You treated all my people as if

they were beasts of burden. You inflicted terrible punishment on them. What good can you claim for yourself for bringing up one child of Banu Israa'eel? You should realize that it also came about through ignorance and error!"

Calling to Allah

Pharaoh was dumbfounded and speechless. He tried to conceal his shock and his embarrassment by asking, "And what is the Lord of the worlds?"

Moosaa (عليه السلام) replied, "The Lord of the heavens and the earth and all that is between them, if you were only to believe."

Pharaoh said to those around him, "Did you hear what he said?"

Moosaa (عليه السلام) continued, "He is your Lord, too, as well as the Lord of your forefathers of old."

Pharaoh exclaimed, "Truly, this messenger of yours who has been sent to you is simply mad." Moosaa (عليه السلام) said, "He is the Lord of the East and the West and all between them, if you only had any understanding."

That is: "I am being called a mad man, but if you have any sense at all, you should seriously consider who the true Lord is: Pharaoh who is ruling over a small part of the earth or Almighty Allah Who is the Lord and Master of the East and the West? As far as I am concerned, I accept only Allah Who is the Lord and Master of the East and the West, and it is on His behalf that I am conveying this command to one of His creatures."

The Egyptians worshipped many false gods. Pharaoh himself had been raised to the status of godhead in his capacity as the incarnation of Ra, the so-called sun god. He considered himself as the lord and master of Egypt where his command was executed, and where he was considered to have full authority. His people considered themselves bound to obey him and even considered him to be in a position to decide what was good and bad for them! He would arrogantly and deceivingly say to his people, **"Does the kingdom of Egypt not belong to me, and [witness] these streams flowing underneath my [palace]?"** (*Surat az-Zukhruf*, 43: 51)

Pharaoh was very angry by Moosaa's reply. He decided to provoke his courtiers against him and distract Moosaa (عليه السلام) from his argument that was so hard for him. He said, "And what of the past generations?" Pharaoh here points out that if it was Allah, as Moosaa (عليه السلام) claimed, Who created everything to perfection and Who guided it to its role, and if there really was no lord other than Allah, then this clearly meant that the forefathers who had worshipped gods

other than Allah were in error. Were they all – the respectable ancestors – dumb, stupid people? Pharaoh thought he had asked a very tricky question.

Moosaa (عليه السلام) replied, **"Its knowledge is with my Lord, duly recorded in a book, My Lord does not err, nor does He forget."** (*Surat Taa Haa*, 20: 52)

Moosaa's reply was full of wisdom. It defeated Pharaoh's evil designs!

The record of all the acts the forefathers have committed during their lives was with Allah. He knows all that they did. He is well aware of their intentions behind those actions, for nothing escapes Allah's Sight nor does anything fade from His knowledge. It is for Allah, and Allah Alone, to judge them. People should be concerned, instead, with themselves. They should examine their own attitude to life. They should consider what kind of ultimate fate they are likely to meet as a result.

Of the two brothers, Moosaa (عليه السلام) was the main person entrusted with the task of expounding the truth, and that was why Pharaoh addressed Moosaa (عليه السلام) rather than Haaroon. Haaroon (عليه السلام) was three years Moosaa's senior, and was placed under the direction of Prophet Moosaa to assist him in his mission.

Moosaa (عليه السلام) was a prophet. He possessed a light from his Lord, and so he went on to say what the Pharaoh had been trying to avoid hearing and preventing others from hearing it as well. Moosaa (عليه السلام) argued, **"My Lord does not err, nor does He forget. It is He who has made the earth like a carpet spread out [for you], and has traced out for you ways and means, and it is He who sends down water from the sky, with it We have produced diverse pairs of plants, each separate from the others."** (*Surat Taa Haa*, 20: 52-53)

Pharaoh was confused. He did not know what to say. He tried to threaten Moosaa (عليه السلام), "Indeed, if you take any god other than me, I will certainly throw you into prison."

Because Pharaoh was considered to be a god in his own right, Moosaa's challenge meant a challenge to the prevalent religious system as a whole.

Prophet Moosaa's Miracles

Pharaoh had thrown the challenge. Moosaa (عليه السلام) argued, "Even if I were to bring a clear sign to you?"

Moosaa's argument meant, "Even if I show you a convincing sign which proves that I am the messenger of Allah, the Lord of all the worlds, will you still refuse to accept my word and send me to prison?"

Pharaoh said, "Show it then if you are truthful at all."

No sooner had Pharaoh said this that Moosaa (عليه السلام) threw down his rod, and behold! It was a serpent, plainly visible. And he drew out his hand, and it appeared shining white to the beholders.

Pharaoh then said to the chiefs around him, "Truly this is indeed a sorcerer of great knowledge, who wants to drive you out of your land by his sorcery. What, then, do you advise?"

These were the two dazzling signs with which Allah had sent Moosaa and Haaroon to the Pharaoh. Pharaoh, however, remained stubborn. He did not change his ways. He did not stop calling himself a lord and a god. He claimed that what Moosaa (عليه السلام) showed was nothing but a sleight of hand — a trick of magic.

But Pharaoh was shaken. He had previously called Moosaa (عليه السلام) a madman because of his claim to be a messenger and his demand that the Children of Israa'eel be permitted to leave Egypt with him. He had also threatened Moosaa (عليه السلام) with imprisonment. But no sooner had he seen these two signs than he was struck with awe. He dreaded the thought of losing his kingdom. He, therefore, lost his self-control and spoke with nervousness before his servants, and the courtiers. In a way he was saying, "My reason has forsaken me, tell me what to do."

The people in the court agreed, "This is a manifest sorcerer."

Moosaa (عليه السلام) said, **"Do you say [this] about the truth after it has come to you? Can this be sorcery? But sorcerers will never prosper."** (*Surat Yoonus*, 10: 77)

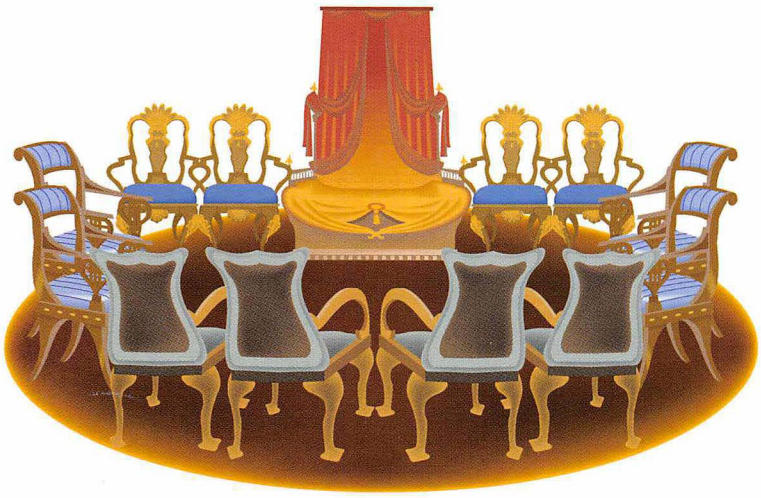
Truth or Sorcery?

Moosaa's first argument expresses horror that the truth is described as sorcery. The second expresses his amazement that anyone should actually say it is so. Sorcery does not aim to provide guidance to people. It does not include any idea about Allah Most High and His relationship with His servants. It cannot outline a code of life. Allah's Message is not sorcery. Sorcerers' work is all false. They play tricks on people's imagination. Hence, they cannot be successful.

At this point, the nobles in the court of the Pharaoh supported him. They revealed their true motives for rejecting the truth. They said, **"Have you come to turn us away from the ways we found our forefathers following so that the two of you might become supreme in the land?"** (*Surat Yoonus*, 10: 78) They feared that the new call would destroy their inherited

beliefs, which formed the foundation of their social and economic systems. They feared that they would lose their power.

Then Pharaoh tried to alarm the council about Moosaa (), **"His plan is to get you out of your land by his sorcery. What do you command then?"** (*Surat ash-Shu'araa'*, 26: 35)



The Council's Advice to Pharaoh

The Council suggested to the Pharaoh that he should call the best magicians in his kingdom so that they would use their sorcery against Moosaa ( ). The tyrant agreed. In fact, accusing Moosaa () of sorcery sounded good to Pharaoh and his nobles. They felt that they could make their accusation stick in people's minds. The signs that Moosaa ( ) exhibited did not seem much different from the kind of sorcery they knew and practised. They hoped that the challenge would show Moosaa ( ) up to be no more than a highly skilled sorcerer.

Pharaoh commanded, **"Bring me every sorcerer of great knowledge."** (*Surat Yoonus*, 10:79) He continued, **"We shall indeed produce a magic similar to it. Therefore appoint between us a time that we shall not fail to keep — neither we nor you — in a place where both will have even chances."** (*Surat Taa Haa*, 20: 58)

The Day of Festival Fixed for the Tryst

Moosaa () answered, "Your tryst will be the day of the festival, and let the people be assembled when the sun is well up." (*Surat Taa Haa* 20: 59)

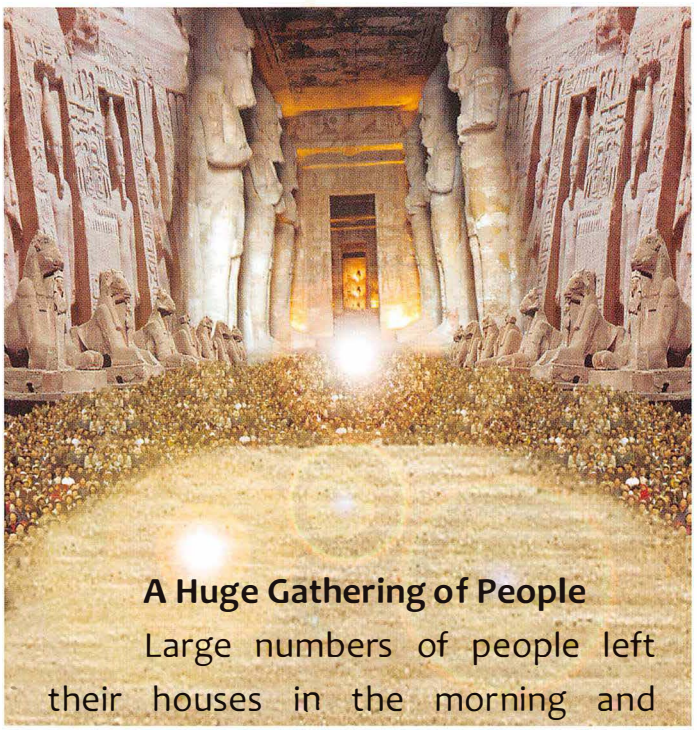
Pharaoh withdrew with his counsellors and decided upon the evil scheme which he would pursue. He decided upon his artful scheme of summoning all the greatest sorcerers of Egypt.

Moosaa ( ) chose the great day of the Temple Festival (literally, the Day of Adornment: *Yawm az-Zeenah*) for this contest when the streets were decorated so that a large number of people coming to the festival from all parts of the country could witness the contest. He decided that time for the contest would be after sunrise to ensure that everyone would witness the truth in broad daylight.

Pharaoh believed that his magicians would be able to nullify the impression created in the minds of his people by Moosaa's miracles.

Pharaoh and his courtiers considered this encounter to be of great importance. Messengers were sent to all parts of the country to summon all the skilled magicians to the capital. Likewise, efforts were made to attract the maximum number of people in order that they might witness the magicians' feats. Moreover, the arrogant Pharaoh and his courtiers publicly claimed that the survival of their faith would depend on the performance of these magicians. If they were victorious, their faith would prevail; if not, Moosaa ( ) would triumph.

In fact, the news of Moosaa's miracles had reached the common people across the country. Pharaoh was afraid that the masses might have been influenced by it. He wanted to prove to them that the change of the staff into a snake amounted to absolutely nothing, that each one of his magicians could perform a similar feat. Moosaa's miracles had produced a great impact on people. The faith of the courtiers had begun to weaken, as did the faith of those who had merely heard about them. The only thing that could possibly save their faith was for the Egyptian magicians to come with something on a par with Moosaa's performance. Pharaoh and his nobles, therefore, looked upon the forthcoming contest as an event of great significance. It was their messengers and agents who went around telling people that if the magicians won the day, they would be secure from Moosaa's religion. If not, their religion would be in trouble and doomed.



A Huge Gathering of People

Large numbers of people left their houses in the morning and walked to the square in throngs. There was a huge gathering of people. All the talk was of sorcery and the names of famous sorcerers.

The sorcerers came forward in all their pride and arrogance. They were clothed in colourful garments carrying their rods and ropes. They were rejoicing for this was the day of their skill; today the king would witness their stunning tricks, and everyone else would see their excellence!

When all the sorcerers arrived, they asked Pharaoh, "Is there a reward for us if we win?"

He answered, **"Yes, and more, for you will be in that case be [raised to posts] among those who are near and dear to me."** (26: 42) This was the highest reward the king could give them. Not just money, but also an esteemed position at the court.

The Difference between a Prophet and a Magician

The truth is the truth. It cannot be sorcery or magic. Sorcery does not aim at providing guidance to people. It does not include a faith or a clear idea about Allah, the True Creator who alone deserves to be worshipped! Indeed, sorcery cannot be confused with Allah's Message given to His Prophets. Sorcerers' work is all false, and thus they cannot be successful.

A Marvellous Sight

Then the people witnessed a marvellous sight. The sorcerers gathered from every corner of the kingdom. Moosaa ( ) said to the magicians, "Throw down whatever you want to throw." So they threw their staffs and their ropes, and said, "By the might of Pharaoh, it is we who will certainly win." The staffs and the ropes appeared to move towards Moosaa ( ) as if they were snakes. They enchanted the eyes of the people. They struck them with awe and produced a mighty sorcery. Suddenly it appeared to Moosaa ( ), owing to their magic, as if their ropes and staffs were running rapidly.

The people saw a marvellous sight. There were serpents slithering in the square. Frightened, they drew back with shouts of 'serpents, serpents'. Women screamed in alarm. Children screamed fearfully. The cries of 'snakes, snakes' filled the air. Moosaa ( ) saw the same thing that the people saw. He was amazed at the sight. His heart was filled with fear. (20: 67) He felt as if hundreds of snakes were speeding towards him.

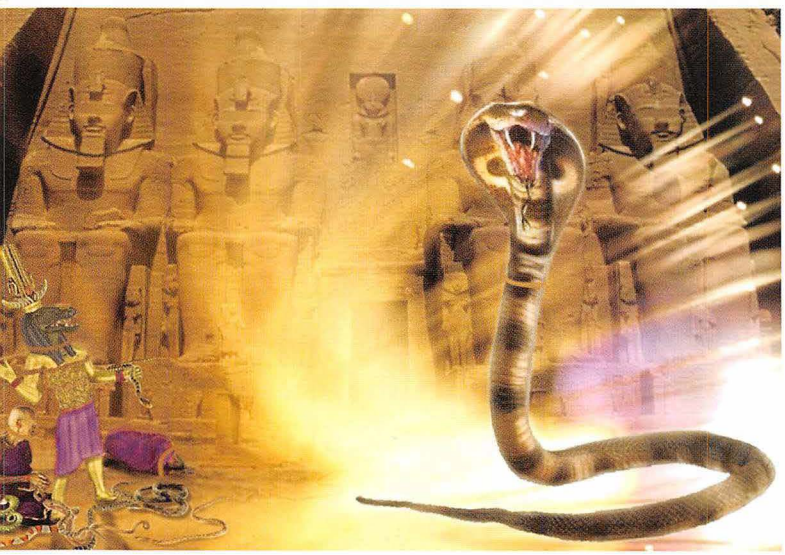
There is nothing, however, strange about the whole thing that such a spectacle would have stunned Moosaa ( ) for a moment. The feat of the magicians was mostly based on mass-hallucination. They had cast a spell on peoples' eyes.

Allah Most High revealed to Moosaa ( ), **"Have no fear, for it is you who will prevail. And throw down what is in your right hand. It will swallow up all that they have faked. What they have faked is only a sorcerer's trick, and the sorcerer never succeeds."** (*Surat Taa Haa*, 20:69-70)

Moosaa ( ) declared to the magicians, **"What you have brought is mere sorcery, which Allah will certainly bring to nothing. Allah does not further the work of those who**

make mischief. By His Words, Allah proves and establishes the truth, however much the sinners may hate it." (*Surat Yoonus*, 10:81-82)

When Moosaa (عليه السلام) said, **"What you have brought is mere sorcery,"** he was actually replying to the accusation levelled against him. There is no real substance to sorcery. It is all tricks and deception that dazzles and bewitches people. It has no higher call. It is far from constructive. It builds nothing in the community. What Moosaa (عليه السلام) had brought was a real miracle given to him by Allah Most High. Therefore, this statement of his shows his great trust in his Lord, Who will never allow sorcery, which is wicked, to score any real success.



Moosaa (عليه السلام) threw down his staff, and behold, it straightaway swallowed up all the falsehood which they were faking. The truth came to pass and what they were doing was proved false. (26:45)

The magicians could hardly believe what they saw. What is happening here? We know what sorcery is. We know what magic is based on. We know sorcery in all its forms. We are the skilled masters of the art. But this does not belong to sorcery! Had it been witchcraft, we could have defeated it with sorcery, confronting skill with skill, artifice with artifice. Our sorcery vanishes in its face. It melts away as dew melts under the sun. Where does it come from? It must be from Allah, the True Creator who must have given support to Moosaa!

The sorcerers were convinced that Moosaa (عليه السلام) was a prophet. Allah had given him miracles. They fell down prostrate in adoration and said, **"We believe in the Lord of all the worlds; The Lord of Moosaa and Haaroon."** (26:47-48)

Pharaoh's Anger and Threat

The tyrant Egyptian king became wild with rage. He sprang to his feet and sat down again and again. He was feeble with anger. The very thing he dreaded had happened. He had brought the highly skilled magicians to defeat Moosaa (عليه السلام), but the magicians had become his followers. The people also now believed in Moosaa (عليه السلام).

Pharaoh said, "Have you come to believe in him before I have given you permission? Indeed, he must be

your master who has taught you magic. But in no time you will come to know my revenge. Most certainly, I will cut off your hands and your feet on opposite sides and I will crucify you all."

Pharaoh had himself witnessed the miracles. His own magicians had testified that Moosaa's acts were genuine miracles. Despite this, Pharaoh rejected the truth and arrogantly insisted on branding these acts as no more than feats of magic. As soon as he realized that he had lost the contest, he tried to give events a political twist. This he did by spelling out that the sorcerers had conspired with Moosaa (عليه السلام) so as to deprive him of his kingdom. Thus, Pharaoh tried to convince the common folk that the religious conversion of the magicians was not the result of the miracles they had witnessed; rather it was of a deal they had struck with Moosaa (عليه السلام) even before the contest began. They had hatched a plot with the intent of seizing power in the land and of reaping the advantages brought about by a changing political situation.

Pharaoh thought that in order to save their lives, the magicians would immediately confess their guilt of conspiracy. Thus, he would be able to offset the effects of the dramatic events, which had just unfolded before thousands of onlookers. But the magicians said, "No harm can you do to us. Indeed, we will return to our Lord. Our only desire is that He will forgive us our faults, since we are the first to believe."

Exercises

A. Fill in the blanks.

1. Pharaoh was considered to be the incarnation of Ra, the _____.
2. Haaroon ( ) was _____ years older than Moosaa ( ).
3. The Pharaoh said to the sorcerers who believed in Allah, "Most certainly, I will cut off your hands and your feet on _____ sides, and I will _____ you all.

B. State whether these statements are true (T) or false (F).

1. Moosaa's signs did not dazzle Pharaoh. _____
2. Sorcery can provide guidance. _____
3. The council supported Pharaoh because they were afraid of him. _____
4. The faith of the people who had heard of Moosaa's miracles had begun to weaken. _____
5. The magicians fell down in prostration to Allah. _____
6. The magicians knew for certain that Moosaa ( ) was a prophet. _____

C. Answer these questions.

1. What reply did Moosaa (عليه السلام) give to Pharaoh when the latter boasted of having brought him up in the palace?

2. What authority did Pharaoh enjoy being the 'lord and master' of Egypt?

3. Write in your own words Moosaa's reply to Pharaoh's question about the past generations.

4. How did Haaroon (عليه السلام) come to be a prophet?

5. What was Pharaoh's reaction to Moosaa's signs? Why?

6. Why did Moosaa (عليه السلام) fix the day of the festival for the tryst?

7. How was Moosaa's snake different from the other 'snakes'?

8. What political twist did Pharaoh give to Moosaa's victory?

D. Think-up

Why do you think Moosaa (عليه السلام) was afraid of the magicians' 'snakes' even though he believed that sorcery was all wrong?

Prophet Moosaa (5)

The people had now witnessed Moosaa's miracles. The conceited king's own magicians had testified that Moosaa's acts were indeed miracles. This made two things quite clear to the common people:

1. The king was a liar. He was stubborn and arrogant. He had himself arranged the contest so that people might reach a conclusive decision. But after Moosaa's clear victory, instead of accepting his defeat, Pharaoh quickly came up with the conspiracy theory. He threatened the magicians so as to force them to admit to the conspiracy plan. The sorcerers had seen that Moosaa ( ) was not a sorcerer, and that his miracles were performed through the Power of his Lord.
2. The skilled magicians who were well-versed in sorcery unexpectedly became true believers. They were now willing to suffer terrible physical torture for the sake of their faith because they were certain that what Moosaa ( ) came with was the truth from his Lord.

Pharaoh's Stubbornness and Arrogance

Pharaoh was deeply worried concerning Moosaa ( ). He spent sleepless nights. He was not able to enjoy food or drink. His courtiers provoked him. They argued, **"Will you allow Moosaa and his people to spread corruption in the land and to abandon you and your gods?"** (*Surat al-'Araaf*, 7:127)

Anxious to stop the Israelites and the Egyptians from believing in Moosaa ( ), Pharaoh proclaimed among the people, **"O my people! Does the dominion of Egypt not belong to me, [witness] all these streams flowing underneath my [palace]? Can you not then see [that I am the supreme lord]? Am I not better than this contemptible [man] who can scarcely express himself clearly?"** (*Surat az-Zukhruf*, 43:51-52) The contents of the message appeared to Pharaoh unconvincing, although the message was quite clear!

Pharaoh then declared with a great sense of calmness, **"O chiefs! I do not know that you could have any god other than me."** (*Surat al-Qasas*, 28:38)

He mockingly said, **"Well, then. O Haamaan! Kindle me a fire for baking bricks out of clay, and then build me a lofty tower, so that I may mount up to the god of Moosaa; but as far as I am concerned, I am convinced that he is a liar."** (*Surat al-Qasas*, 28:38) Thus Pharaoh contemptibly referred to Moosaa's concept of Allah, the All-Embracing Lord, High above all, that exists. Haamaan was the Pharaoh's minister responsible for constructions in the country. Pharaoh talked scornfully about going to the sky to see for himself so that he would tell people that he could not find Moosaa's Lord there.

At times, he remarked that had Moosaa (ﷺ) truly been sent by Allah, then **"Why are bracelets of gold not sent down on him, or why do the angels not accompany him in procession?"** (*Surat az-Zukhruf*, 43:53)

This is not much different from what Khrushchev, a former First Secretary of the Communist Party of the then USSR, used to say. He had asked his astronauts in space to look for God. Sometimes he would deny the existence of God, at other times he would repeatedly mention His Name, sometimes even swearing by Him.

Pharaoh was overcome by disappointment, fear, and shame. He felt that he was powerless. He did not know what to do. He finally decided that the only way to defeat Moosaa (ﷺ) and his mission was to kill him. He said to his nobles, "Leave it to me to kill Moosaa, and let him invoke his Lord! I fear lest he causes you to change your religion, or lest he should cause corruption in the land." (*Surat Ghaafir*, 40:26)

A Believing Man from Pharaoh's Own Family

When Pharaoh was busy devising his evil plan to kill Moosaa (ﷺ), a man, who was a believer from among Pharaoh's own people, who had kept his faith concealed, exclaimed, **"Would you kill a man because he says, 'Allah is my Lord' when he has brought you all evidence of this truth from your Lord?"** (*Surat Ghaafir*, 40: 28)

The man continued, **"Why do you oppose Moosaa? Why do you seek to harm him? If you do not believe in him, then leave him alone. Let him go his way. If he is a liar, his lie will fall back on him. But if he is a man of truth, there will strike you some of what the [calamity] of which he warns you. Truly, Allah does not guide those who transgress and lie. Yours is the dominion this day; you have the upper**

hand in the land, but who will rescue us from Allah's punishment once it befalls us?" (*Surat Ghaafir*, 40: 28)

Pharaoh stubbornly answered, "I but want to make you see what I see myself. I would never make you follow any path but that of righteousness." The anonymous believer argued that the message brought by Moosaa (عليه السلام) was convincing by itself. It was a proof that he was not a liar who was making a false claim to Prophethood.

He continued, **"O my people! Truly, I fear for you the like of what one day befell those others who had grouped together [against Allah's truth]; the like of what befell Nooh's people, and to the tribe of 'Aad and Thamood, and those who came after them."** (*Surat Ghaafir*, 40:30-31)

Those sinners were not wrong by what befell them in this world. They had richly deserved it. The believer sought to warn his people about a terrible punishment and the fate of those who are sinners and wrongdoers.

This sensible man tried to make them conscious of the Day of Judgment. He tried to make them realize how awesome that Day would be!

He said, **"O my people! I fear for you the coming of that Day [of Judgment] when you will be calling each other in distress. The Day when you will wish to turn your backs and flee, having none to defend you against Allah; and whomever Allah lets go astray can never find any guide."** (*Surat Ghaafir*, 40: 32)

It is sufficient to note that the suffering, which is in store in the life to come for those who have wilfully remained deaf and blind to the truth in the life of the world, is a natural result of their free choice, just as happiness in the life to come is the natural consequence of Allah's obedient servants who made efforts to attain righteousness and the ultimate salvation.

He continued, "Allah gave you a blessing. But you did not realize its excellence. You did not value it as it should have been valued until you lost it. Then you regretted losing it afterwards. That was Prophet Yoosuf (عليه السلام) whom Allah had sent as a blessing upon you, but you did not realize his worth. When he died, you said, 'There will never be a Prophet like Yoosuf.'"

The Man's Good Counsel

The righteous man went on to say, "O my people! Follow me; I will guide you to the path of righteousness. O my people! This worldly life is nothing but a brief enjoyment, and the life to come is the home that will last. He who does a bad deed will be rewarded with no more than a like of it, and he who does righteous deeds, whether a man or a woman, and is a believer, all such will enter Paradise, wherein they will be blessed with good beyond all reckoning. And O my people! How [strange] it is for me to call you to salvation while you call me to the Fire; you call me to ascribe partners to Him, partners of whom you have no knowledge, and I call you to the Exalted in Power, who forgives again and again!"

The believer knew that his people were intoxicated with their power and with the pleasures of this world. The Pharaoh was so dazzled by his power and kingdom that he and even his chiefs did not realise that the worldly life is short-lived.

The believing man knew that the pleasures of this life prevented people from following Moosaa ( ) and the truth with which he came, but he still wanted to call their attention to the truth. When he despaired of waking them from their deep slumber and guiding them, he sounded a final call, "The time will come when you will remember what I am telling you. As for me, I commit myself to Allah. Surely Allah sees what is in the hearts of His servants." (*Surat Ghaafir*, 40:44-45)

Allah Most High preserved the believer from the evil of their scheming, but He terribly punished Pharaoh and his blind followers.

Pharaoh's Wife

Pharaoh's head was full of silly notions. He thought he was the master of his subjects' hearts, in the same way as he was the master of their bodies. He wrongly believed that he had absolute power over their tongues and speech. When someone came to believe in Moosaa (), even in the distant part of his kingdom, Pharaoh grew wild with anger. He would jump to his feet and slump down onto his throne angrily. He would fume and fret. He would thunder and roar. He would yell, **"How can one believe in Moosaa and his Lord without my permission? How can one live in my kingdom, eat provisions provided by me, yet be ungrateful to me? People must obey me and remain loyal to me."**

Pharaoh had forgotten that his kingdom, his power and whatever pleasures he enjoyed were given to him by Allah Most High. Yet, he was rebellious against Him. He was ungrateful to his Lord. But Allah gave rise to a sign in his own palace. His wife, Aasiyah, believed in Allah without his knowledge. Faith entered Pharaoh's palace without his permission. It laid bare his helplessness. Allah made it clear that He Alone is the Lord of people's hearts. The arrogant king's wife had come to believe in Allah and disobeyed her own husband.

Pharaoh and his guards could not do anything. They could not prevent it. Pharaoh had no power over his subjects' hearts; Aasiyah knew that her husband was the king of Egypt. She knew her husband better than anyone else in the land. She knew that he was a merciless tyrant, yet she believed in Moosaa ( ) and in the message he brought from his Lord. She worshipped Allah in the house of Allah's enemy. She was innocent of what Pharaoh was doing. Allah was pleased with her. He saved her from Pharaoh and his actions.

"And Allah sets forth, as an example to those who believe the wife of Pharaoh, as she prayed, 'O my Lord! Build for me, in nearness to You, a mansion in Paradise, and save me from Pharaoh and his doings, and save me from those that do wrong.'" (*Surat at-Tahreem*, 66:11)

The Trials of the Children of Israa'eel

The Pharaoh was too arrogant, and so were his people. They always persisted with their evil ways and paid no heed to Allah's signs or to any test to which they were put. They said to Moosaa ( ), "Whatever be the sign you bring before us with which to work your sorcery on us, we shall never believe in you." (*Surat al-A'raaf*, 7: 132)

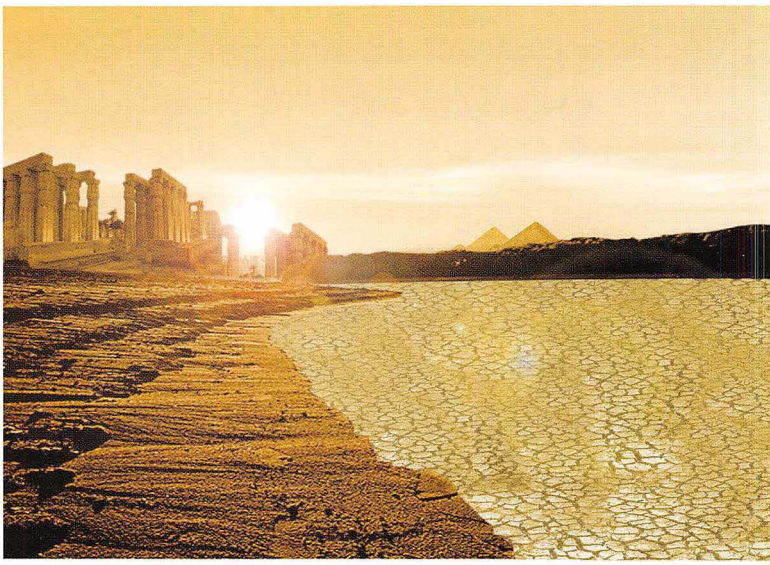
As people knew that the Pharaoh was hostile to the Israelites, they always sided with him and displayed their hostility towards Banu Israa'eel in various ways. They treated them badly and even their children were rude to them. Every night brought with it a new disaster, and every day brought with it a new trial and calamity. Moosaa ( ) consoled his people and advised them to be patient. He told them, **"Turn to Allah alone for help and remain steadfast; for the earth belongs to Allah. He allows it to be inherited by whomever He Wills of His servants; and the end is [best] for the righteous."** (*Surat al-A'raaf*, 7: 128)

The Israelites, however, did not like this test and persecution. They told Moosaa ( ), **"We have been oppressed before you came to us and since you have come to us."** (7: 129) These words carried a sort of a complaint. They were telling him that his coming to them as a prophet had not changed anything, and that their oppression seemed to be endless.

Prophet Moosaa ( ) continued to remind them of Allah and advised them to put all their trust in Him. He told them, "It may well be that your Lord will destroy your enemy and leave you to inherit the earth so He will see how you act." (7: 128-129)

Punishments

As Pharaoh and his folks became more tyrannical, heedless and cruel, Allah willed to warn them, for He does not like corruption on earth. Pharaoh was foolishly ignorant. Wise words were wasted on him as he did not heed warnings.



Egypt was a green, fertile land. It was a land where fruits, grains and vegetables grew in plenty. Egypt had even provided assistance to distant lands in the years of famine during the time of Prophet Yoosuf ( ). The reason for this was that Allah blessed Egypt with the Nile which continuously provides it with water and irrigates its crops. Pharaoh and his folks thought that the Nile was the key to their prosperity, but they did not realize that the keys of sustenance belong to Almighty Allah. Nor did they consider that the Nile ran its course by Allah's command.

Allah commanded the Nile and its waters to recede, and so they vanished into the ground. The fruits of the land disappeared. Its grains dwindled. The land was struck by severe drought and famine.

Pharaoh, his minister Haamaan, their guards and armies were all powerless. They could not do anything. Instead of learning a lesson from this situation, they ascribed these calamities to evil omens connected with Moosaa and those with him, and even arrogantly declared that they would not allow Moosaa ( ) to bewitch them as they claimed.



A Few more Signs

Almighty Allah then sent another sign. He sent torrential rains, and the Nile overflowed with rainwater. Actually, it rained so much that the fields were totally flooded and the crops were washed away. Once the people had complained about lack of rain, now they were complaining about too much of it!

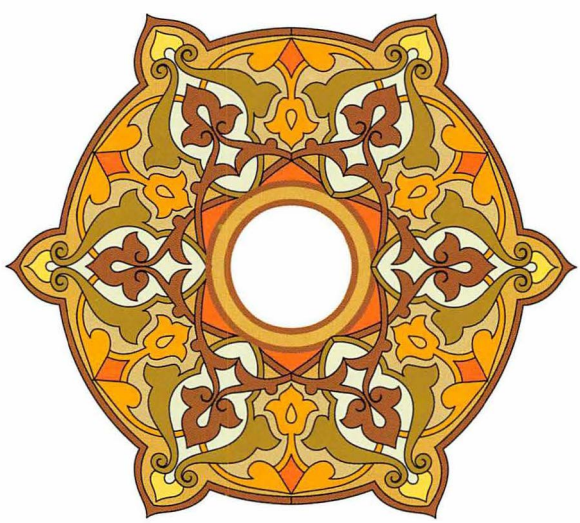
Then Allah let loose on them locusts. The armies of locusts devoured the crops and fields and made the trees completely bare. The armies of Pharaoh could not fight against the armies of Allah Most High. When Allah commanded the locusts to storm the country, they formed what seemed like a great cloud that darkened the sky and ate up all green things in the land.

The people of Egypt still refused to contemplate such signs and took no heed. Allah then sent them another sign. He gave the lice power over them. Lice were in their clothes and in their hair! They had to spend sleepless nights and uneasy days searching for lice to get rid of them.

Then Almighty Allah engulfed them with frogs. There were frogs everywhere: in their storage vessels for food and drink and even in their clothes. The frogs made their life miserable. They croaked all night. One jumped here and another leapt there. The frogs were all over them. One would even fill a glass with water to drink it, and a frog would leap into it from nowhere! Whenever they killed one, more frogs would appear. Pharaoh and his forces were helpless against these nasty frogs!

Allah then sent yet another sign against them: blood. Every time they collected water from any river or any well, it would turn into blood. Their noses bled. It weakened and exhausted them. Even all the water they had in their containers would turn into blood. Their doctors were unable to treat them. No medicine worked. They complained to their arrogant king and said that they had nothing to drink, but he thoughtlessly suggested that Moosaa (عليه السلام) had cast a spell on them.

Whenever they saw a sign, they went to Moosaa (عليه السلام) and said, **"Ask your Lord to remove this affliction from us. We shall truly repent and believe in you, and we shall send the Children of Israa'eel with you."** But when Allah removed the affliction according to a fixed term, they again broke their promise.



Exercises

A. Fill in the blanks.

1. The only way for Pharaoh to get rid of Moosaa (عليه السلام) was to _____ him.
2. Pharaoh thought that he was the master of his subjects' _____, as he was of their bodies.
3. Pharaoh's wife believed in Allah without her husband's _____.
4. Moosaa (عليه السلام) advised his people to be _____.
5. Pharaoh was so arrogant that he did not heed _____.

B. Answer the following questions.

1. What two things did the victory of Moosaa's miracles make clear to the common folk?

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. Who was Haamaan, and what did Pharaoh order him to do?

_____

_____

_____

_____

3. What did the believer from Pharaoh's own family believe was the reason for Pharaoh and his people not to follow the truth?

4. How did Pharaoh react whenever he learnt of someone following Moosaa (عليه السلام)?

5. In what way did Pharaoh's people display hostility towards Banu Israa'eel?

6. Besides Moosaa's miracles, what were the other trials to which Pharaoh and his people were put?

Prophet Moosaa (6)

Pharaoh's rebellion persisted. His enmity towards Moosaa ( ) and his brother Haaroon ( ) constantly increased. Moosaa ( ) produced all proofs about the Oneness of Allah before Pharaoh and his chiefs and clearly established evidence against them, but they chose to reject the truth in their arrogance. They simply mocked his message and ridiculed it. There were only a few people who believed in Moosaa ( ) from among the Coptic Egyptians, and many of these concealed their faith because of their fear of Pharaoh and his chiefs lest they should persecute them.

Moosaa's Advice to his People

Moosaa ( ) said to his people, "My people! If you do really believe in Allah, then place your trust in Him if you submit your will to Him." They said, "In Allah do we place our trust. Our Lord, do not let us suffer at the hands of those who practise oppression, and save us by Your Grace from those who disbelieve in You."

The Qur'an says, **"And thus did We inspire Moosaa and his brother, 'Provide dwellings for your people in Egypt, make your dwellings into places of worship, and establish regular prayer; and give good news to those who believe.'"** (*Surat Yoonus*. 10: 87)

Some people responded positively to Moosaa ( ). Allah then advised Moosaa ( ) and his brother Haaroon to choose special houses for the Children of Israa'eel so that they would be ready to leave Egypt at the appointed time. It would thus be easy for everyone to contact each other in the case of departure from Egypt when commanded to do so.

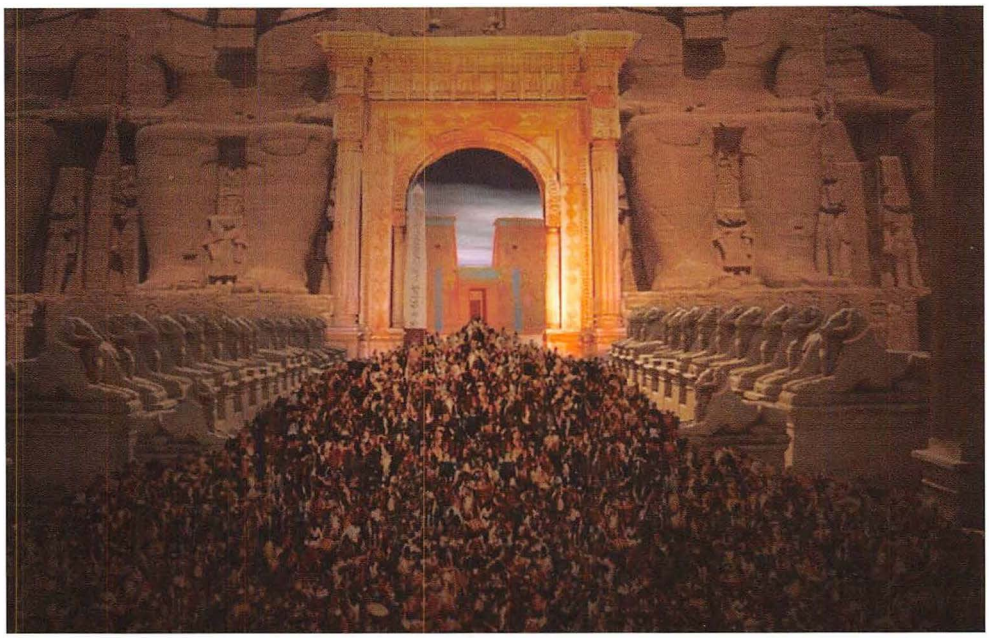
Even though Egypt was a great country with a fertile land, the Children of Israa'eel felt they were in prison. They suffered all sorts of torments and humiliation. They were human beings after all, so how long could they be patient for?

Moosaa ( ) Supplicates his Lord

Moosaa ( ) prayed, **"Our Lord! You have indeed given Pharaoh and his chiefs splendour and wealth in the life of this world[1], and so, our Lord, they are misled [people] from Your path. O our Lord! Wipe out the features of their wealth and harden their hearts so they will not believe until they see the grievous punishment."**

Allah said, **"Your prayer is accepted. Continue, then, both of you, steadfastly on the right way, and do not follow the path of those who do not know."** (*Surat Yoonus*, 10: 88-89)

[1]This means: Instead of being grateful to Allah for His bounty, Pharaoh and his chiefs are using their power to corrupt their own people.



The Migration

Finally there came a time when Allah revealed to Moosaa ( ), "Depart with My servants, by night, for surely you will be pursued." (*Surat ash-Shu'araa'*, 26: 52)

Commenting on this verse, *Sheikh* Abual-A'Iaa Mawdoodee writes, "It should be borne in mind that the Israelites did not live in one particular part of Egypt. Rather, they lived in all of its cities and towns. There was, however, a great concentration of Israelites between Memphis and Rameses, which was known as Goshen. Therefore, when Moosaa ( ) was commanded to take the Israelites out of Egypt, he must have sent errands to all the towns and must have appointed a particular night for the migration. The expression 'you will be pursued' refers to the fact that the time for departure was set for the night so that they would have a head-start over Pharaoh's army."[2]

[2]Towards understanding the Qur'an, Vol. VII, p. 70.

The appointed night arrived, and Moosaa ( ) led the twelve tribes of Banu Israa'eel out of Egypt towards the Holy Land — Palestine. Each tribe had its own leader.

When Pharaoh's guards learnt about the departure of Moosaa ( ) and the Children of Israa'eel, they informed Pharaoh of the Children of Israa'eel's flight. His anger was terrible. He sent heralds to all cities, bidding them to call out his troops and to proclaim: "These are a small contemptible band."

Pharaoh mobilized his forces from all parts of the country to crush them once and for all, or so he thought; but Allah turned his plans upon him by bringing together Pharaoh, his nobles and courtiers as well as his armies at one place where they were all doomed.



"My Lord is with Me"

As the sun rose, the Children of Israa'eel saw a huge cloud of dust behind them. Coming after them was a great army. Pharaoh and his army were in hot pursuit on chariots and swift horses. Moosaa ( ) stood on a rock and gazed back to the cloud of dust already darkening the horizon. He turned and gazed to where the calm water of the Red Sea flowed – a barrier separating them from the safety of the true desert beyond. Voices were raised, "Son of 'Imraan! Why did you plot to kill us? You have indeed brought us to our death. There is no way for us to escape, and Pharaoh will certainly kill us." Moosaa ( ) calmly replied, "By no means! My Lord is with me, and He will soon guide me."

Almighty Allah then inspired Moosaa ( ) thus, **"'Strike the sea with your rod', so it divided, and each separate part became like a huge mountain."** (*Surat ash-Shu'araa'*, 26: 64)

The Arabic words the Qur'an used in this verse are *'at-tawdh al-'adheem'*, which mean a huge mountain. These words clearly indicate that the Nile water stood on both sides like two great mountains and remained in this state until several hundred thousand Israelites passed through the dry path, by Allah's command. As the Qur'an says in another verse, **"Travel by night with my servants and strike a dry path for them through the sea, without fear of being overtaken [by Pharaoh] and without [any other fear."** (*Surat Taa Haa*, 20: 77)

There were twelve paths, one for each tribe. Moosaa's followers crossed unharmed and reached the land in safety. Allah commanded Moosaa ( ) to leave the sea as a furrow [divided] to lure on the Egyptian

host, on which the sea afterwards closed in, and they were all destroyed. (See *Surat adh-Dhukh-khaan*, 44:24)

This indicates that if after reaching the other side, had Moosaa ( ) struck his staff again, the two sides of standing water would have rejoined. Allah, however, stopped Moosaa ( ) from doing so. Allah willed that Pharaoh and his army should be allowed the same dry path and then be drowned.

Pharaoh and his Army Drown

Pharaoh witnessed how the Israelites had crossed the sea in safety. He did not realise, in his arrogance and false pride, this sign and advanced with his army towards Moosaa and his followers. The Israelites were in fear again. Following Allah's command, Moosaa ( ) left the sea alone. However, when Pharaoh and his forces reached the middle of the path into the sea, the sea flooded back over them, terrible as thunder, faster than chariots, and even faster than their swift horses!

As Pharaoh was overwhelmed with the flood and was about to drown, he cried out, **"I believe that there is no god other than Him in whom the Children of Israa'eel believe, and to Him I surrender myself."** (*Surat Yoonus*, 10: 90)

Pharaoh's masks had now fallen away. He was no longer the mighty ruler whose orders were instantly obeyed. He had shrunk and looked humiliated. But Allah said, **"Only now? But before this you were rebelling against Us, and you spread corruption in the land."** (*Surat Yoonus*, 10: 91) Now you believe when you have no longer any choice of means of escape. You have been arrogant in your disbelief. You rejected all Our messages and warnings.



The tyrant who had commanded the slaying of thousands of innocent people and children was now dead. The despot who had treated people cruelly and mercilessly was no more! The king of Egypt had died far away from his throne and his court, and there was no one around to comfort him or shed tears for him.

Allah said, **"But today We shall save your body so that you may become a sign to those who will come after you, for a great many people do not heed Our signs."** (*Surat Yoonus*, 10: 92)

This incident shows that Almighty Allah protects the believers and punishes those who choose to be His enemies.



Pharaoh's body has been and is till intact today, and many generations since he was drowned have seen this sign. Indeed, it is a clear sign for those who are able to see and a good lesson for those who are willing to heed Allah's warnings.

All Pharaoh's army drowned to the last man. They had left all the blessings Allah had bestowed upon them. The Qur'an says, **"How many were the gardens and springs they left, and corn-fields and noble buildings, and pleasant things where they had taken such delight! Thus [was their end]! And We made other people inherit [those things]"** (*Surat adh-Dukh-khaan*, 44: 25-28)



In the Sinai Desert

As the Israelites were city people and were not used to desert life, they found the desert sun too hot for them. They did not even have tents which would shelter them from the sun and hot winds. But Allah, the All-Generous, the All-Merciful, commanded the clouds to shade them and travel with them wherever they moved!

Soon when they felt thirsty and saw that there was no water in the desert, they complained to Moosaa (عليه السلام) of their severe thirst. Moosaa (عليه السلام) prayed for water for his people, and Allah commanded him to strike the rock with his staff. Moosaa (عليه السلام) did, and twelve springs gushed forth from it, so that each group knew where to drink.

They again complained to Moosaa (عليه السلام), "O Moosaa! You brought

us out of Egypt, which is the land of fruits and produce. Who will give us food in this desert?"

Moosaa (عليه السلام) prayed to Almighty Allah, and soon Allah sent down small sweet round things called *manna* as well as flocks of birds called *salwaa* (quails), which they could easily catch from the trees.

Opinions vary over what exactly was *manna*. Some believe it was honey, others say it was a kind of sweet gum, while others maintain that it was a snow-like substance that settled upon trees every night as dew. They could dissolve it in water or make bread with it. The quails used to settle in thousands every morning and every evening near them at such a close distance that they could easily catch them by their hands.

The Israelites' Ingratitude

Allah sent *manna* and quails upon the Israelites, which were two kinds of foods they received without having to make any effort whatsoever. Allah also made springs of fresh water gush forth in the desert for them and provided them with cool shade in the scorching heat of the Sinai desert.

But they did not appreciate any of these favours. They remained rebellious and disobedient. Their tastes and morals had been corrupted due to their long enslavement. They could not make up their mind about anything. They showed little gratitude and had many complaints. They fretted and fumed. They easily got bored, wanting what they were forbidden and hating what they were given. Soon they complained to Moosaa (عليه السلام), **"O Moosaa! We cannot endure one kind of food, so pray to your Lord to produce for us what the earth grows: its pot-herbs and cucumbers, its garlic, lentils and onions."** Moosaa (عليه السلام) said to them, **"Would you exchange the better for the worse? Go back in shame to Egypt, and then you will find what you are asking for."** (*Surat al-Baqarah*, 2: 61)

The Israelites' Stubbornness

The Children of Israa'eel were so stubborn that whenever they were told to do something they would persistently do just the opposite. They ignored whatever they were told and took it lightly. Instead of remaining conscious of Allah and being grateful to Him for His numerous blessings, they neglected their duties and indulged in sins.

When Allah commanded them, "Enter this town, and eat of the plenty therein as you wish, and enter the gate prostrating and say, *hiittatun* (forgive us)', We shall forgive you your sins and increase [the portion of] those who do good", they simply ignored Allah's

order and went in dragging themselves on their buttocks, as reported in some Prophetic traditions.[3]

Further, instead of praising their Lord, they said *'hintatun'* (wheat), instead of *'hittatun'*, making it a point of mockery and derision. So Allah inflicted a serious punishment on them: a plague that claimed many lives.

One of their many mischievous deeds was that whenever they were given a command, they would ask many questions in order to avoid doing what they were commanded to do.

The Story of the Cow

A man was once murdered and the Israelites were very worried about it. They did all they could possibly do in an attempt to find the killer, but to no avail. Finally they went to Moosaa (عليه السلام) and begged him to ask Allah to make it clear to them who the murderer was.

Moosaa (عليه السلام) sought Allah's help, and He revealed to him that they should slaughter a cow. The Israelites found this command so funny that they asked Moosaa (عليه السلام), **"Are you mocking us?"** he replied, **"Allah save me from being an ignorant [fool]."** (*Surat al-Baqarah*, 2: 67)

They took it as a joke, because they could not believe that he would ask his Lord about this matter, and that He would command them to slaughter a cow. Moosaa (عليه السلام), however, insisted, "God forbid! How can I attribute something to Allah without having it revealed to me? This is what Allah has commanded me when I asked Him about this matter, and you ought to do as you are told."

The Israelites asked so many questions about the characteristics of the cow including its colour and age. Each time they asked for more details, they would be provided with these details, hence making it only difficult for themselves to find the cow they were looking for. They also asked him, **"Call on your Lord to tell us exactly what type of cow it is. To us cows are all alike; we wish indeed for guidance if Allah wills."** (*Surat al-Baqarah*, 2: 70)

Moosaa (عليه السلام) replied, **"He says: a cow not trained to till the soil or water the fields; sound and without blemish."** (*Surat al-Baqarah*, 2: 71)

They said, "Now you have come up with the right description." So they slaughtered it, although they almost did not do it.

In fact, Allah's command to them was clear and simple: "Slaughter a cow." Had they sacrificed any cow, it would have been sufficient. But they looked for trouble for themselves, so Allah provided them with what they were looking for!

[3]See Tafseer Ibn Katheer.

It was no longer an ordinary cow that could easily be found anywhere, but one with a special description and an unusual combination of features. After a long, exhausting search, they finally found the cow with an orphan who refused to sell it to them unless they paid him a very high price: Its weight in gold.

Moosaa (عليه السلام) then commanded the Israelites to strike the corpse of the murdered man with a portion of its meat; and when they did, the man came back to life by Allah's command and will. Moosaa (عليه السلام) asked him about the person who had murdered him. He pointed to him and then fell dead again.

The question arises here as to why this approach should be necessary when Allah can restore the dead to life without the need for anything in particular. What possible relationship could there be between the sacrificed cow and the murdered man being restored to life? The Qur'an scholars have answered all these questions.

First, the act of sacrificing a cow by Allah's command was a means to gain His nearness, which can only be obtained by Allah's bidding. Second, to teach the lesson that when one is commanded to do something, one has to do it well. Third, to impress on the believers the fact that when one is commanded to do something, one must hasten to do it without asking for details that may only make it harder for one to do. Fourth, to help the orphan who owned the cow. Fifth, for the ignorant not to mock the words of the wise, as the Israelites foolishly imagined when Moosaa (عليه السلام) asked them to slaughter a cow. Sixth, for the believer seeking nearness to Allah by his sacrifices to choose the best that he can find. Ibn 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) used to select a sacrificial animal that was the best of its kind and the most expensive. Seventh, to demonstrate that it is Allah alone Who brings the dead to life. It is Allah's Power, the workings of which human beings cannot comprehend.

We see the effects of Allah's Power around us all the time, but we are not able to grasp its reality or the way it works. Allah shows us His signs so that we may understand.

Exercises

A. Fill in the blanks.

1. Moosaa (عليه السلام) wanted to go north, while Allah willed him to go _____.
2. The Children of Israa'eel found themselves on the shores of the _____.

B. State whether these statements are true (T) or false (F).

1. Only a few of the Coptic Egyptians believed in Moosaa (عليه السلام). _____
2. Moosaa (عليه السلام) led his people towards Makkah. _____
3. The Red Sea stood split at Pharaoh's command. _____
4. Pharaoh finally believed in the One True Allah. _____
5. The Israelites were ungrateful for Allah's bounties. _____

C. Answer the following questions.

1. Why did Moosaa (عليه السلام) and his brother choose special houses for the Children of Israa'eel?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. Why did Moosaa (عليه السلام) and his people leave Egypt at night?

3. Why had Allah commanded Moosaa (عليه السلام) to leave the sea as it was?

4. What is the wisdom behind saving Pharaoh's body?

5. Mention the blessings Allah showered on the Children of Israa'eel.

6. In what way were the Israelites ungrateful to Allah?

D. Think-up

What lessons do you learn from the story of the cow?

Our Lord is Allah (*Surat Fussilat*, 41:30–36)

The title of this *surah* (41) is derived from the verb '*fussilat*', which occurs in verse 3.

Translation of the meaning of these verses

In the Name of Allah, the Most Kind, the Most Merciful

بِسْمِ ٱللَّهِ ٱلرَّحْمَٰنِ ٱلرَّحِيمِ

إِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ قَالُوا۟ رَبُّنَا ٱللَّهُ ثُمَّ ٱسْتَقَٰمُوا۟ تَتَنَزَّلُ عَلَيْهِمُ
ٱلْمَلَٰٓئِكَةُ أَلَّا تَخَافُوا۟ وَلَا تَحْزَنُوا۟ وَأَبْشِرُوا۟ بِٱلْجَنَّةِ
ٱلَّتِى كُنتُمْ تُوعَدُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾ نَحْنُ أَوْلِيَآؤُكُمْ فِى ٱلْحَيَوٰةِ
ٱلدُّنْيَا وَفِى ٱلْءَاخِرَةِ ۖ وَلَكُمْ فِيهَا مَا تَشْتَهِىٓ أَنفُسُكُمْ
وَلَكُمْ فِيهَا مَا تَدَّعُونَ ﴿٣١﴾ نُزُلًا مِّنْ غَفُورٍ رَّحِيمٍ ﴿٣٢﴾
وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ قَوْلًا مِّمَّن دَعَآ إِلَى ٱللَّهِ وَعَمِلَ صَٰلِحًا وَقَالَ
إِنَّنِى مِنَ ٱلْمُسْلِمِينَ ﴿٣٣﴾ وَلَا تَسْتَوِى ٱلْحَسَنَةُ وَلَا ٱلسَّيِّئَةُ ۚ
ٱدْفَعْ بِٱلَّتِى هِىَ أَحْسَنُ فَإِذَا ٱلَّذِى بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَهُۥ عَدَٰوَةٌ كَأَنَّهُۥ
وَلِىٌّ حَمِيمٌ ﴿٣٤﴾ وَمَا يُلَقَّىٰهَآ إِلَّا ٱلَّذِينَ صَبَرُوا۟ وَمَا يُلَقَّىٰهَآ
إِلَّا ذُو حَظٍّ عَظِيمٍ ﴿٣٥﴾ وَإِمَّا يَنزَغَنَّكَ مِنَ ٱلشَّيْطَٰنِ نَزْغٌ
فَٱسْتَعِذْ بِٱللَّهِ ۖ إِنَّهُۥ هُوَ ٱلسَّمِيعُ ٱلْعَلِيمُ ﴿٣٦﴾

30. Indeed, those who say, "Our Lord is Allah" and then steadfastly pursue the right way—upon them the angels will descend, [saying], "Do not fear and do not grieve, but receive the good news of Paradise which you were promised.

31. "We [the angels] are your allies in the life of this world and in the life to come; and you will have therein whatever your souls desire, and in it you will have whatever you request [or wish].

32. "As a ready welcome from [a Lord who is] Much-Forgiving and All-Merciful."

33. And who could be better in speech than one who calls [his fellow-men] to Allah and does what is just and right and says, "Surely, I am of those who have surrendered themselves to Allah!"

34. But good and evil cannot be equal. Repel [evil] with something that is better; and behold, the one whom between you and him is enmity [will become] as though he were a loyal friend.

35. But this is not given to any but those who are patient; and it is not given to any but those with a large share of good.

36. And if an evil suggestion comes to you from Satan, then seek refuge in Allah; surely, He is the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing.

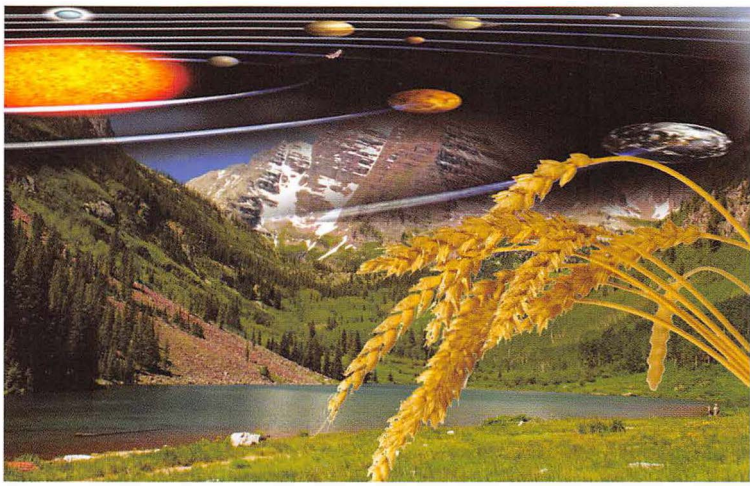
Explanation

A closer look at these verses will reveal a striking similarity between them and *Surat al-'Asr*. In fact, these verses as well as those in *Surat Al-'Asr* describe most clearly the all-important truth that success of human life depends upon the following:

1) *Eemaan* (sincere faith)
2) *Al-'amal as-saalih* (righteous deeds)
3) *At-Tawaasee bil-haqq* (Encouraging each other to the truth)
4) *At-Tawaasee bis-sabr* (Encouraging each other to steadfastness)

There is, however, a little difference. *Surat al-'Asr* discusses the four fundamental elements of the success of human life in brief, whereas these verses mention their highest and loftiest stations.

Now let us take a close look at these verses. First of all, we will look at the term '*Rabb*' (translated here as Lord), which occurs in verse 30.



It is difficult to find a single English word with which to pinpoint the basic idea contained within this particular term. According to the Arabic Lexicographers (persons who write dictionaries), the primary significance of the noun '*Rabb*' is "bringing a thing to a state of completion by degrees'. Depending on the context, the word then comes to mean: 'a lord, possessor, owner or proprietor or a lord, master or chief, to whom obedience is offered or a fosterer, bringer-up, feeder or nourisher or a completer or accomplisher." The definite article **'ar'** in **'ar**-*Rabb*' is properly applied only to Almighty Allah.

The word is now exclusively used for Allah. However, there are a few instances where the term '*Rabb*' is used, as in the Glorious Qur'an, in its literal and limited meaning of being a master and a lord. Thus, the Prophet Yoosuf (عليه السلام) reminded his prison-mate who was about to be released, **"Mention me to your lord (*rabb*), but Satan made him forget to mention him to his lord."** (*Surat Yoosuf*: 12:42) Here '*rabb*' refers to the King of Egypt.

Allah is the *Rabb* of the universe, of all the worlds — in all the meanings mentioned above. Allah's Lordship (*Ruboobiyah*) entails that a person should worship Allah as his Lord. He should be a servant to Him alone. He should obey Him everywhere and at all times. As Allah is the One who provides for him and He Alone is the Protector, he should then seek His help alone. He causes the living to issue from the dead and causes the dead to issue from the living. All good is in His hand, as well as giving and withholding, wealth and poverty and honour and disgrace. No one has anything to match Him. A sensible person is therefore one who turns to Him alone for assistance and support.

In verse 30, the Glorious Qur'an gives glad tidings to those who say, "Our Lord is Allah" and then they stand firm. This means they do good deeds sincerely for the sake of Allah. They obey Him, do whatever He commands them to do and do not associate anything with Him in worship.

Once a man came to the Prophet (ﷺ) and said, "Messenger of Allah! Tell me something that I can adhere to!" The Prophet (ﷺ) said to him, "Say, 'My Lord is Allah', and then stand firm." (Ibn Maajah)

For those who remain steadfast in their faith and constantly obey Allah, Allah will certainly provide them with countless help in this world and bestow untold blessings on them in the hereafter.

The angels will descend on these at the time of their death, and they will say to them, "Do not fear what you are about to face and do not feel sad about the worldly things that you have left behind, such as children, family, wealth, but receive the good news of Paradise which you were promised." The Prophet (ﷺ) once said, "The angels say to the soul of the believer, "Come out, good soul, from the good body in which you used to dwell; come out to rest, to provision and a Lord Who is not angry." (Ahmad)

The believer knows that there are angels with him at all times, recording all his deeds. He also knows that the angels are noble creatures who support whatever is true and just. Therefore, whenever he intends to perform a good deed, to stand up for the truth and sacrifice what is right, he knows that there are creatures in this world that are going to support him in his cause, in the same way that they supported and helped the believers in the time of the Prophet (ﷺ). In particular, the believer knows that the angels pray for them and support them when he does righteous deeds. Allah's

Messenger (ﷺ) once said Allah, the angels, the inhabitants of heavens and earth, and even the fish in the depths of the seas seek forgiveness for a person who follows a path in quest of knowledge.[1]

[1] This is mentioned in a *hadeeth* reported by Abu Daawood and At-Tirmidhee.

Their prayers for the person can continue for a long time, even after the person has completed his act. In another *hadeeth*, the Prophet (ﷺ) said, "If someone goes to visit an ill person in the late afternoon, seventy thousand angels go with him and continue to seek Allah's forgiveness for him until the morning, and he will have a garden in Paradise. And if someone goes to visit him in the morning, seventy thousand angels go with him and seek Allah's forgiveness for him until the evening, and he will have a garden in Paradise." (Ahmad, Abu Daawood and at-Tirmidhee. *Sheikh* al-Albaanee classified it as *saheeh*)

Almighty Allah also says, **"Those [angels] who bear the Throne [of Allah] and those around it praise and glorify their Lord and believe in Him and implore forgiveness for those who believe: 'Our Lord, You embrace all things in mercy and knowledge. Forgive, then, those who turn to You in repentance and follow Your path and save them from the punishment of the blazing fire; and grant, our Lord, that they enter the Gardens of Eternity which You have promised to them and to the righteous among their fathers, their wives and their posterity, for You are the Exalted in Might, All-Wise. And preserve them for [all] ills; and any whom You preserve from ills[2] that Day—on them will You have bestowed mercy indeed, and that will truly be the highest achievement.'"** (*Surat Ghaafir*, 40: 7-9)

[2] Commenting on this, Yusuf Ali writes, "That is the final judgment, and any who is saved from the evil consequences of their deeds in the life will truly have been saved by Allah's mercy; and for them it is the highest achievement they could have, the attainment of all wishes, the fulfillment of their destiny and the noblest purpose of their life, the supreme salvation and felicity." (See *The Holy Qur'an: English Translation of the Meanings and Commentary*, King Fahd Holy Qur'an Printing Complex, Saudi Arabia, p. 1425)

How great the effect will be on the person who does righteous deeds will be when he realises that these noble creatures pray for him in such a manner! In fact, when the person obeys Allah's commands and performs only good deeds, all creation, except for the devils, support him. Indeed, even inanimate objects of nature express their love for the true believers. The Prophet (ﷺ) once said, "Mount Uhud loves us, and we love it." (al-Bukhaaree and Muslim)

The believer will then feel that he gets support from the angels, who are not like ordinary people but rather creatures with a great and magnificent creation. Once the Prophet (ﷺ) described Angel Jibreel (عليه السلام) as having six hundred wings! (al-Bukhaaree) This fact also nurtures in the believer love, awe and admiration for Allah.



A great reward awaits those who gather together to read and study the Qur'an. The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "Whenever a group of people gather in one of the houses of Allah in order to read the Book of Allah and teach it to one another, peace and tranquillity will descend upon them, mercy will cover them, the angels will spread their wings over them, and Allah will mention them to those surrounding Him." (Muslim)

"We [the angels] are your allies in the life of this world and in the life to come; and you will have therein whatever your souls desire, and in it you will have whatever you request [or wish]"

This means that the angels say to the believers when death approaches them: We have been your friends and close companions in this world, protecting you and helping you by the command of Allah, and we will bring you to the Garden of Delight, therein you will have all that you desire. Whatever you ask for will appear before you as you wish it to be.

"As a ready welcome from [a Lord who is] Much-Forgiving and All-Merciful"

This means a welcoming gift and a blessing from the One who has forgiven your sins and who is Merciful and Kind towards you.

The Virtue of Calling Others to Allah

"And who could be better in speech than one who calls [his fellow-men] to Allah and does what is just and right and says, 'Surely, I am of those who have surrendered themselves to Allah!'"

This means there is no one better than one who calls people to Allah, and he himself follows that which he says so it benefits him as well as others. He is not one of those who enjoin good but do not do it themselves, or who forbid evil yet they do it themselves. He does good and avoids doing evil and calls people to

their Creator. This is general in meaning and applies to everyone who calls people to what is good and is himself guided by what he says. Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) is the foremost among people in this regard.

Wisdom in *Da'wah*

"But good and evil cannot be equal. Repel [evil] with something that is better; and behold, the one whom between you and him is enmity [will become] as though he were a loyal friend."

There is a huge difference between the good deed and the evil deed.

"Repel the evil with one, which is better" means when someone does you wrong, repel him by treating him well. There is no better punishment for one who has disobeyed Allah with regard to you than your obeying Allah with regard to him.

If you treat well those who treat you badly, this good deed will lead to reconciliation, love and empathy, and it will be as if he is a close friend to you and will become kind to you.

"But this is not given to any but those who are patient; and it is not given to any but those with a large share of good."

It is, however, significant to note that no one accepts this advice and works according to it except for those who can be patient in doing so, for it is difficult for people to do. Those who manage to do this are certainly endowed with the greatest good fortune.

Allah commands the believers to be patient when provoked, to be forbearing when confronted with ignorance and to forgive when mistreated. When they do this, Allah will save them from Satan and will continue to subdue their enemies to them until they become like loyal friends.

"And if an evil suggestion comes to you from Satan, then seek refuge in Allah; surely, He is the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing."

Since Satan is invisible, there is no way to fight off his influence and presence except by seeking Allah's help.

The devils among men may be deceived by your kind treatment of them, but the devils among the *jinn*, when they insinuate their evil whispers, cannot be dealt with except by seeking refuge with the Creator who gave them power over you. Sulaymaan ibn Soorad (ﷺ) said, "I was sitting with the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) when two men began insulting each other. One of them was red in the face and his jugular veins had swelled up. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said, 'I know of some words which, if he were to say them, the state he finds himself in would go away from him – were he to say أَعُوذُ بِاللهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيم 'I seek refuge with Allah from the accursed devil', the state he finds himself in would go from him.'"

(al-Bukhaaree and Muslim)

Exercises

A. Fill in the blanks

1. The literal meaning of '*Rabb*' is _____.
2. Allah commands the believer to be _____ when provoked.
3. When a believer forgives those who mistreat him, Allah will save him from _____ and _____ to his enemies.
4. If Satan provokes us, we should _____.

B. Answer the following questions.

1. In which ways are these verses and *Surat al-'Asr* similar?

2. There is a little difference between these verses and *Surat al-'Asr*. What is it?

3. Explain in detail the meaning of '*Rabb*'.

4. What does Allah's Lordship entail?

5. What type of support do the believers receive in doing good works?

6. On what different occasion do the angels descend on the believers?

7. What direct benefit does calling to Allah have on us?

8. How should a Muslim punish an evildoer?

C. Think-up

Explain this *hadeeth*: "Say, my Lord is Allah, and then stand firm."

Prophet Moosaa (عليه السلام) (7)

The *Sharee'ah*

In Egypt, the Israelites had lived a life of the beasts of burden. Now Allah rescued them and they went to live in the desert as free and noble folks. But they needed a divine law that would guide them — that could illuminate a straight path for them to follow. Mankind cannot live like human beings unless they are provided with a divine law and a light from their Lord. This light is the light of the Prophets which gives people the guidance they need. Without this light, beliefs are merely fancies and superstitions. Hence those who have no knowledge of Allah follow nothing but conjecture, ideas and beliefs formed by guessing. Never can conjecture take the place of truth which naturally comes from Allah the Almighty. Those who do not follow the Prophets and violate people's rights exceed limits and follow their whims and desires. The people who have no fear of Allah and who do not have a *Sharee'ah*, or divine law, break their trusts, abuse the bounties of Allah and violate Allah's and people's rights. The prophets teach people how to live as human beings on earth. Those who reject the teachings of their prophets will never prosper — they are astray and lead a life similar to that of animals.



The *Tawraah* (Torah)

Allah willed to guide the Children of Israa'eel on to the Straight Path, and thus He sent a *shareeah* to them. *Sharee'ah* literally means a clear path which we must follow as we toil on towards the Creator whom we will eventually meet. In its fullest sense, the *Sharee'ah* virtually is the '*deen*', which is often inadequately translated as religion. '*Deen*' literally means 'way of life', 'following' or 'the way'.

Moosaa (عليه السلام) was summoned by Allah to Mount Sinai in order that he might receive the Law for the Children of Israa'eel. He was summoned for a period of forty days so that he might single-mindedly devote himself to worshipping, fasting, reflecting and contemplating and thus develop the ability to receive the revelation for guidance.

Obeying Allah's Command, Moosaa (عليه السلام) left the Israelites at the place now known as Waadee ash-Shaykh, which lies between Nabee Saalih and Mount Sinai. The place where the Israelites had camped is presently known as Madyan ar-Raahah. The top of the towering Mount Sinai standing at 7,359 feet is mostly enveloped by clouds. The cave in which Moosaa (عليه السلام) retired for forty days to devote himself to fasting and contemplation is situated at the top of the mountain and still attracts visitors.

Moosaa (عليه السلام) appointed Haaroon in his place, saying to him before he left, **"Act for me among my people, do right and do not follow the way of those who do mischief."** (*Surat al-A'raaf* 7: 142)

While leaving for Mount Sinai, Moosaa (عليه السلام) took with him seventy prominent leaders so that they could hear Allah speak to him and witness Moosaa (عليه السلام) receiving the Book — the *Tawraah* – and Law. Moosaa (عليه السلام) fulfilled the term of forty days. He fasted during those days, and when he came to the place appointed by Allah, **"his Lord spoke to Him".** (*Surat al-A'raaf* 7: 143)

Allah spoke to Moosaa (عليه السلام) from behind a veil, and "His veil is Light," as the Prophet (ﷺ) once explained. (Muslim) This shows the sublime and high rank Moosaa (عليه السلام) occupied by the Grace of Allah. Allah the Almighty spoke to Moosaa (عليه السلام), but this increased his yearning and he said, **"O my Lord! Show Yourself to me so that I might see You."** (*Surat al-A'raaf* 7: 143)

Almighty Allah said, **"'Never can you see Me [direct], but ook upon the mount; if it remains firm in its place, then will you see Me. ' When his Lord revealed Himself to the mount, He caused it to crumble to dust, and Moosaa fell down in a swoon. When he came to himself, he said, 'Glory be to You! To You I turn in repentance, and I am the first to believe.'"** (*Surat al-A'raaf* 7: 143)

Allah also said, **"O Moosaa! I have chosen you above other men, by the messages I [have given you] and the words [I have spoken to you], so take the revelation which I have given you and be of those who give thanks."** (*Surat al-A'raaf* 7: 144)

Allah gave Moosaa (عليه السلام) the Book (*Tawraah*) and the Criterion – a standard by which to distinguish the truth from the falsehood. A huge cloud engulfed Moosaa (عليه السلام) and his companions and they heard Allah reveal His Message to Moosaa (عليه السلام). He presented them the Book and the Criterion. But they began to say that they were not convinced by the Voice alone. They would not believe until they had seen Allah Himself. **"We will not believe you until we see Allah**

openly," (2: 55) they said to Moosaa ( ). This invited the wrath of Allah and they were punished. A tremendous thunderbolt struck them and killed them. Moosaa ( ) prayed to Allah since none of them was alive to bear witness to what had happened. Allah raised them again after they had been dead, so that they might become grateful. Allah answered Moosaa's prayer and restored them to life so that they might show thankfulness.



Worship of the Calf

The Children of Israa'eel had lived with the idol-worshipping Egyptians for many generations. The Egyptians worshipped many things in Egypt. The Children of Israa'eel had witnessed it with their own eyes. Hatred of idol-worship had departed from their hearts. Instead, love of idol-worship had seeped into their hearts as water seeps into the foundation of a building. Whenever an opportunity came their way, they would begin to worship idols. The path of truthful guidance did not attract them much. Whenever they came across a path of error and wrongdoing they took it.

After crossing the sea, they had come across, on their way to Sinai, a people who worshipped idols. The Qur'an does not say who those people were. It is, however, probable that they belonged to the group of Arabian tribes called Amalekites who inhabited southernmost Palestine, the adjoining region of the Hejaz and parts of Sinai Peninsula.

They said, **"O Moosaa! Fashion for us a god like the gods they have."** (*Surat al-A'raaf* 7: 138) What incredible wickedness! A little while ago, they were saved from the cruel Pharaoh at the hands of their Prophet, in the Name of Allah, the Lord of all the Worlds, who destroyed their enemy and parted the sea for them to cross.

The diseases of the soul is just as infectious as the diseases of the body. The infection, however, cannot be passed on except to souls that are ready to receive it. The nature of the Children of Israa'eel had grown weak. They totally lacked in resolve. Hardly had they come across people who were engaged in idol-worship than they began to overlook what they had been taught over a long period of time since Moosaa ( ) first called on them

to believe in Allah's Oneness. They even forgot the miracle that had only a short while ago saved them from Pharaoh and drowned him and his army.

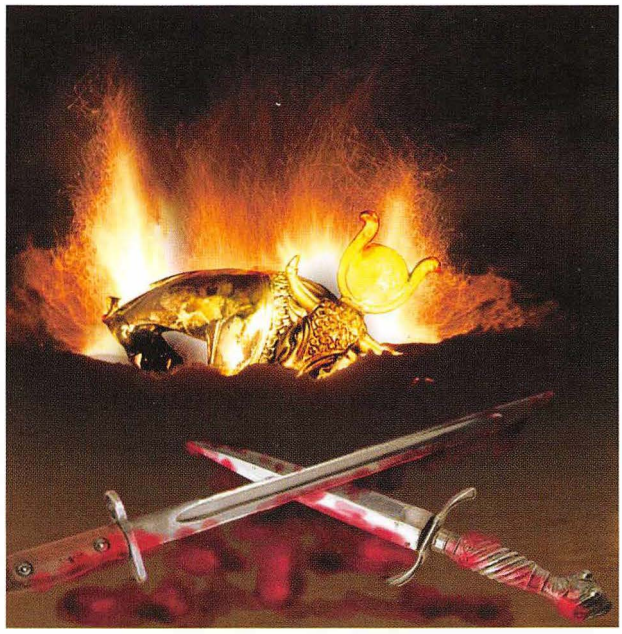
Motivated by his faith in Allah, the Lord of the Worlds, Moosaa (ﷺ) became very angry. He said to them, **"Surely, you are an ignorant people."** (*Surat al-A'raaf* 7: 138)

He asked them, **"Shall I seek for you a god other than Allah, when it is He who has endowed you with gifts above all other nations?"** (*Surat al-A'raaf* 7: 140)

When Moosaa (ﷺ) went to the Mount and was absent from them for some weeks, they became playthings in the hands of Satan. They fell prey to associating things with Allah. One of their men called as-Saamiree took charge of the common folks. He got the gold ornaments the Children of Israa'eel had brought with them from Egypt, threw a fistful of dust that he had picked up from the hoof-marks of Angel Jibreel's horse and moulded a body into the shape of a calf. It produced a lowing sound, and the Israelites began to worship the calf. They said to each other, **"This is your god, and the god of Moosaa, but [Moosaa] has forgotten."** (*Surat Taa Haa* 20: 88)

The Israelites were allured by this golden calf. They bowed to it, and their hearts were deaf and blind to the truth. They did not think that the calf – the effigy of a calf – did not give them any response. It had no power to harm or benefit them. Haaroon forbade them to do this. He tried hard to dissuade them, saying, **"O my people! You are being tempted to evil by this [idol], for surely your Lord is [Allah] Most Gracious, so follow me and obey my command."** (*Surat Taa Haa* 20: 90)

But they answered, **"By no means shall we stop to worship it until Moosaa comes back to us."** (*Surat Taa Haa* 20: 91)



The Punishment

When Allah revealed to Moosaa (ﷺ) that as-Saamiree had misled the Israelites, he came back to his people in grief and anger. He was angry for Allah's Sake with his brother Haaroon. He asked him, **"Haaroon! What prevented you when you saw them going astray from following my way? Have you disobeyed my command?"** (*Surat Taa Haa* 20: 92-3)

Haaroon (عليه السلام) replied, **"Son of my mother! Do not seize me by my beard, nor by the hair of my head. I feared that on returning you might say, 'You sowed discord among the Children of Israa'eel, and did not pay heed to my words.'"** (*Surat Taa Haa* 20: 94)

Moosaa (عليه السلام) was full of wrath and sorrow. He said to his people, **"Evil is the course which you have followed in my absence! Have you forsaken your Lord's Commands?"** (7: 50)

As Moosaa (عليه السلام) threw down the Tablets and dragged Haaroon (عليه السلام) to him, Haaroon said, **"The people made me utterly weak and almost killed me, so do not let my enemies rejoice at my affliction, and do not count me among the evildoing folk."** (7: 150)

Moosaa (عليه السلام) calmed down and prayed, **"My Lord! Forgive me and my brother, and admit us to Your grace; for You are the Most Merciful of those who show mercy."** (7: 151)

Then Moosaa (عليه السلام) turned to as-Saamiree and asked him, **"What then is your case, O as-Saamiree?" He replied, 'I saw what they did not see. So I took a handful [of dust] from the footprint of the Messenger and threw it [into the calf]; thus did my mind prompted me to do.'"** (20: 95-96)

Some Qur'an scholars have said that as-Saamiree saw Jibreel (عليه السلام) and picked up a fistful of dust from the hoof-prints of his horse. He threw it into the golden calf. He thought that by throwing a handful of dust taken from the hoof-marks of the horse of Angel Jibreel (عليه السلام), the moulded golden calf would produce a lowing sound.

Moosaa (عليه السلام) punished as-Saamiree by keeping him entirely apart from the other people of his community. He was branded an outcast and was prohibited from maintaining any social relations. He constantly announced his outcast condition by saying, "Touch me not," so that everyone knew that he could not be touched – in the same way that everyone avoided contact with lepers[1]. He had to live alone like a wild beast without any companions. What a terrible punishment! He corrupted thousands of people with idol-worship. As a result he was shunned and considered filthy.

[1] A leper is someone who has leprosy, a very serious infectious disease in which the flesh and nerves are gradually destroyed.

Moosaa (عليه السلام) then commanded the cursed golden calf to be burnt down. When this was done, he threw its remains into the sea. The Children of Israa'eel witnessed the fate of the calf they had worshipped. It was nothing but an effigy of a calf – weak and powerless in the hands of a Prophet. He then turned to his people and said, **"O my people! You have wronged yourselves by your worship of the calf, so turn to your Lord in repentance and**

slay each other. That will be better for you in the sight of your Lord." (2: 54)

When those who had not worshipped the calf killed those who had worshipped it. Allah turned towards them in forgiveness. Indeed, He is Oft-Returning, Most Merciful.

The Cowardice of the Children of Israa'eel

The Children of Israa'eel had lived in Egypt for many years. They had grown up in Egypt in slavery, humiliation and abasement. The warm blood of faith had frozen in their veins. The fire of faith had died down in their hearts. This showed in their lack of courage, self-respect and enthusiasm. They were not used to leading themselves to striving and fighting for their rights. They had never even thought of such lofty matters.

Guided by revelation from Allah, Moosaa (عليه السلام) commanded his people to enter the Holy Land. There they could dwell secure and free. Moosaa (عليه السلام) was aware of the cowardice and weakness of the Israelites, but he inspired them and urged them to wake up. He wanted to make things easy for them because he knew that the Holy Land was occupied by a strong and arrogant people.

The Children of Israa'eel refused to enter the Holy Land until those fearsome arrogant people had been driven out from it. Moosaa (عليه السلام) recounted Allah's blessings on them, how He had preferred them to other people, so that they would be eager to strive in the way of Allah and loathe the humiliating and undignified life they were living. He said to them, **"O my people! Enter the Holy Land, which Allah had promised you; and do not turn back or else you will be lost."** (5: 21)

What Moosaa (عليه السلام) had been afraid of occurred. Their answer, in spite of all that he had told them was, **"O Moosaa! In this land are a people of exceeding strength. Never shall we enter it unless they leave it; if they leave, then we will enter."** (5: 22)

Two God-fearing men upon whom Allah had bestowed His grace said, **"Assault them at the proper gate; for once you are in, you shall be victorious! And in Allah you must place your trust if you are believers."** (5: 23)

As cowardly as ever, Moosaa's people replied, **"O Moosaa! Never shall we enter it as long as they are in it. Go forth, you and your Lord, and fight then, the two of you while we sit here."** (5: 24)

The two tried to persuade the terror-stricken Children of Israa'eel to place their trust in Allah, but that had no effect on them. They were not alive — they did not move!

This made Moosaa (عليه السلام) sad and angry. He despaired of them and supplicated to Allah, **"My Lord! I have control of none but myself and my brother, so separate us form this rebellious people."** (5: 25)

Allah answered Moosaa's prayer. He said, **"Then it shall remain forbidden unto them for forty years [during which time] they shall be wandering in the land. Therefore, grieve not for the rebellious people."**(5: 26)

During this period of the wandering of the Children of Israa'eel, the generation who had grown up in Egypt in slavery and humiliation died. Another generation grew up and had been raised in this wandering hardship. That was the nation of the future.

Allah afflicted them with humiliation and poverty. Even though it was Almighty Allah who had raised Prophets from among them and made them kings and given them what He had not given any other people during their time, they insisted on disobeying Him, and thus they deserved His wrath.

Pharaoh had subjected them to an evil punishment. He had humiliated them, killed their sons, letting their daughters live. Allah had split the sea for them and had rescued them. He had drowned Pharaoh and his strong armies before their very eyes. He had made the clouds shade them. He had sent *Manna* and *Salwaa* for them. He had made the earth gush forth springs of water for them. He had given them ample food and drink.



The Israelites after Moosaa (عليه السلام)

Prophet Moosaa (عليه السلام) died while the Israelites were still wandering in the land, as a punishment from Allah and what they had done.

But the Children of Israa'eel did not give thankfulness to Allah. Instead, they rejected His signs and disobeyed Him.

They angered Moosaa (عليه السلام) who was extremely kind to them. In fact, it

was Moosaa (عليه السلام) who had rescued them from the tyrant Pharaoh, by Allah's leave. He had brought them out of Egypt to a land of security and freedom —out of a life of slavery into a life of freedom and comfort. But they opposed him and mocked him. Did they not deserve their punishment of wretchedness and constant wandering in the land? Yes, they richly deserved all those punishments because of their evil deeds.

"It was not Allah Who had wronged them, but it was they who wronged themselves." (16: 33)

Prophet Haaroon (عليه السلام) died in the wilderness of wandering about two years before Moosaa (عليه السلام). After him, Moosaa (عليه السلام) died in the wilderness of wandering also. He asked his Lord to let him be close to Jerusalem when he died — at a distance of a stone's throw from it.

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) is reported to have said, "If I were there, I would have shown you his grave below the sand hill by the side of the road." (al-Bukhaaree)

Prophethood passed from Moosaa (عليه السلام) to Joshua at the end of the life of Moosaa (عليه السلام). He was Joshua, son of Noon. Until Moosaa (عليه السلام) died, he continued to receive revelations concerning commands and laws, and to speak with Allah about every circumstance. He had been an honoured Prophet and of eminent position before Allah. He spoke to Allah until his very last moment.

Joshua ibn Noon brought the Children of Israa'eel out of their wandering and took them to the Holy Land.

The Israelites conquered Jerusalem under the leadership of Joshua. When the Israelites conquered Jerusalem, they held it for a long time. Prophet Joshua ruled among them with justice in the light of the *Tawraah*. He was one hundred and twenty-seven years old, and so he lived after Moosaa (عليه السلام), for about twenty-seven years.

You will, *inshaa' Allaah*, learn in detail about the story of Qaaroon and Prophet Moosaa's encounter with Al-Khidr in Grade Nine!

Exercises

A. Fill in the blanks.

1. Light from the Lord is the light of the _____.
2. People who have no fear of Allah and no *sharee'ah* break their _____.
3. Allah summoned Moosaa (عليه السلام) to _____ in order to give him the Law.
4. He was summoned for a period of _____ days.
5. The Israelites had camped at a place called _____.
6. Moosaa (عليه السلام) appointed _____ in his place.
7. Allah gave Moosaa (عليه السلام) _____ and _____.
8. After Moosaa (عليه السلام), Prophethood passed to _____.

B. Answer the following questions.

1. What does *sharee'ah* mean?

2. Why did Moosaa (عليه السلام) take with him leaders to Mount Sinai?

3. What did Moosaa (عليه السلام) do in the forty days of retreat?

4. Was Moosaa (عليه السلام) able to see Allah?

5. How did Moosaa's companions invite the wrath of Allah?

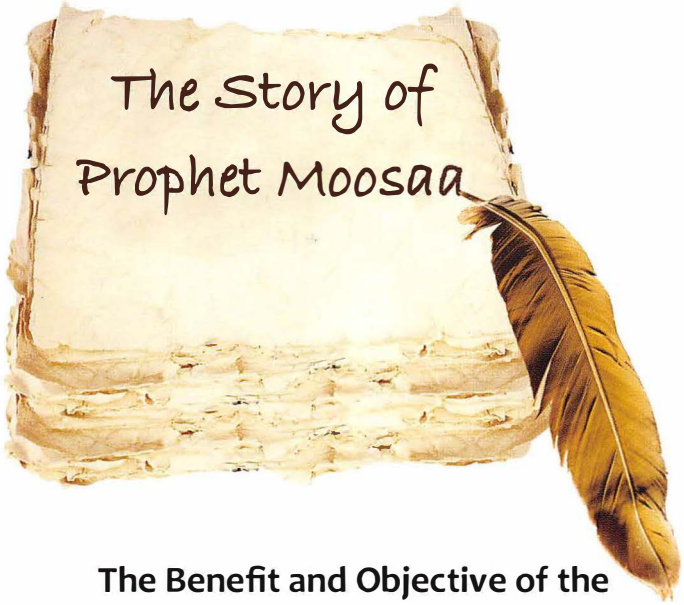
6. Why did as-Saamiree mould the idol for the Israelites?

7. What kind of punishment did as-Saamiree receive?

8. Why did Allah forbid the Children of Israa'eel's entry into the Holy Land? What did He do instead?

The Story of Prophet Moosaa (عليه السلام) and Pharaoh:

24



The Benefit and Objective of the Stories in the Qur'an

It is very important to read and study the stories of the Qur'an. These stories contain very important lessons and warnings. After one of the longest stories in the Qur'an, the story of Prophet Yoosuf (عليه السلام) and his brothers, Almighty Allah makes a very important pronouncement on stories when He says, **"Indeed, in their stories there is a lesson for men of understanding."** (12:111) One of the most significant Lessons we can derive from these stories is that they show us how we should invite people to Allah and what things we should stress first. The stories of the Qur'an make it quite clear that all the Prophets' primary message was one and the same — calling people to the Oneness of Allah (*tawheed*). Moreover, these stories show that the true religion of mankind has always been one and the same — that religion which is consistent with man's inherent nature. It is the religion of *tawheed* — the Oneness of Allah.

Furthermore, through these stories, the believer realizes that he is part of one community that has existed throughout the centuries. This community has as its sole purpose the worship and good pleasure of Allah. The Muslim is not alone in his struggle to follow the Straight Path. Many have gone along the path in the past. They were successful in following that path. He can also be successful in adhering to it.

Many of these stories show how the earlier Prophets were treated by their own communities. They show that all the prophets had to face hardships and difficulties including ridicule, contempt and denial from their own people. Therefore, the Prophet and those who follow in his footsteps should keep clearly in their minds that when they face such hardships in their lives, earlier Prophets also had to face the same. This is Allah's way — It is a test from Allah that all may have to face. At the same time, these stories make it abundantly

clear that Allah gave them strength and helped them because of their patience.

These stories also demonstrate how greatly Allah Most High blessed His true and devoted servants. While reading stories of Prophets Sulaymaan, Daawood, 'Eesaa, Zakariyyaa, and Prophet Eesaa's mother Maryam, one does not fail to recognize how much Allah blessed, guided and supported these pious and righteous people. It reminds the reader that if he is really working for the sake of Allah, Allah will surely help him. He will surely bless him and will never deprive him of the rewards of his deeds. This is part of the fulfillment of Allah's promise to the believers.

Allah has Power over everything. He can do whatever He wills. Nothing occurs except by His Will. If He wills to alter the natural course of events and permit miracles to happen, this is easy for Him. He has done it throughout the history of mankind. This can be seen in the stories of Prophets Ibraaheem, Yoosuf, Moosaa, 'Eesaa, and others.



The Story of Moosaa (عليه السلام) and Pharaoh

One of the stories most often repeated in the Qur'an is the story of Moosaa (عليه السلام) and Fir'awn (Pharaoh). Many of the stories found in the Qur'an are repeated throughout the Qur'an. The purpose of this repetition is manifold.

(1) The different ways of presenting these stories brings out the linguistic eloquence of the Qur'an.

(2) Presenting similar teachings in various ways leaves the matter fresh in the minds of the readers who anxiously read the stories and derive benefit from them.

(3) Presenting the same over and over again in different forms demonstrates to the readers the great significance of these particular stories.

Hence, one can clearly see in the life of Prophet Moosaa (عليه السلام) that when Allah wills to protect and preserve something, no one can foil His plans. This is what happened with Moosaa (عليه السلام) when his mother put him into the River Nile to protect him from Pharaoh's guards. They were killing the sons of the Children of Israa'eel. Allah revealed to Moosaa's mother to cast him into the river and not to fear

fear nor grieve. Allah promised her to bring him back to her and make him one of the messengers. Such is the perfect will and knowledge of Allah.

We can also learn from the story of Moosaa (عليه السلام) that no matter how powerful the forces of evil might be, there comes a time when they are brought down and destroyed. Pharaoh and his forces were destroyed swiftly.

Pharaoh misled and befooled his people who thoughtlessly obeyed him. They were in fact an evildoing folk. So when they angered Allah Most High, He punished them and drowned them all. Allah made them an example for later generations. This is one of the clearest lessons of the story.

A believer can also see in the story of Moosaa (عليه السلام) and Pharaoh the effect of *eemaan* , or faith, when it enters into the hearts. The sorcerers whom Pharaoh had gathered together were willing to obey his orders for some worldly gains. However, as soon as they realized the truth of Moosaa's call, they immediately gave up the gains they were hoping to get and firmly stood for the truth right in the face of the cruel Pharaoh and prostrated to Allah. A little while before they were sorcerers, and now they were righteous martyrs, who preferred to die for the sake of their faith.

Their faithfulness to the Truth is a lesson for all. Once someone sees and recognizes the truth, he should never compromise or sacrifice that truth for anything in this world. The stories of the Qur'an are not meant for pure enjoyment. Their purpose is to present very important moral teachings. They contain a great deal of guidance that the Qur'an has to offer.

Exercises

A. Fill in the blanks.

1. The Prophets' primary message was to call people to _____.
2. The stories of the Qur'an are not meant for pure _____.

B. Answer the following questions.

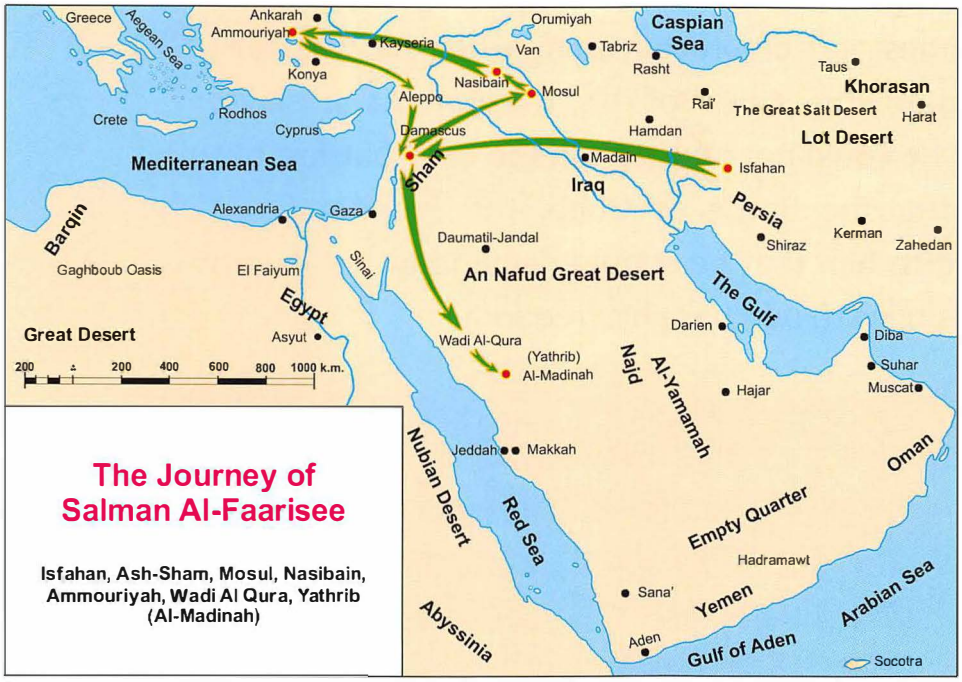
1. Why is it important to read and study the stories of the Qur'an?

2. What kind of treatment did all the Prophets have to face?

3. What kind of people does Allah bless, guide and support?

4. Why are the stories in the Qur'an repeated?

Salmaan al-Faarisee (رضي الله عنه)



Salmaan al-Faarisee, or the Persian, hailed from the town of Raam Hurmuz in Khuzestan. According to some other reports, he belonged to Jayy, near Isfahan. He was one of the noble companions of the Prophet (ﷺ).

Salamaan (رضي الله عنه) was the son of an apparently well-to-do agriculturist. He had displayed, since his early childhood, a deeply religious bend of mind. After a period of hard attachment to the Zoroastrian faith, he came in contact with some Christians. He found a great deal of what he had been previously longing for, in their teachings. He, therefore, decided to embrace Christianity. But this angered his father who harshly opposed him. So Salmaan left his home and proceeded to Syria.

In Damascus he spent some years as a Christian in the service of a priest. After the priest's death, he became his successor. For many years afterwards, he was intimately associated as servant-disciple with several other Christian priests and monks of more or less saintly reputation. He travelled during that period in Mawsil, Nasibeen and Ammuriyah, a town in Anatolia. In the end, he was told by one of his spiritual masters that the Prophet announced in the Injeel (Gospel) had now appeared in far-off Arabia.

Driven by his insatiable spiritual thirst, Salmaan immediately proceeded southwards. On this way, he was treacherously sold into slavery by some Bedouins of the tribe of Banu Ka'b, whom he had engaged as his guides. He came to be the slave of a Jew in Waadee al-Quraa, an oasis between Taymaa' and Khaybar. He was later sold by his master to a Jew in Madeenah.

When, about one year later, the Prophet (ﷺ) migrated there from Makkah, Salmaan understood at once that this was the Prophet of whom he had heard during his travels in the north. He visited the Prophet (ﷺ) several times and embraced Islam when he was fully convinced of the truth of his mission. As a slave, however, he could not take part in the early battles, but shortly after the Battle of Uhud, the Prophet (ﷺ) suggested to him that he should demand of his Jewish master his right to purchase his freedom.

The Jew agreed to set Salmaan free if he planted date palms and paid, in addition to this, a heavy amount in cash. The Companions collected the palm-slips between themselves. All of them worked together with Salmaan in planting and watering the date palms. The money was a more difficult problem. The Muslims were poor at that time. But it happened that one of them found a lump of gold in an old mine, near Madeenah, and it was given to Salmaan's master, who promptly liberated him.

From that time onward, Salmaan took part in all the Prophet's campaigns. The first one in which he took part was the Battle of the Trench, which took place in the year 5 AH.

The Prophet (ﷺ) regarded him as a member of his own family. He was deeply respected by all the Prophet's companions on account of the knowledge he had acquired during his long travels in foreign lands. Umar ibn Al-Khattaab (رضي الله عنه) appointed him governor of Madaa'in in Iraq, where Salmaan died during the Caliphate of Uthmaan. The date of his death is variously given as 35, 36, and 37 AH. The most probable date is 35 AH.

Exercises

A. Fill in the blanks.

1. Al-Faarisee means _____.
2. Salmaan left Persia and went to _____.
3. _____ was the first battle in which Salmaan took part.
4. Umar (رضي الله عنه) appointed him governor of _____.

B. Answer the following questions.

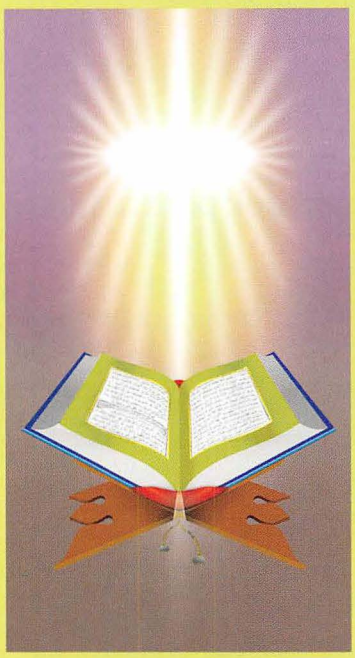
1. Why did Salmaan (رضي الله عنه) leave Zoroastrianism to join Christianity?

2. Why did Salmaan (رضي الله عنه) leave Syria? What happened to him on the way?

3. What kept Salmaan (رضي الله عنه) from taking part in the earlier Islamic battles?

4. How did Salmaan (رضي الله عنه) manage to win his freedom?

Sujood at-Tilaawah
Prostration for Recitation



The Qur'an is the Word of Allah

The Glorious Qur'an is the Word of Allah. It is addressed to us. It is the Book of eternal guidance given to us by the Ever-living Allah. It is as relevant for us today just as it was over fourteen centuries ago and will remain so forever. The Qur'an is the Speech of Allah – as if Allah were speaking to us through it now and today.

Words of the Prophet (ﷺ) about the Qur'an

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said, "The superiority of the Speech of Allah over all other speech is like the superiority of Allah over His creation." (At-Tirmidhee and ad-Daarimee)

When one realizes the nature of the superiority of the Qur'an, one will definitely dedicate some of one's time to read and study this speech and not ignore it or turn to other sources for guidance.

The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "Have good tidings! Truly, one end of this Qur'an is in the Hand of Allah and another end is in your hands. Adhere to it and you will not be destroyed, nor will you ever go astray after it." (at-Tabaraanee)

He also said, "Certainly, Allah has special people among mankind." His companions asked, "Messenger of Allah, who are they?" He replied, "They are the people of the Qur'an. They are the people of the Qur'an and specially His.' (Ahmad, Ibn Maajah and an-Nasaa'ee)

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) also said about the Qur'an, "Allah makes the way to Paradise easy for him who follows a path in order to seek knowledge. No people gather together in one of the houses of Allah, reciting the Book of Allah and studying it among themselves, except that calmness is descended upon them, mercy covers them, the angels surround them and Allah makes mention of them to those in His presence." (Muslim)

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) also said, "The example of the believer who recites the Qur'an is like that of a citron (*utrujjah*), which tastes good and smells good; that of the believer who does not recite the Qur'an is like a dried date (*tamrah*), which is good in taste but has no smell; and the example of a hypocrite who recites the Qur'an is like the basil plant (*rayhaanah*), which smells good but tastes bitter; and the example of a hypocrite who does not recite the Qur'an is like the colocynth[1] (*handhalah*), which tastes bitter and has no smell." (Muslim)

Here Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) shows the greatness and lofty nature of the Qur'an. It is important to realize that even if it comes out of the mouth of someone who does not truly believe in it, Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) describes it as having a good and pleasant smell.

Last but not least, we mention here one *hadeeth* which demonstrates the importance of the Book of Allah in one's life. Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said, "The Qur'an is evidence either for you or against you." (Muslim)

In this *hadeeth*, Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) makes it clear that the Qur'an constitutes evidence for us or against us, hence the importance of living by its dictates.

[1] A colocynth is a certain bitter plant. See Lane Vol. One, p. 657.

A Muslim's Obligation towards the Qur'an

One of the first obligations of a Muslim towards the Qur'an is to believe that it is Allah's Book which He sent down to His Messenger Muhammad (ﷺ). Therefore, he must have a strong love for it. He should read it, study it, try his best to memorize it and act in accordance with its teachings.

One must realize that the Qur'an has been revealed for the sake of the reader and is directed to him. The Qur'an is a mercy, healing and guide and has been sent for the sake of every individual who wishes to believe in it and follow it. Hence, the Qur'an has actually been revealed for the reader himself. Therefore, when he approaches the Qur'an, he should think to himself: It is Allah's Mercy. He has revealed this Book for my benefit. He has revealed it so I may know my Lord better and see that Straight Path that is pleasing to Him and follow it. In reality, the Qur'an is my personal Book. It is my own Book. Allah is talking to me directly in the Qur'an. He is guiding me directly. It is a healing for the diseases of my heart and soul. There is not a single passage in the Qur'an which does not have a personal message for me. Every Attribute of Allah requires me to build a corresponding relationship with Allah the Almighty.

Every description of life after death requires me to prepare for it, aspire for its reward and seek protection from its evil.

The Term *Tilaawah*

Tilaawah is the term the Qur'an uses to describe the act of reading. No single word in English can convey its full meaning. 'To follow' is closest to its primary meanings. 'To read' is only secondary.

Hence, primarily, *tilaawah* means 'to move closely behind, to go forward, to go in pursuit, to take as a guide, a model, to accept its authority, to understand, and to follow the train of thought'. It means 'reading the Qur'an, following its guidance and understanding it'.

Tilaawah, then, is an act by which your whole person — eyes, tongue, mind, soul, heart, and your entire body — participates.

The Manner of Reading the Qur'an

The Qur'an says, "And recite the Qur'an in slow, measured rhythmic tones." (*Surat Al-Muzzammil*, 73: 4)

This manner of reading the Qur'an (*tilaawah*) can be achieved by observing the rules of *tajweed*. The term *tajweed* is derived from the Arabic root *jawwada*, which means 'to make well, to improve, or make good'. Hence, *tajweed* carries two distinct meanings.



1. Correct and good pronunciation in recitation,
2. A mode of recitation of medium speed.

Finally the Word *Sujood*: Prostration

Sujood literally means prostration. It is, however, important that no single English word or expression can convey the full meanings of Islamic terms. The following explanation will bring out the difference. The English word prostration, according to *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, means lying stretched out on the ground with one's face downwards. In the technical language of the *Sharee'ah*, the term *sujood* is a part of the *prayer*, or *salaat*.

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) used to say, "When a servant [of Allah] prostrates, seven limbs prostrate with him: his face, his palms, his knees and his feet." (Muslim)

He used to order likewise, saying, "When you perform *sujood*

place your palms on the ground and raise your elbows. Do not spread your forearms like a dog spreads his." (Muslim)

Another version reads, "None of you should rest his arms to the ground the way a dog rests them." (At-Tirmidhee)

He also used to say, "There is no prayer for the one whose nose does not feel as much of the ground as the forehead." (At-Tabaraanee)

In one narration it comes, 'When you perform *sujood*, put your face and hands down firmly, until all your bones are relaxed in their proper places." (Ibn Khuzaymah)

The Prophet (ﷺ) would support himself on his palms, put his fingers together and point them towards the *qiblah*, keeping his feet upright. Hence, he would prostrate on seven limbs: the palms, the knees, the feet, and the forehead and the nose. He once observed, "I have been ordered to prostrate on seven bones." (Muslim)

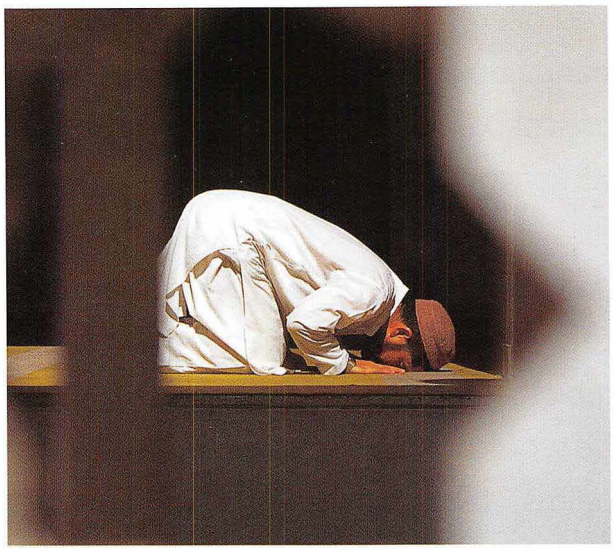
Sujood at- Tilaawah

There are fifteen verses (*aayaat*: sing. *aayah*) in the Qur'an which require us to perform a prostration when we read or hear them. In them it is mentioned that Allah's servants and creation prostrate before their Lord. They are:

Verse	*Surah*	Verse	*Surah*	Verse	*Surah*
206	7	18	22	24	38
15	13	77	22	38	41
49-50	16	60	25	62	53
109	17	25-26	27	20-21	84
58	19	15	32	19	96

When one of these verses is read (for example 96: 19 or 53: 62), readers and listeners alike perform *sujood*, either directly from the sitting position, if one is sitting, or from the standing position if, for example, the passage is recited during the prayer. The prayer is then resumed in the normal order.

The verses calling for *sujood* are often amplified by printing a line above the actual words, mentioning the word '*sajdah*' in the margin of the printed copies of the Qur'an.



Sujood at-Tilaawah outside the prayer is performed as follows:

- ❑ Formulate the *niyyah* (intention).
- ❑ Face the *qiblah* (standing or sitting).
- ❑ Say *takbeer*, i.e. *Allaahu Akbar*.
- ❑ Prostrate on the floor, making sure that the palms, knees, toes, nose and forehead are placed on the floor, and glorify Allah by saying: *Subhaana rabbiyal-A'ala* (Glory be to my Lord, Most High), three times.
- ❑ Rise saying *takbeer*.

According to traditions, while reciting the Qur'an in large gatherings, when the Prophet (ﷺ) came upon a verse the recitation of which called for *sujood*, he would prostrate and the whole gathering would follow him. The traditions mention that sometimes some people did not have room to prostrate. Such people prostrated on the backs of others. (Al-Bukhaaree)

It is reported in connection with the Conquest of Makkah that in the course of the Qur'anic recitation, as the Prophet (ﷺ) recited such a verse, those standing fell into prostration, while those who were mounted on horses and camels performed prostration in that very state. It is also recorded that while delivering a sermon from the pulpit, the Prophet (ﷺ) came down from the pulpit to offer prostration, and resumed his sermon thereafter. (Abu Daawood)

Note:

There is a difference in Arabic between the words *sajdah* and *sujood*. *Sajdah* is one single act of prostration, while *sujood* refers to the act of prostration itself.

The Conditions for *Sujood at-Tilaawah*

The conditions for this kind of *sujood* are exactly the same as required for offering prayer.

- ❑ One should be in a state of ritual purity.
- ❑ One should be facing the *qiblah*.
- ❑ The prostration should be performed as one performs it in prayer.

This is the general opinion of scholars on this point, and it is preferable to follow it.

Exercises

A. Fill in the blanks.

1. The superiority of the Speech of Allah over all other speech is like _____.
2. The Qur'an has been revealed for the sake of the _____.
3. When a servant [of Allah] prostrates, _____ prostrate with him.
4. There are _____ verses in the Qur'an that require us to prostrate.

B. Answer the following questions.

1. According to a *hadeeth*, who are the special people among mankind?

2. Explain the *hadeeth* "The Qur'an is evidence either for you or against you."

3. Write a few lines on the attitude Muslims should adopt toward the Qur'an.

4. Give the meaning of the word *tilaawah*.

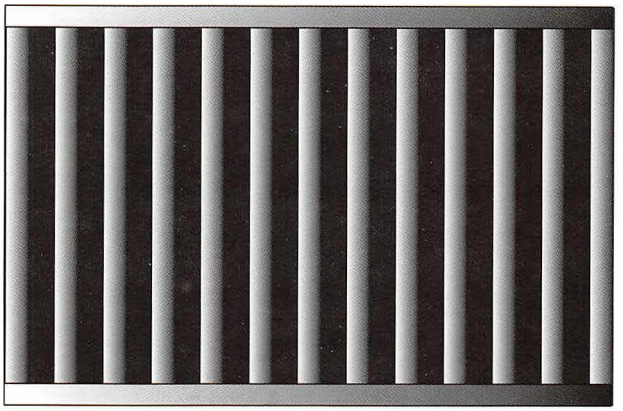
5. How should one perform s*ujood at-tilaawah* while in prayer?

6. What are the conditions for s*ujood at-tilaawah*?

Paradise is yours... for now I have forgiven you your sins.'" When Haatib's servant remarked, "Messenger of Allah, Haatib will enter Hell." Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said, "That is not true. He will never enter Hell, for he has witnessed Badr and Al-Hudaybiyyah [Truce]." (Muslim)

The fact that Haatib did what he did does not mean that he had no faith in Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ). He only wanted to have some influence among the people of Makkah, so that he would protect his family and his possessions there. This shows the high in esteem in which the Prophet (ﷺ) himself held the companions of Badr. Their heroism and self-sacrifice on the occasion of the battle outweighed any lapse on their part in later times. It is to be understood, however, that the Prophet (ﷺ) considered that Haatib's act was due to weakness rather than to treacherous motives.

The outcome of Badr had a profound effect in Makkah and Madeenah and indeed throughout the Arabian Peninsula. The polytheists were disappointed with the outcome and displayed hatred, which manifested itself in open hostility.

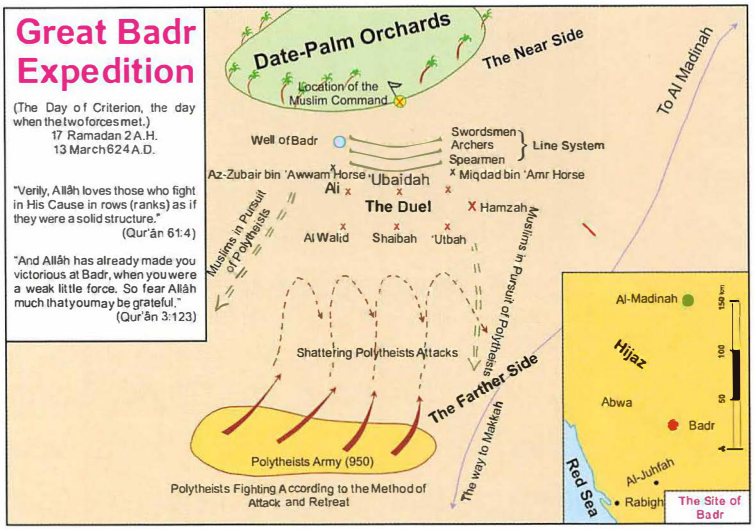


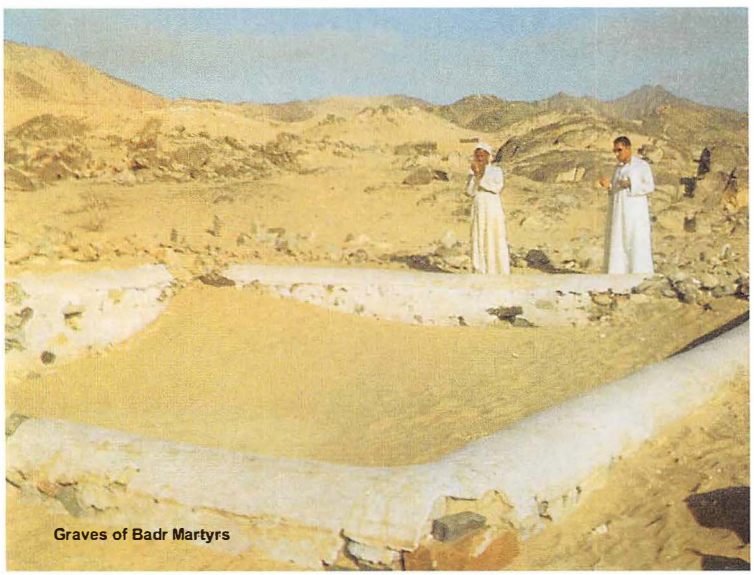
A Word about the Prisoners of War

As discussed in Grade Seven earlier, seventy of the Makkans were taken captive on the battlefield. Each of the captives had been shared between three or more of the fighters who had participated in the battle. Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) pardoned the captives. He accepted ransom from them and released them. He was gracious to those who had nothing to give and set them free. The Quraysh sent money to ransom the prisoners and Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) set them free.

Among the captives were those who had nothing from which to ransom themselves. Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) asked them to earn their freedom by teaching the children of the *Ansaar* how to write. Each captive taught ten Muslims. Zayd ibn Thaabit was one of those who learnt in this way from the captives of Badr.

In dealing with the seventy captives of war, there were three ways open for the Prophet (ﷺ), all of which




Graves of Badr Martyrs

The Great Battle of Badr at A Glance

The Battle of Badr was a turning point in the history of Islam. For this reason, the Qur'an describes it as the Day of Distinction (*yawm al-furqaan*) between truth and falsehood. A little before the battle, the Ansaar of Madeenah had announced that their obedience to the Prophet (ﷺ) was not limited to the written pledge which they had drawn up at the second Pledge at al-Aqabah. They were obedient soldiers. They were prepared to make sacrifices for the sake of their faith without any conditions whatsoever.

During the battle, the *Muhaajiroon* faced their near relatives: son confronted father, and brother confronted brother. Family ties did not prevent the *Muhaajiroon* from fighting against their kith and kin. Faith came before over all other ties and commitments. Those who fought at Badr obtained great esteem. They received honour and recognition throughout the ages.

The authentic sayings of the Prophet (ﷺ) extol the merits of the Badriyoon (those who participated in the Battle of Badr) and their high ranks in Paradise.

There is a story of Haatib ibn Abee Balta'ah (رضي الله عنه) who was one of those who fought in this battle. He had informed the Quraysh, a little before the conquest of Makkah, that the Muslims were coming to conquer Makkah, but the Prophet (ﷺ) forgave him. He said, "Maybe Allah has looked at those who fought at Badr and said, 'Do whatever you like; now

were in conformity with the established customs of Arabia in those days. He could have killed all of them. This was, in fact, suggested to him by no less an illustrious companion than 'Umar ibn al-Khattaab (رضي الله عنه), who later became the second caliph. 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) even suggested that each prisoner should be killed by his nearest Muslim relative. Many soldiers in the Makkan army had their relatives among the migrants including fathers and sons. But the Prophet (ﷺ) did not accept the suggestion.

The second course open for him was to take them all as slaves and distribute them among the Muslims who had fought in the battle. Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) did not do so.

The third option available was to free them by taking ransom. Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) preferred this course of action.

One of the captives was Suhayl ibn 'Amr who was a fiery orator. He had become infamous for his bitter and offensive attacks on the Prophet (ﷺ) and his companions in his speeches. When he was found among the captives, 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) suggested that two of his front teeth be pulled out as punishment so that he might not in future be so sharp in his vile utterances. Allah's Messenger (ﷺ), although having full power over Suhayl, and having himself been most aggrieved, did not agree. Suhayl (رضي الله عنه) later embraced Islam and became a devout Muslim.

All the captives had been tied down to different pillars. Among them was Al-'Abbas ibn 'Abd al-Muttalib who was one of the Prophet's uncles. He later embraced Islam during the time of the conquest of Makkah.

The Prophet (ﷺ) knew that he had a soft corner for him and that he had joined the Quraysh in Badr against his will. The ropes round him were so tight that he groaned in pain. At night, the Prophet (ﷺ) could hear his groans. It pained him to see his uncle in pain and he began to pace up and down restlessly. The companions asked him why he was so perturbed, and he told them the reason of his distress. The companions forthwith offered to loosen the ropes around Al-'Abbaas. The Prophet (ﷺ) demanded that the ropes around all the captives be loosened as well. All the captives were treated in the same way.

On one occasion, the Ansaar sought permission from the Prophet (ﷺ) not to take ransom from Al-'Abbaas and to release him unconditionally, but he remarked, "You will not leave a single *dirham* of it." (Al-Bukhaaree)

The Prophet (ﷺ) turned to Al-'Abbaas and said, "Ransom yourself and your two nephews, 'Aqeel and Nawfal, and your ally 'Utbah ibn 'Amr, for you are a rich man." Al-'Abbaas protested, "I was already a Muslim, but the people made me march out with them." The Prophet (ﷺ) then said, "As to your Islam, Allah knows best. If what you say is true, Allah will reward you. But outwardly you have been against us, so pay us your ransom." Al-'Abbaas replied that he had no money. But the Prophet (ﷺ) said, "What about the money you and your wife, Umm al-Fadhl, have hidden? You two were alone when you said to her, 'If I should be killed, so much is for Al-Fadhl, for 'Abdullah, and for Qutham, my sons.'" Al-'Abbaas said, "I do know for certain that you are Allah's Messenger. This is something of which no one has any knowledge except me and my wife." And he agreed to ransom his two nephews and his confederates as well as himself.

One of the prisoners who was quartered with the Prophet (ﷺ) was his son-in-law Abul-'Aas, whose brother 'Amr came from Makkah with a sum of money sent by Zaynab, the daughter of the Prophet (ﷺ), to ransom him; and with the money she sent a necklace of onyx, which her mother had given her on her wedding day. When the Prophet (ﷺ) saw the necklace, he became sad, recognizing it at once as Khadeejah's, his wife. Deeply moved, he said to those who had a share in the prisoner, "If you find it fit to release her captive husband and return her the ransom, it is for you to do so." They at once agreed, and both the money and the necklace were returned together with Abu Al-'Aas himself. It had been hoped that he would enter Islam while he was in Madeenah, but he did not, and when he left for Makkah, the Prophet (ﷺ) told him that on his return he should send Zaynab to Madeenah, which he sadly promised to do. The revelation made it clear that a Muslim woman could not be the wife of an unbelieving man.

Many people now began to accept Islam. Among them were those who did so to protect their own interests after they realized that Islam was on the rise. These people were the hypocrites (*munaafiqoon*) who professed Islam but concealed unbelief (*kufr*) in their hearts. Their leader was 'Abdullah ibn Ubayy ibn Salool.

The Quraysh in Makkah could hardly believe what had happened. Their leader and heroes had been killed. They were determined to avenge their dead. They sent 'Umayr ibn Wahb al-Jumahee to assassinate the Prophet (ﷺ) after Safwaan ibn Umayyah had promised to look after his family, should 'Umayr be killed.

'Umayr agreed. His son was one of the captives, but he was too heavily in debt to ransom him. "On me be your debt," said Safwaan, "and your family be as mine! I will care for them as long as they live." 'Umayr immediately accepted his offer, and they swore to keep it a secret between the two of them until their end had been achieved. Then he sharpened his sword, smeared it with poison, and set off for Madeenah on the pretext of ransoming his son. When he reached the mosque, 'Umar ibn al-Khattaab (رضي الله عنه) seized him and took him to the Prophet (ﷺ), who asked him why he had come. 'Umayr lied and told him that he had come to ask the release of his son. But the Prophet (ﷺ) told him his real purpose and repeated word for word the conversation he had had with Safwaan. "So Safwan took it upon himself to pay off your debt and look after your family," the Prophet (ﷺ) concluded, "that you should kill me, but Allah has come between you and that." 'Umayr exclaimed, "Who told you this, for by Allah there was no third man with us?" "Jibreel told me," said the Prophet (ﷺ). 'Umayr said, "We called you a liar when you brought us news from heaven. Praise be to Allah Who has guided me to Islam. I testify that there is no god but Allah, and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah."

The Prophet (ﷺ) turned to some of those who were present and said, "Instruct your brother in his religion, recite the Qur'an to him, and release for him his captive son."

'Umayr was eager to return to Makkah so that he might try to bring others to Islam; Safwaan was among them. The Prophet (ﷺ) gave him permission to go and he made many people accept Islam. But Safwaan considered him to be a traitor. He resolutely refused to speak to him or have anything to do with him. A few months later, 'Umayr returned to Madeenah as an Emigrant.

When Abul-'Aas returned to Makkah, he told Zaynab that he had promised her father that he would send her to Madeenah. They agreed that their little daughter Umaamah should go with her. Their son 'Ali had died in infancy and Zaynab was now expecting a third child. Zaynab began to prepare for the journey in absolute secrecy. Being the daughter of the Prophet (ﷺ), she knew the value of secrecy when a major task was being undertaken. Of course, the Quraysh were watching. It was impossible that they would willingly grant the Prophet (ﷺ) the satisfaction and blessing of being reunited with his daughter. So Zaynab had to plan her exit from Makkah very carefully. Meanwhile, the Prophet (ﷺ) sent his adopted son Zayd

ibn Haarithah, and one of the Ansaar to go out to fetch her. They stayed in Yaa'jaj, some 12 km north of Makkah. The journey took place roughly a month after the Battle of Badr. When everything was ready, her brother-in-law, Kinaanah ibn ar-Rabee', decreed it was safe to leave with her in broad daylight. He might have thought that as she was inside a howdah (*hawdaj*) nobody would notice her. But he was proven wholly wrong. Soon the Quraysh horsemen were in hot pursuit. They caught up with Zaynab and her guide in a place not far from Makkah called Dhaat at-Tuwaa.

One of the pursuers, called Habbaar ibn al-Aswad, threatened her with his spear. The camel on which she was riding got frightened, for it jerked violently and Zaynab (رضي الله عنها), who was pregnant, fell so heavily to the ground that her unborn child was killed. In this way, Zaynab's skilful handling of the situation, all her patient, secret preparations, was rendered futile by the reckless and thoughtless action of her well-meaning brother-in-law, Kinaanah. He, however, did manage to push back the offenders and guard Zaynab against any further harm.

At length, a group of the Qurayshite elders arrived on the scene. They rebuked Kinaanah for the way he had made his exit from the city. He had been insensitive, they argued, to the feelings of the Quraysh against Muhammad (ﷺ), especially after the heavy casualties they had suffered at the recent Battle of Badr. If they had allowed him to take her in broad daylight, the Arab tribesmen would have considered this as a sign of weakness or even cowardice on the part of the Quraysh.

Then, Abu Sufyaan, acting as the supreme chief of the Quraysh (which he no doubt was after the death of Abu Jahl and other Quraysh leaders who were killed at Badr) assured Zaynab (رضي الله عنها) and her brother-in-law that they would, after all, be allowed to leave for Madeenah, but they would have to leave at night and in secrecy. After a few days, when things were calmer and settled, Zaynab (رضي الله عنها) was allowed to make the journey as promised. She safely made her way to Madeenah and was reunited with the father, the Prophet (ﷺ).

The Incident of Abu Sufyaan and His Son 'Amr

The discussion of the captives of war will remain incomplete if we do not mention the incident of Abu Sufyaan ibn Harb and his son 'Amr. Abu Sufyaan was the leader of the caravan, which the Muslims had tried to intercept. That was the incident which led to the Battle

of Badr. As learnt earlier, Abu Sufyaan succeeded in evading the Muslim troops and led his caravan to safety until he reached Makkah. Two of his sons, however, were in the Quraysh army, which fought against the Muslims. One of his sons, Handhalah, was killed in the battle, while the other Amr was taken prisoner.

When most of the captives were freed after the payment of ransom, some people of Makkah were surprised that Abu Sufyaan did not attempt to get his son freed, nor was he even prepared to ransom him. His argument for leaving his son prisoner, without trying to get him released, was that he did not want to suffer a financial loss in addition to the loss of his son. He said he was prepared to leave 'Amr captive for as long as the Muslims cared to keep him. One day, he argued, they would have to free him.

A short while later, an elderly man from the Muslims of Madeenah went out with his wife to Makkah for *'umrah*. It did not occur to the man, Sa'd ibn an-Nu'maan, that he would be in any danger because it was a time-honoured custom in Arabia that the Quraysh would not harm anyone who visited Makkah for *'umrah* no matter how good or bad their relations with the visitor's tribe were. But this time, Abu Sufyaan and his men caught Sa'd and kept him prisoner. It was, however, a blatant violation of their established traditions. Nobody in the Quraysh objected to Abu Sufyaan's wrong action. The fact was everyone in the Quraysh felt the agony and humiliation of their defeat at Badr. This led them to believe that Abu Sufyaan's action was not without justification.

Back in Madeenah, the *Ansaar* who belonged to the same clan as Sa'd were perturbed when they learnt that he was captured. They went to the Prophet (ﷺ) and asked him to approve an exchange deal whereby they would give Abu Sufyaan his son and get their man freed. Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) agreed and the exchange was put into effect. But the time-honoured traditions were violated for the sake of a limited gain. Indeed, the Quraysh stopped at nothing in their hostility to Islam and the Prophet (ﷺ).

The Situation after Badr

The victory of Badr was most inspiring for the Muslims. It made their position quite strong and cast terror into the hearts of the enemies whose defeat at Badr was a grave misfortune

for the Makkans. They were so shaken by the news that they hardly believed what had happened. They had lost most of their prominent men and trained fighters. The defeat shook their prestige completely. It had a profound effect on Abu Lahab. A severe fever seized him and he died a few days later.

For days women of the Quraysh mourned their dead. They shaved off their heads and whipped themselves. Only Hind, the wife of Abu Sufyaan, did not lament publicly. She said, "I shall not mourn them publicly until I have avenged them. Fat and fragrance will remain forbidden to me until we have defeated the Muslims," she vowed.

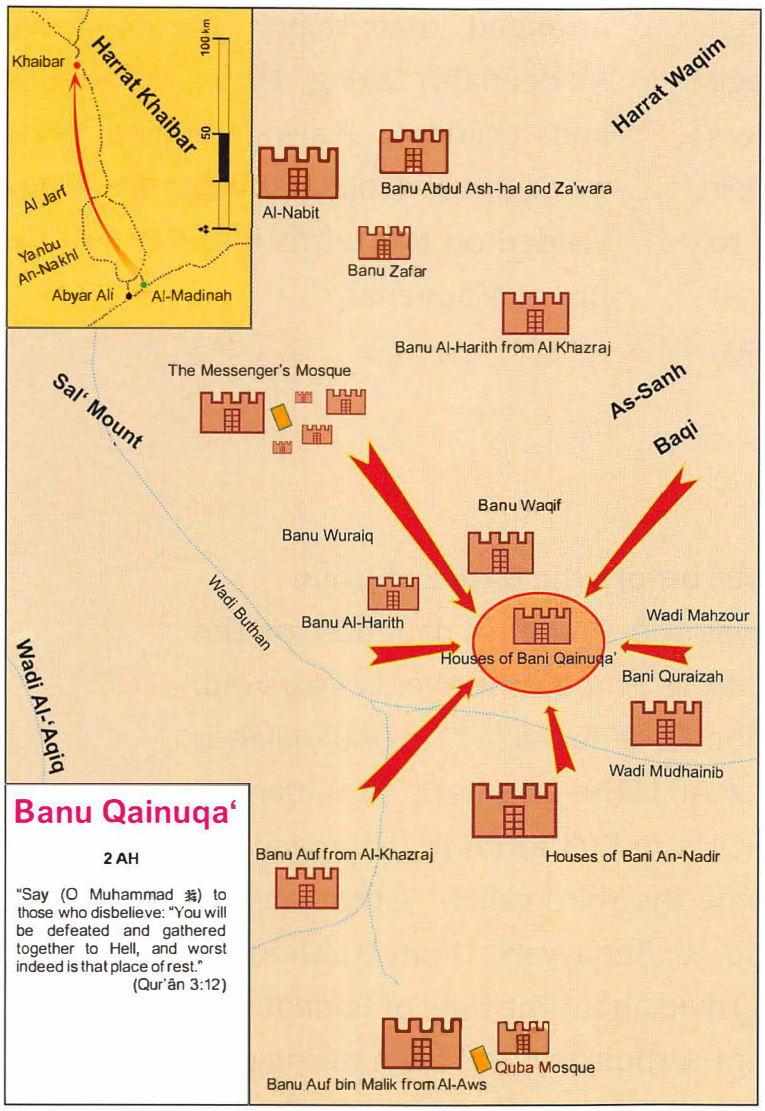
Abu Sufyaan took control of the affairs of Makkah. He publicly announced that he had vowed to carry out a raid against the Muslims.

The Battle of As-Saweeq (The Barley-Meal Expedition)

Nearly two and a half months after the Battle of Badr, Abu Sufyaan mobilized a force of two hundred horsemen and went towards Madeenah to fulfil his oath. They first went to the quarters of the Jewish tribe of Banu An-Nadheer and called at the home of Huyayy ibn Akhtab who refused to open the door as he was afraid.

So Abu Sufyaan went on to Sallaam ibn Mishkam, who was at that time the chief of Banu An-Nadheer and the custodian of their treasure. Sallaam asked him in, treated him well and gave him food. Sallaam ibn Mishkam then told Abu Sufyaan everything he knew about the Prophet (ﷺ) and the Muslims. Before dawn of the following day, Abu Sufyaan and his men went to a place called 'Urayd, where they burnt down some young date-palms, set several houses on fire and killed two men of the *Ansaar*. Now that Abu Sufyaan had fulfilled his vow, he left quickly with his men.

When the Prophet (ﷺ) heard of this incident, he called on his companions to pursue the raiders. He went out at the head of 200 men of the Emigrants and the *Ansaar* in pursuit of Abu Sufyaan and his men. The Muslims pursued them as far as Qarqarat al-Kudr but could not catch them. They brought back provisions which consisted of *as-saweeq* (foodstuff made of wheat and barley) which the raiders had thrown down on their way to Makkah in order to lighten their loads and hasten their escape, hence the name of the campaign.



The Expulsion of the Clan of Banu Qaynuqaa'

There were three main Jewish tribes which had settled in Madeenah: Banu Quraydhah, Banu An-Nadheer and Banu Qaynuqaa'. Banu Qaynuqaa' had a strong settlement which conducted a market and practised crafts such as that of goldsmith. Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) had made separate treaties with these three tribes. Of these, Banu Qaynuqaa' lived in a quarter of Madeenah, while Banu Quraydhah and Banu An-Nadheer lived on the outskirts of the city.

Banu Qaynuqaa' was very unfriendly towards the Muslims and was the first to openly violate the treaty. It challenged the Prophet (ﷺ) for a fight soon after the Battle of Badr. The Prophet (ﷺ) was well informed of the treachery and hatred of Banu Qaynuqaa'.

Meanwhile an incident occurred, which brought things to a climax. A Muslim woman had come to the market of Banu Qaynuqaa' to sell or exchange some of her gold ornaments. When she sat with one of their goldsmiths, the men present around her began to pester her to unveil her face, but she firmly refused to do so. The goldsmith cunningly managed to attach the hem of her dress to her back. When she got up, a large part of her person was exposed. The bystanders laughed loudly, and the helpless woman began to cry.

A Muslim man who happened to be present regarded this as an insult. He came to her rescue and killed the Jew on the spot. The Jews gathered around the Muslim and likewise slew him. As soon as the Prophet (ﷺ) heard about this, he gathered a force and

besieged the Jews, who had then retired to their strongholds. The siege lasted for fifteen days. The believers completely blocked the Jews in their quarters and did not allow anyone to enter or to leave. The tension grew. At long last the Jews surrendered. It was arranged that they were to leave Madeenah, taking their womenfolk and children, leaving behind their goldsmiths' tools and weapons. They yielded on the terms offered to move out of Madeenah.

A Few other Events before the Battle of Uhud

Faatimah (رضي الله عنها) was the youngest daughter of the Prophet (ﷺ). She was at this time about twenty years old. She was married to 'Ali ibn Abee Taalib (رضي الله عنه) in *Dhul-Hijjah* in the year 2 AH, (June 624 AD). The Prophet (ﷺ) married another of his daughter, Umm Kulthoom to 'Uthmaan ibn 'Affaan, who later became the third caliph. 'Uthmaan had been previously married to Ruqayyah, Umm Kulthoom's sister, but Ruqayyah (رضي الله عنها) died about the time of Badr. It was her sickness that had kept 'Uthmaan (رضي الله عنه) from taking part in the Battle of Badr. The Prophet (ﷺ) himself married Hafsah (رضي الله عنها), the daughter of 'Umar (رضي الله عنه), who later became the second caliph.

It was in the second year of *al-Hijrah* that fasting in the month of *Ramadhaan*, *Zakaat-ul-Fitr* and the two *'Eed* prayers (i.e. *'Eed-ul-Fitr* and *'Eed ul Adh-haa*) were made obligatory.

In this month of *Ramadhaan* (2 AH), Faatimah (رضي الله عنها) gave birth to a son. The Prophet (ﷺ) spoke the words of the call to prayer into the ear of the newborn baby and named him al-Hasan, which means 'the beautiful'.

Exercises

A. Fill in the blanks.

1. The Qur'an describes the Battle of Badr as _____.
2. Al-'Abbaas (رضي الله عنه) accepted Islam during the time of _____.
3. The leader of the hypocrites was _____.
4. _____ and _____ did not publicly mourn the dead.
5. The three main Jewish tribes in Madeenah were _____, _____ and _____.

B. Answer the following questions.

1. Who are the Badriyoon, and what is their status?

2. What did Muhammad (ﷺ) do with the prisoners of war?

3. Did the Prophet (ﷺ) take ransom from Al-'Abbaas? Why or why not, even though his companions asked to release him without it?

4. Why did the Prophet (ﷺ) return Zaynab's ransom?

5. Who are the hypocrites?

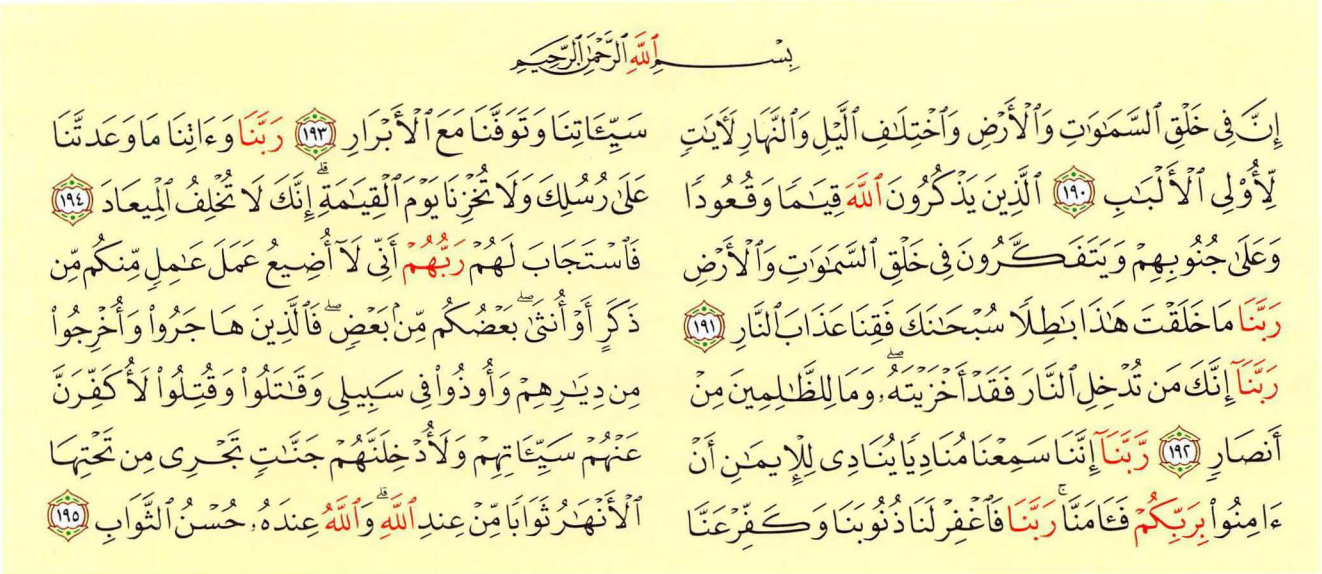
6. What was the pretext for 'Umayr accepting Islam?

7. Why was it important for Zaynab to leave Makkah secretly at night?

8. What effect did losing the Battle of Badr have on the Makkans?

9. What aspects of Islam did Allah make obligatory In the second year of *al-Hijrah*?

The Creation as Evidence of Allah (*Surat Aal-'Imraan*, 3: 190-195)


بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ لَآيَاتٍ
لِّأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ ﴿١٩٠﴾ الَّذِينَ يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ قِيَامًا وَقُعُودًا
وَعَلَىٰ جُنُوبِهِمْ وَيَتَفَكَّرُونَ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
رَبَّنَا مَا خَلَقْتَ هَٰذَا بَاطِلًا سُبْحَانَكَ فَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ ﴿١٩١﴾
رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ مَن تُدْخِلِ النَّارَ فَقَدْ أَخْزَيْتَهُ ۖ وَمَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ مِنْ
أَنصَارٍ ﴿١٩٢﴾ رَّبَّنَا إِنَّنَا سَمِعْنَا مُنَادِيًا يُنَادِي لِلْإِيمَانِ أَنْ
آمِنُوا بِرَبِّكُمْ فَآمَنَّا ۚ رَبَّنَا فَاغْفِرْ لَنَا ذُنُوبَنَا وَكَفِّرْ عَنَّا
سَيِّئَاتِنَا وَتَوَفَّنَا مَعَ الْأَبْرَارِ ﴿١٩٣﴾ رَبَّنَا وَآتِنَا مَا وَعَدتَّنَا
عَلَىٰ رُسُلِكَ وَلَا تُخْزِنَا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ ۗ إِنَّكَ لَا تُخْلِفُ الْمِيعَادَ ﴿١٩٤﴾
فَاسْتَجَابَ لَهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ أَنِّي لَا أُضِيعُ عَمَلَ عَامِلٍ مِّنكُم مِّن
ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنثَىٰ ۖ بَعْضُكُم مِّن بَعْضٍ ۖ فَالَّذِينَ هَاجَرُوا وَأُخْرِجُوا
مِن دِيَارِهِمْ وَأُوذُوا فِي سَبِيلِي وَقَاتَلُوا وَقُتِلُوا لَأُكَفِّرَنَّ
عَنْهُمْ سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ وَلَأُدْخِلَنَّهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِن تَحْتِهَا
الْأَنْهَارُ ثَوَابًا مِّنْ عِندِ اللَّهِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ عِندَهُ حُسْنُ الثَّوَابِ ﴿١٩٥﴾

In the Name of Allah, the Most Kind the Most Merciful

190. Surely, in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and in the succession of night and day, there are indeed signs for all who are endowed with insight.

191. Those who remember Allah when they stand, and when they sit, and when they lie down on their sides, and thus reflect on the creation of the heavens and the earth: Our Lord, You have not created this in vain (*baatilan*). You are far from every imperfection! Protect us from the punishment of the Fire.

192. Our Lord, whomsoever You admit to the fire, You will have him brought to disgrace; and for the evildoers there are no helpers.

193. Our Lord, we heard a caller calling us to faith, "Believe in your Lord," – so we came to believe. Our Lord, forgive us, then, our sins, and efface our bad deeds, and let us die the death of the truly virtuous.

194. Our Lord, grant us that which You have promised us through Your Prophets, and disgrace us not on the Resurrection Day. Truly, You never fail to fulfil Your promise!

195. Their Lord did answer their supplication thus: I waste not the labour of any of you who labours [in My way], be it man or woman — the one of you is as

the other. Hence, for those who emigrated, and were expelled from their homes, and those who suffered in My way, and fought and were slain — I will most certainly efface their evil deeds, and most certainly bring them into gardens underneath which rivers flow, as a reward from Allah; for with Allah is the most beautiful of rewards.

Explanation

Contemplation and Reflection

In his *Saheeh*, Ibn Hibbaan reports that the companion Ataa' ibn Rabaah (ﷺ) said, "I entered the presence of 'Aai'shah (ﷺ) and said, 'Tell us about the most amazing experience you ever had in the company of Allah's Messenger.' She wept at first, but then she said, 'Was there anything at all about him that was not a marvellous wonder? He came to me one night and snuggled beside me in my bed. But then he said, "Daughter of Abu Bakr, let me go so that I may devote myself to my Lord." I then told him, "I love your nearness, but I prefer to respect your dearest wish." I therefore allowed him to take his leave of me. So he got up, found a water-skin which was full of water, and performed his ablution, pouring a considerable amount of water in the process. Then he stood erect, and started to perform the prayer, weeping as he did so, until his tears were streaming down his chest. Then he adopted the bowing posture, and shed more tears. Then he prostrated himself, and again he wept. Then he raised his head, and wept still more. He went on like this until Bilaal appeared on the scene to call him to the dawn prayer. Bilaal said, "Messenger of Allah, what makes you weep when Allah has forgiven you your former and latter sins?" He replied, 'Alas for you, Bilaal! How can I not weep when tonight Allah sent down to me: Surely, in the creation of the heavens and the earth..." The Prophet (ﷺ) added, "Woe to him who recites these verses but does not contemplate them."' (Ibn Hibbaan)

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) would recite these verses often at night, as is recorded by Muslim. In these verses Allah clearly ties contemplating the creation with remembering Him. The verses conclude that it is unacceptable to believe that Allah has created this creation in vain and without a noble purpose. So the issue is not merely a matter of appreciating the beauty and excellence of the creation. This is something that even the disbelievers do. Unfortunately for them, as with so many aspects of the universe, the disbelievers do not seem to go beyond

the tip of the iceberg to see the reality and significance that lies beyond it. As Allah says, **"They know but the outer things in the life of this world, but of the Hereafter they are heedless."** (*Surat Ar-Room*, 30:7). In other words, they are heedless of the lessons to which the various aspects of this creation point.

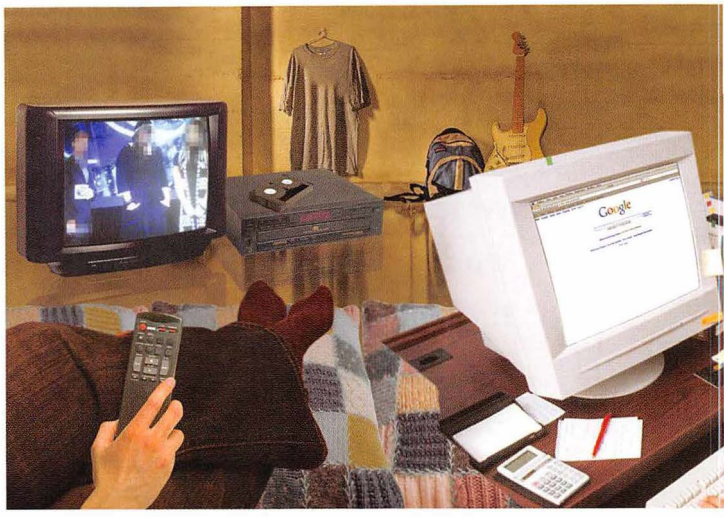
What is Contemplation and Reflection?

Contemplation and reflection are the words used for the Arabic term *tafakkur*. It is difficult to capture the meaning of the expression *tafakkur* in English. 'Aamir ibn 'Abd Qays once said, "I heard more than one, two or three of the companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) remark, 'The lamp of faith or the light of faith is contemplation and reflection.'"

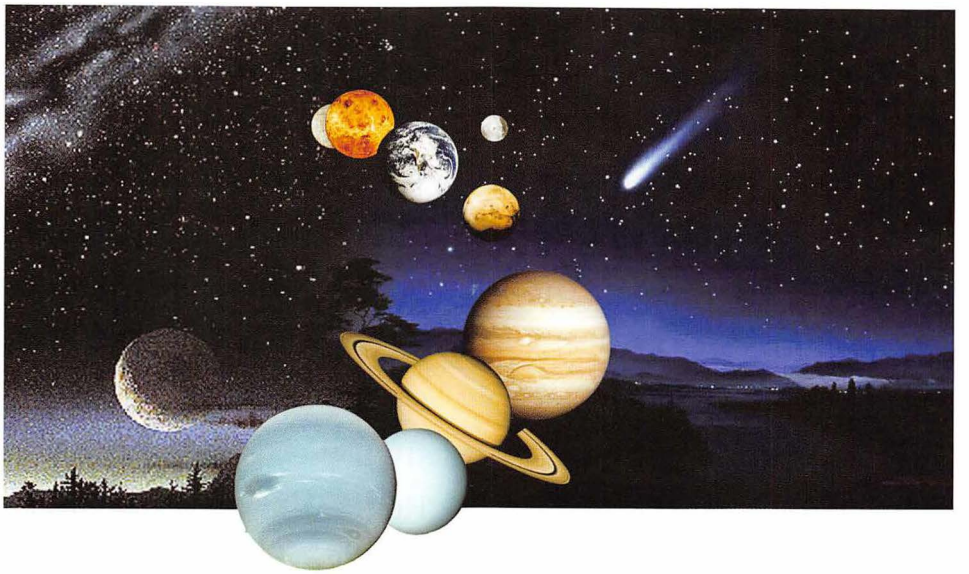
Contemplation and reflection is an act of worship in itself. This is often neglected in the hustle and bustle of the modern world.

The Plight of Modern Man

It appears as though Satan and its troops have a major plan for the humans of the present century: keep them so busy and preoccupied that they do not get any time to reflect upon what they are truly here for, what they should be doing and what their prime concerns should be. At the present time, in a world of technology, people are flooded with information. Most of which is useless, trivial or simply time-consuming.



Moreover, in order to keep up with the pace of time, many have to work overtime or take on two or three jobs as everything is considered a necessity of life. Everyone has to have a cell phone, a newspaper delivered, internet access, cable TV, a number of cars and so on. All these cost money. For the majority of people, they cannot be obtained except through sweating more and more hours at work. At the end of the day, only mental and physical energy to seek entertainment, relaxation and fun remains. The modern technologically advanced world is ready to fill this desire and need in various ways and forms. Once again, the person feels exhausted and has no mental energy left in him to contemplate and ponder.



The Greatest Blessing of Allah

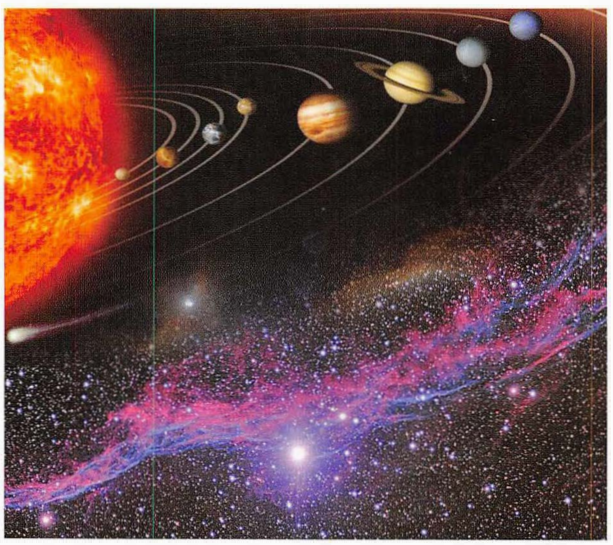
The human mind and its ability to contemplate, think and understand is one of the greatest blessings of Allah. When a person uses his mind in an appropriate manner, he is straightaway led to the truth of the Oneness of Allah. It stirs in him a strong desire to worship Allah, the One. One very essential sort of contemplation is to reflect upon nature and the creation of the universe. Allah urges mankind to ponder over various aspects of the creation, for example, the creation of the heavens and the earth and the succession of night and day. Indeed there are signs for men of understanding. Contemplation deepens the faith in one's heart. It increases one's certainty and makes one conscious of the truth that this existence has a Creator.

The universe has not come about on its own! Contemplation makes us realize that we and all the forces of the creation are acting as one in worshipping the One and Only true Creator – Allah. It makes us aware how weak we truly are and how greatly we depend upon our Creator for everything, from the clean air we breathe to the pure water we drink, to most importantly, the guidance He has bestowed on us so we can live properly in this world. It leads in turn to heedfulness of Allah.

We should also reflect upon unpleasant experiences that have occurred to us or to others. We should also reflect upon the various peoples who were destroyed by Allah due to their disobedience and sinful ways. In short, we should take advantage to learn and benefit from what occurs to them. We need not go to some solitary place to contemplate and reflect. What is around us on a daily basis should provide us with ample lessons to reflect upon.

The World is a Boundless Festival of Mystery

Verses 190-191 invite us to reflect on the world around us, as if for the first time, with open eyes and eager senses and a conscious heart. The physical world is full of beautiful mysteries. It is full of awe-inspiring events that have captivated many an eye and fascinated many a heart.



The world is a boundless festival of mystery, splendour and beauty. The heavens and the earth, the planets, the stars and the galaxies are in a vast expanse of limitless space of dizzy dimensions. The cycle of day and night and the alternation of light and darkness, dawn and dusk, rivers, mountains and waterfalls, have opened the eyes and illuminated the hearts and souls of people everywhere. For the believing heart, it is a daily marvel to behold — a constant reminder of Allah's Greatness and Glory.

The word *Aayaat*

The word *aayaat*, which occurs in verse 190 above, is the plural of *aayah*. The term means guide, directive, pointer, sign, indication, signifier, proof and denotation. The Qur'an refers to the things of the universe as signs (*aayaat*) of Allah, which is to say that they signify Allah, the Creator. Hence the universe might be defined as knowledge of the signs and the understanding of what they signify.

The signs are the signifiers that He is Real — the Creator of the heavens and the earth. The signs point to Allah and each carries a message given to it by Allah. Hence each thing in the universe is a sign and a proof. The Qur'an uses the word sign (*aayah*) to refer to the phenomena of the universe as well as to its own verses. Just as the Qur'an is Allah's Book displaying His signs or verses, so the universe, or cosmos, is His book. Allah has given men the ability to read this book. Their wisdom comes from Him.

Selves and Horizons

Allah's signs are found both in the outside world and within ourselves. Allah has filled the Qur'an with the mention of various signs such as the alternation of day and night, the descent of the rains, the bringing forth of vegetation, the running of ships in the sea, the diversity of tongues and

colour, sleep during the night and the daytime for seeking Allah's bounty. So is everything He has mentioned in the Qur'an as signs for a people

who reason (13:4),
who listen (10:67),
who understand (6:98),
who have faith (6:99),
and who reflect (13:3).

Despite all this, no one gives it any notice save the Folk of Allah, who are the Folk of the Qur'an!

A Word of Caution

In the process of contemplation and reflection, though, one must contemplate any of the several aspects of the creation and not try to imagine or, conceive, what the Creator is like. Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) clearly stated, "Do not contemplate Allah but contemplate Allah's creation." (Abu Nu'aym. According to *Sheikh* Al-Albaanee, this *hadeeth* is *hasan*). In reality, it is virtually impossible for a human to ponder over the essence of the Creator, Almighty Allah, since there is nothing similar to Him that a human could possibly be familiar with. One may, however, contemplate His Attributes and how these Attributes are manifested in the universe.

The Expression *Oolul-Albaab*

The word '*albaab*' is the plural of *lubb*, which means the heart, understanding, intellect, mind and reason. It is also interesting to note that *lubb* with the plural *luboob* means core, pith, gist, essence and innermost. Thus, *oolul-albaab* means people of wisdom and understanding. The Qur'an has given the following signs of the wise:

﴿ٱلَّذِينَ يَذْكُرُونَ ٱللَّهَ قِيَـٰمًا وَقُعُودًا وَعَلَىٰ جُنُوبِهِمْ﴾

"(The wise are those) who remember Allah when they stand, and when they sit, and when they lie down on their sides."

The second sign of the people of wisdom given in the verse is that they reflect upon the creation of the heavens and the earth. From this verse we find out that the act of contemplation is also an act of worship and very much like *dhikr* (remembrance of Allah). Al-Hasan al-Basree used to say, "An hour of contemplation is better than a whole night spent in prayers." He also said, "Contemplation is a mirror which shows you both your good and evil deeds."

It is related that Prophet 'Eesaa (عليه السلام) said, "Blessed is he whose speech is remembrance of Allah and his silence is contemplation." 'Umar ibn 'Abd

Al-'Azeez (ﷺ) once observed, "The best speech is remembrance of Allah, and contemplation of Allah's bounties is the best form of worship." Sufyaan ibn 'Uyaynah said, "Reflection is the beam of light entering your heart."

Verses 192-194

Verses 192-194 include a set of supplications from people who realize that Allah has not created anything in vain and believe that He is far from every imperfection!

1. The first appeal is: Protect us from the Fire.
2. The second request is: Save us from the disgrace of the hereafter for whoever is condemned to the Fire stands disgraced before the whole world.
3. The third supplication is: We heard the call of the caller to faith and we have come to believe: so forgive our sins and efface our bad deeds, and let us die the death of the truly virtuous.

According to some Qur'an scholars, the call mentioned here is the call of the Qur'an. This is because many of those whom Allah describes in these verses are not among those who saw the Prophet (ﷺ) or heard his call to Allah. Hence, he who hears the Qur'an is as though he met the Prophet (ﷺ).

Such people do not doubt the fact that Allah will fulfil His promises. What they fear is whether they will be reckoned among those for whom these promises are made. Hence they pray to Allah to make them worthy of it.

Verse 195

Verse 195 confirms that these supplications have been accepted. The believers have been given the good news that great rewards have been marked for their good deeds.

As soon as these supplications were uttered, they were favourably accepted by Allah. This indicates that if the prayers are said with sincerity and at an appropriate time, they gain acceptance. Again, it is stressed that whoever struggles in the way of Allah, man or woman, will certainly receive their reward from their Lord. However, there will be struggles, trials and tribulations ahead. One must be ready for this!

Dhikr (remembrance of Allah) should be synthesized (the combining of these two things) with *fikr* (deep reflection on Allah's creation) and not just mere repetition of certain words and expressions.

Woe to him who merely gives them lip service but does not meditate upon them.

Exercises

A. Fill in the blanks.

1. _____ and _____ are the words used to mean *tafakkur*.
2. _____ is the light of faith.
3. The best speech is _____ and the best form of worship is _____.
4. The call of the caller refers to _____.
5. *Dhikr* should be synthesized with _____.

B. Answer the following questions.

1. What do the verses given in the chapter conclude?

2. What is Satan's major plan for the modern man?

3. What does thinking in an appropriate manner lead to?

4. What benefits does contemplation have?

5. What do verses 190-191 urge us to do?

6. What does the expression '*aayaat* of Allah' mean?

7. What are the two signs of the wise?

8. What are the two conditions mentioned in the lesson for acceptance of supplication?

C. Think-up

1. This lesson teaches us to reflect and contemplate. Mention a few areas that you would like to reflect upon.

2. Explain the *hadeeth*, "Do not contemplate Allah, but contemplate Allah's creation."

Prophet Muhammad ﷺ Part 2

The Battle of Uhud: Preparations for Revenge

The Makkans had suffered a serious disaster at Badr. They had been completely routed and several of their most prominent chiefs, including Abu Jahl, were killed. The effect of their defeat could never be erased from the minds of the Quraysh. They were burning for revenge. To avenge their defeat, they raised a large army which set out for Madeenah in the month of *Shawwaal* 3 AH (March 625 AD).

The battle is known by the name of the mountain by which it took place. Mount Uhud lies at a distance of about five kilometres from the Prophet's Mosque. It is formed of red granite rocks and has several peaks. To the south, it faces a small mountain called 'Aynayn. After the battle, it was known as *Jabal ar-Rumaah* (the mountain of archers). Between the two mountains lies a valley called Waadee Qanaah. Uhud was so named because of its unique distinction among these mountains. The Arabic word '*ahad*' implies number one and uniqueness.

The Strength of the Army

The Makkans had deeply felt the loss of their Red Sea caravan route. The Makkans now intensified and quickened the preparations, which had been in progress ever since Badr for an irresistible attack on Madeenah. The Quraysh sent their messengers to various tribes around Makkah to explain to them the gravity of the situation, which had arisen out of the Prophet's setting up a powerful state in Madeenah. There was every possibility that if left unchecked, it would lead to the closing of the trade routes leading to the northern regions.

As a result, the Makkans were able to raise a huge army. In the last days of the month of Ramadhaan (3 AH), a sealed letter was brought to the Prophet (ﷺ) by a horseman who had ridden from Makkah to Madeenah in three days. It was from his uncle Al-'Abbaas, warning him that an army of three thousand men was on the point of marching out against Madeenah. Seven hundred of the men were fully armoured, and there was a troop of horses two hundred strong. The camels were as many as the men, not counting the transport camels and

those which carried howdahs for women. A total of two hundred and fifty thousand *dirhams* were raised in Makkah alone for the expedition. Abu Sufyaan, the new commander-in-chief of the army himself had contributed a fabulous sum out of the profits he had made from the trade caravan which he managed to lead safely to Madeenah.

By the time the letter arrived, the Quraysh had already set out. Abu Sufyaan took with him Hind and also a second wife. Safwaan likewise brought two wives, other chiefs' only one. Jubayr the son of Mut'im remained in Makkah but sent out with the army an Ethiopian slave of his named Wahshee who, like many of his countrymen, was an expert at throwing the javelin. Wahshee had seldom been known to miss his mark. Jubayr said to him, "If you slay Hamzah, Muhammad's uncle, to avenge my brother's death, you are a free man." Hamzah (رضي الله عنه) had killed the uncle of Jubayr ibn Mut'im as well as 'Utbah, the father of Hind, in the battle of Badr.

The Emigrants and Helpers still had about a week before the enemy could be upon them. But within that time room had to be made inside the walls of Madeenah for all those who lived on the outlying parts of the oasis, together with their animals. This was done. Not one horse, camel, cow, sheep or goat was left outside the walls. By the time, the Makkan army had reached and encamped on a strip of cultivated land in the plain below Mount Uhud, which overlooks Madeenah from the north.

The Prophet (ﷺ) sent out scouts. They returned the next morning with the information that the numbers of the enemy were indeed as the letter had stated. The three thousand and more camels and the two hundred horses were eating all the pasture and the as yet unharvested crops to the north of the city, and soon not a blade of greenery would be left.

The army, however, showed no signs of being ready for any immediate action. That night the city was closely guarded by the believers and Sa'd ibn Mu'aadh and Sa'd ibn Ubaadah, insisted on keeping watch outside the Prophet's door, and with them was Usayd and a strong bodyguard.

The Council of War

The Prophet's first thought was not to go out of the city but to stand a siege within its walls. He nonetheless wished to have his opinion confirmed by others. Hence, the Prophet (ﷺ) held a council of war. It was the month of *Shawwal* 3 AH. He (ﷺ) discussed the tactics of war to be adopted.

He asked the companions whether they should march out or not. The Prophet (ﷺ) himself was of the

opinion that the Muslims should give battle from within the fortifications of Madeenah. They should, if need be, fight in its narrow streets and lanes. The Prophet's plan was supported by many of the most outstanding among his companions. 'Abdullaah ibn Ubayy also agreed with the Prophet (ﷺ). A large number of the older companions, of both the Emigrants and Helpers, inclined to the opinion of 'Abdullaah ibn Ubayy. So the Prophet (ﷺ) said, "Stay in Madeenah and put the women and children in the fortresses." Only when he had spoken thus did it become clear that most of the younger men were burning with eagerness to march out against the enemy. One of them said, " Messenger of Allah, lead us forth against the enemy. Let them not think that we fear them. Let them not think that we are too weak for them." These words were met with murmur of approval from different parts of the assembly. Others said much the same. They argued that their inactivity and their failure to respond for their ruined crops would only embolden the Quraysh against them in the future. It was now clear that the majority were against remaining behind city walls. At noon they assembled for the Friday Prayer. Then the Prophet (ﷺ) bade them make ready to meet the enemy.

Handhalah's Dilemma

After the prayer was concluded, a man waited behind to speak to the Prophet (ﷺ). He had an urgent decision to make. He was Handhalah, the son of Abu 'Aamir. It was Handhalah's wedding day. The day had been chosen some weeks in advance. He was engaged to his cousin Jameelah, the daughter of Ibn Ubayy. He was unwilling to postpone the marriage, yet determined to fight. The Prophet (ﷺ) told him to celebrate the marriage and spend the night in Madeenah; there could be no fight before sunrise. Handhalah would have ample time to join him on the battlefield early the next morning. He could find out by inquiry which way the army had passed.

Getting Ready for War

After the 'Asr prayer, Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) put on his armour and came out of his house. When he came out, he had wound his turban about his helmet and donned his breastplate, under which he wore a coat of mail, carried his sword and slung his shield across his back. Many of the men by the time had regretted the course they had taken. As soon as he appeared, they said, "Messenger of Allah, it is not

for us to oppose you in anything; so do what seems best to you." The Prophet (ﷺ) replied, "It is not fit for a Prophet, when he has put on his armour, to take it off until Allah has judged between him and his enemies. So look to what I bade you do. Do it. Go forward in the Name of Allah. The victory is yours if you are steadfast."

Then he called for three lances and fastened upon them three banners. He handed the banner of the Aws to Usayd ibn Hudhayr, that of the Khazraj to Al-Hubaab ibn al-Mundhir and that of the Emigrants to Mus'ab ibn 'Umayr. He appointed 'Abdullaah ibn Umm Maktoom to lead the prayers in his absence. Then he mounted his horse Sakb — Running water, so called because he could gallop at an easy pace. He asked for his bow, which he hung over his shoulder, taking in his hand spear. No other man was mounted. Sa'd ibn Mu'aadh and Sa'd ibn 'Ubaadah marched in front of him, and there were men on either side. In all, there were about one thousand strong.

The March to Uhud: Teenagers' Eagerness

The sun was about to set when they reached a place called Shaykhayn, half way between Madeenah and Uhud. Bilaal (رضي الله عنه) made the call to prayer, and they prayed. The Prophet (ﷺ) then reviewed the troops. It was then that he noticed the presence of eight boys, who despite their age, were eager to take part in the battle. Amongst them were Usaamah ibn Zayd and 'Abdullaah ibn 'Umar, both only thirteen years old. The Prophet (ﷺ) ordered them and their six friends to return home immediately. They protested. One of the Helpers assured the Prophet (ﷺ) that the fifteen year-old Raafi' ibn Khadeej was already a better archer than some of his elders. So Raafi' was allowed to stay, whereupon Samurah ibn Jundub claimed that he could throw Raafi' in wrestling. The Prophet (ﷺ) told the boys to show him what they could do. So they set about each other then and there; and Samurah proved his claim to be true. Hence, he was also allowed to stay, while the others were sent back to their families.

In Madeenah that night Handhalah ibn Abu 'Aamir and Jameelah had consummated their marriage. At dawn, he bade her farewell, for he wanted to join the army. He was in a hurry and did not stay to perform his *ghusl*; so he put on his coat of mail, seized his weapons, and left.

The Prophet (ﷺ) had given instructions that the army should be ready to move off from Shaykhayn shortly before dawn. But 'Abdullaah ibn Ubayy had been in consultation with some of his close followers during the night. When it was time to raise camp, he turned back to Madeenah with three hundred of the hypocrites (*munaafiqoon*), to the great sorrow of his son, whose name was also 'Abdullaah, who remained with the army. The hypocritical 'Abdullaah ibn Ubayy pretended to be convinced that the Muslims did not really intend to fight. He did not even speak to the Prophet (ﷺ). When he was questioned by some of the Helpers, he said, "He has disobeyed me, and obeyed the immature men – men of no judgment. I do not see why we should lose our lives in this ill chosen spot."

'Abdullaah ibn 'Amr ibn Haraam as-Sulamee went after them and called out, "I enjoin you by Allah not to desert your people and your Prophet in the very presence of your enemy." But they only answered, "If we knew that you would be fighting, we would not leave you. But we do not think there will be a battle." "Enemies of Allah," he retorted, "Allah will avail His Prophet beyond any need of you."

The Qur'an explains that the withdrawal of 'Abdullaah ibn Ubayy and the hypocrites took place in order to cleanse the Muslim ranks of their influence and to distinguish the Muslims, so that there would be no one left among them who would spread lies and thus discourage the Muslim fighters. (3: 166-167 and 179)

Shortly before the battle, two other groups from among the Prophet's forces — namely, the clan of Banu Salamah of the tribe of Aws and Banu Haarithah of the tribe of Khazraj almost lost heart and considered for a while to return to Madeenah, but they overcame their weakness with the help of Allah and remained with the believers. The Qur'an depicts their condition (3: 122). They wavered for a moment and struggled with doubt, but, as the Qur'an affirms, Allah came to their rescue and gave them heart to stay and fight. They thought of turning back. But Allah willed right guidance for them. They thus remained steadfast. It was no more than a wish, a whispering of the soul. In times of hardship the soul is prone to panic, but it must be made to remain steadfast and endure adversity. Allah steered them away from those negative feelings. He gave them the courage to go ahead and fight. Allah was with them all the way. He helped them in their moments of weakness, so that

they learnt from where to seek help and support the next time they faced a similar situation.

The Army Advances

Reduced now to seven hundred, the army advanced for a short distance towards the enemy. Still under cover of the darkness, they moved to their right and made their way across a volcanic tract until they came to the narrow valley of Uhud. In the half-light of the dawn, they could see the Makkan camp ahead of them. They marched on until they were directly between the enemy and Uhud.

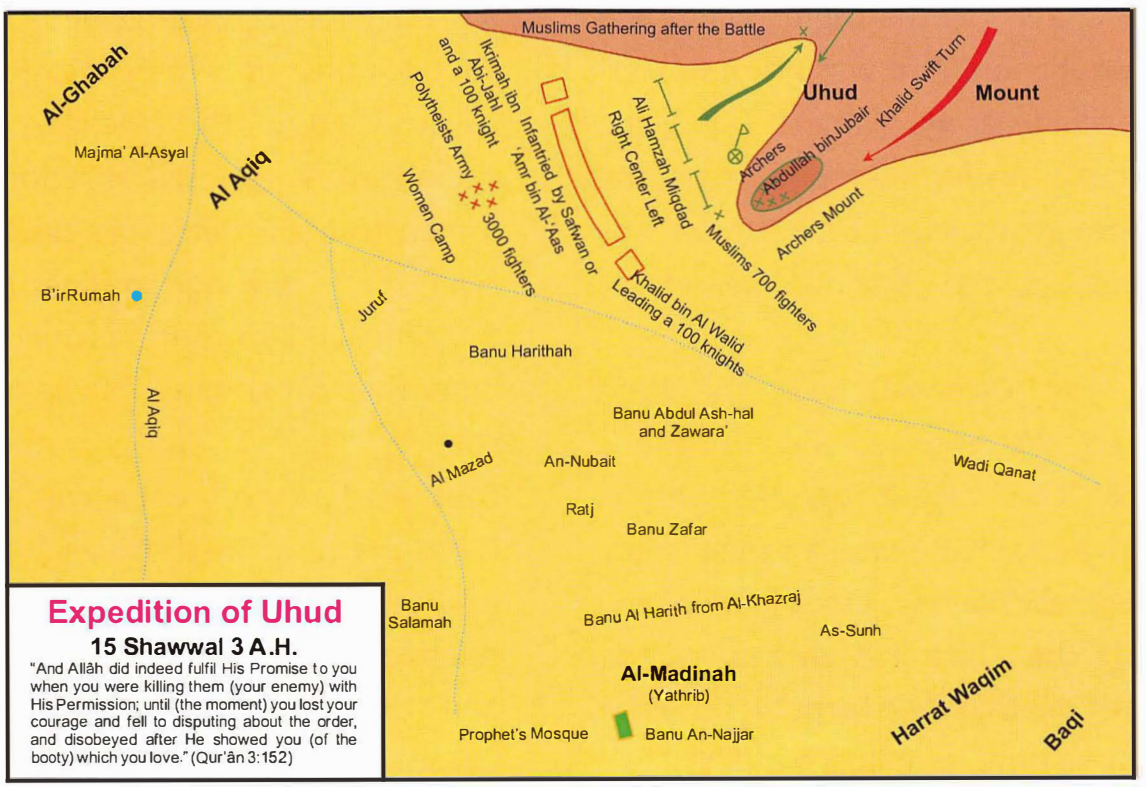
There were a good number of women volunteers with the force, including 'Aa'ishah, the Prophet's (ﷺ) wife. Women often went with the armies in those days. They usually cooked food for the soldiers, mended their clothes, nursed the wounded and fetched water for the thirsty.

Of the seven hundred Muslim soldiers, only one hundred had coats of mail. There were only two horses; one belonged to the Prophet (ﷺ), while the other to Abu Burdah (رضي الله عنه).

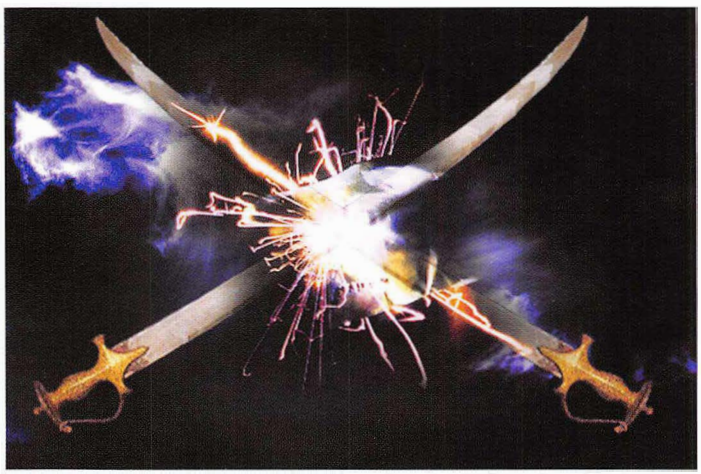
Soon afterwards, Handhalah returned from Madeenah and greeted the Prophet (ﷺ), ready to fight in Allah's Way.

The Batch of Fifty Archers

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) now chose out his best archers. He told fifty of them to take up their position on a hill a little to the left of his main force. He put over them 'Abdullaah ibn Jubayr, who belonged to the Aws. He (ﷺ) gave them clear orders, saying, "Keep the enemy cavalry from us with



your arrows. Let them not come upon us from our rear. Be the tide of battle for us or against us; stay at this point. If you see vultures descending upon us, do not leave your post, and even if you see us overcoming the enemy, do not leave your positions."



The Battle

The Prophet (ﷺ) now drew up his troops for the battle. He appointed Az-Zubayr ibn al-'Awwaam as the commander of the right wing and Al-Mundhir ibn 'Amr was given the left wing of the army. Hamzah (رضي الله عنه), the Prophet's uncle, was put in as the advance guard. Mus'ab ibn 'Umayr was chosen as the standard-bearer of Islam.

Abu Dujaanah was fortunate enough to receive the Prophet's sword. "I will take it together with its right," he said. He was a valiant man. His red headband was well known, and among the Khazraj it was called the band of death. When he put it on, as he had done now, winding round his helmet, they knew that he meant to inflict a great slaughter on the enemy. His full name was Abu Dujaanah ibn Simaak ibn Kharaashah.

The Quraysh were already in line. The right wing of the Makkan force was commanded by Khaalid ibn al-Waleed and the left by 'Ikrimah ibn Abu Jahl. Talhah of 'Abd Ad-Daar carried the banner of Quraysh. From the centre, Abu Sufyaan gave the order to advance. Mus'ab ibn 'Umayr recognized his fellow clansmen from where he stood in front of the Prophet (ﷺ) with the banner of the Emigrants.

The Makkan army began to advance. Not far from the front lines the women, led by Hind, moved forward, beating their tumbrels and their drums and singing.

Soon the two armies were almost joined. The Prophet's archers shot a volley of arrows into Khaalid's cavalry. From the Makkan centre Talhah strode forward. He shouted for a man to meet him in single combat. 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) went out to meet him. He finally felled him to the ground with a blow that cut through his helmet and split his skull. Talhah's brother now took his banner and he was slain by Hamzah (رضي الله عنه). The Prophet (ﷺ) had now taken up his position on a piece of relatively high ground, with Abu Bakr and 'Umar and others of his closest Companions.

Abu Dujaanah was being true to his promise of his red headband. He killed every man he encountered as easily as if he had been a reaper and his sword a sickle.

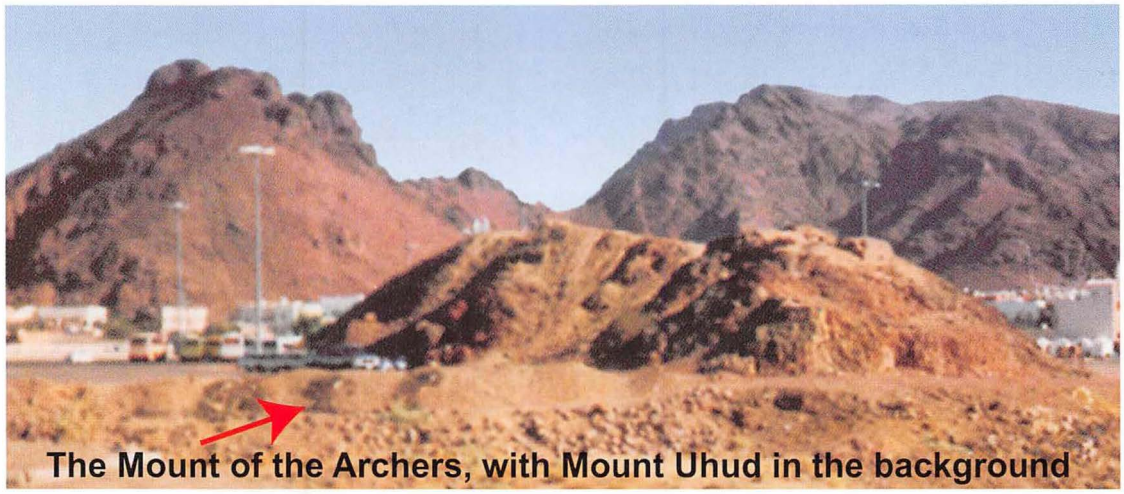
Hamzah (رضي الله عنه) fought fiercely. He was remarkable for his unusually powerful structure and for his manner of fighting. He killed many heroes of the Quraysh. No one could stand against him until Wahshee, the slave of Jubayr ibn Mut'im, waited for him in ambush. Wahshee was making his way forward. Unlike the rest of the polytheists on the field, he was concerned with only one man, Hamzah. Wahshee saw him from a distance. He slowly came forward. He was quick enough to see his chance. He poised his javelin and launched it with perfect aim. The spear pierced the lower part of Hamzah's body and he fell a martyr. Wahshee waited until his body stopped moving. He then went and drew out his javelin and returned with all speed to the camp. Later he said, "I only killed him for the sake of my freedom." Hind, daughter of 'Utbah and wife of Abu Sufyaan, then went and cut Hamzah's stomach open. She pulled out his liver and began to chew it. When she could not swallow it, she spat it out.

Handhalah's Bravery

Handhalah was fighting valiantly near the centre. Abu Sufyaan narrowly escaped the sword of Handhalah. He was about to cut him down when a man suddenly appeared from the side and thrust Handhalah with his spear, felling him to the ground and killing him.

The battle moved gradually down the slope away from the Prophet (ﷺ). The Makkans were driven back towards their camp. But now the Prophet's attention was drawn upwards from the battle. His eyes were raised as one watches the flights of birds. He said to those beside him, "The angels are washing your companion Handhalah." Afterwards he said to Handhalah's wife, Jameelah, "I saw the angels washing him between heaven and the earth with water from the clouds." Then she told him how through fear of being late for the battle, he had not taken his ritual bath he would normally have taken." This is why he was nicknamed *al-ghaseel*, as he was washed by the angels.

The Muslims continued to advance. At one point the enemy lines were broken altogether. The way to their camp was now laid open.



The Mount of the Archers, with Mount Uhud in the background

The Archers Leave their Posts

Allah Most High sent down His help to the believers. He fulfilled His promise until the Makkans were cut off from their camp. They were clearly defeated.

The Muslims had prevailed, and seventy of the most valiant of the Quraysh were killed. The bulk of the Makkan forces were scattered and ran back to where the women were camped. The women lifted their dresses and took flight.

When the Muslim archers saw that the Makkans had been routed and had turned in flight, a large number of them left their posts. Certain of victory, they headed for the enemy camp. shouting, "People! Booty, Booty!" In vain their commander, 'Abdullaah ibn Jubayr, reminded them of the Prophet's order not to leave their posts on any account. They did not listen. They replied that the Prophet (ﷺ) had not meant them to stay there forever. They thought the battle was now finished and the polytheists were routed.

About forty of them sped down the slope in the direction of the camp. They assumed that the Makkans would not come back. So they left the Muslim army unprotected. Khaalid ibn al-Waleed soon saw what had happened. He realized that his moment had come. He wheeled round and led his men into the rear of their enemy's main force. 'Ikrimah followed his example. The Makkan horsemen made much havoc in the unguarded ranks of the believers.

'Abdullaah ibn Jubayr and his men vainly tried to stop the Makkan horsemen with their arrows so much so that they threw down their bows and fought to death with sword and spear. Not one of them was left alive. 'Ali and his companions now turned to face the new danger. The tide of battle had now suddenly changed. Many of the Muslims in the rear lost heart. They fled towards the mountain, where they knew they could find refuge.

Exercises

A. Fill in the blanks.

1. _____ was the commander-in-chief of the Makkan army.
2. _____ sent a letter to the Prophet (ﷺ) describing the Makkan army.
3. The clans of _____ and _____ wavered for a while before the Battle of Uhud.
4. The Prophet (ﷺ) gave the _____ strict instructions against leaving their positions.

B. Answer the following questions.

1. Why is the Battle of Uhud named as such?

2. Mention the strengths of both the Makkan and the Muslim army.

3. Who was Wahshee? What task was assigned to him?

4. Why did the Prophet (ﷺ) decide to go out to fight at Uhud even though he personally wanted to fight within Madeenah?

5. What was Allah's wisdom in 'Abdullaah ibn Ubayy withdrawing with 300 other hypocrites?

6. What was Wahshee's motive for killing Hamzah (رضي الله عنه)?

7. Why was Handhalah ibn Abu 'Aamir called '*al-ghaseel*'?

8. Why was the archers' positions vital for the Muslim army?

C. Think-up

Why was it necessary to make room for everyone inside the walls of Madeenah?

Prophet Muhammad ﷺ Part 3

The Muslims were not aware of what was happening. Khaalid ibn al-Waleed had occupied the hill where the Prophet (ﷺ) had posted the archers. The defeated Makkans rallied again to the calls of Khaalid. The believers dropped the spoils of war they were collecting, drew their swords and began to defend themselves. But the victory was lost. The Muslim ranks were in disorder. They had lost the cover of the archers. They were now caught between the two fires. The enemy killed several of them. It was the day of trial for the believers. A scene of great confusion followed. Their fighting was now disorganized and they were at a great loss. Many of them fled from the battlefield. Some of them sat at the edge of the battlefield without fighting. The Muslims had lost their positions. They began to fight without any plan. They could not distinguish friend from foe. They killed al-Yamaan (رضي الله عنه) by mistake, the father of Hudhayfah, who was a very old man. Hudhayfah (رضي الله عنه) repeatedly yelled at them, "He is my father, he is my father!" but no one listened. Whereupon, Hudhayfah said, "May Allah forgive you. He is the Most Merciful of the merciful."

The tables were turned. The Muslims went on the defensive. Chaos broke out all over the battlefield. The surprise attack from the Quraysh had thrown the Muslims into disorder. Many Muslims were martyred.



The Makkans were able to get very close to the Prophet (ﷺ) who was being defended by a handful of his companions. Although they fought bravely, all were killed. 'Ali, Az-Zubayr, Talhah and Abu Dujaanah and others who had been in front lines had fought their way back, through the enemy. They now reached the Prophet's side, but not before a sharp stone from the enemy had struck him in the mouth, gashing his lower lip and breaking one of his teeth. His helmet was shattered. A volley of stones was hurled at him by the polytheist fighters. It caused him to fall on his side into a hole. Two metal rings from his helmet pierced his cheek. Blood flowed from his face.

Amid this confusion, someone raised a cry, "Muhammad has been killed." The Muslims were overcome with despair and exhaustion. They were routed. Anas ibn An-Nadhir passed by some men of the Emigrants and the Helpers who were sitting down looking very sad and gloomy. He asked them, "What are you doing here?" "The Prophet (ﷺ) has been killed," they replied. Anas ibn An-Nadhir told them, "What is our life worth after him, then? Get up and die for what he has died for." He then turned towards the enemy camp and he passed by Sa'd ibn Mu'aadh. He said, "Sa'd, how wonderful the fragrance of Paradise is! I can smell it behind Mount Uhud." He went forward and fought the enemy until he was martyred, with some seventy wounds to his body. Only his sister was able to recognize him by a mark on his finger.

At one point Talhah ibn Ubaydullaah rushed towards the Prophet (ﷺ) and was the only one defending him. He took that position until he fell to the ground. Soon Abu Ubaydah ibn al-Jarraah came running. He and Abu Bakr as-Siddeeq both rushed towards the Prophet (ﷺ) to find Talhah having fallen wounded. The Prophet (ﷺ) asked them to take care of him. Talhah was now too weak from loss of blood, but he almost immediately regained consciousness.

Nusaybah, the Daughter of Ka'b (Umm 'Umaarah)

Nusaybah bint Ka'b, a woman of the Khazraj of Madeenah, defended the Prophet (ﷺ) gallantly at the most critical moment in the battle. She was among the very few who held their ground around the Prophet (ﷺ) when the Muslim army was dispersed by the Quraysh charge. Her gallantry and courage were phenomenal. Her husband, Ghaaziyah ibn Amr, and her two sons were participating in the battle with her.

She had set out with them at the beginning of the day with a water-skin to give water to the fighters. She went to the Prophet (ﷺ) who was with his companions when things were going the way of the Muslims. But when the Muslims were routed, she joined Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) and began to take part in the fighting.

She continued to fight, among less than ten companions, who managed to hold their ground around the Prophet (ﷺ). She sustained more than twelve wounds, one of which was almost fatal. It was a sword-cut deep in the side of her neck, which took more than a year to heal completely.

Muslim reports that at Uhud, the Prophet (ﷺ) was left alone with seven of his companions from the Ansaar and two from the Quraysh. When his (ﷺ) attackers increased their pressure on

him, he called, "Who would defend me and go to Paradise?" One by one the Helpers came forward, fought the polytheists and was finally martyred. Then Talhah ibn Ubaydullaah fought hard to drive the enemy away from the Prophet (ﷺ). Abu Dujaanah shielded the Prophet (ﷺ). Despite the volley of arrows that were hitting his back, he never wavered, all the while leaning over the Prophet (ﷺ).

The Prophet (ﷺ) was so exhausted that he was not even able to climb a rock on the mountain until Talhah squatted to allow him to step over his back. He couched below the ledge with great violence to his wounds. He took the Prophet (ﷺ) on his back and raised him to the necessary height. Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said of him that day, "He that would see a martyr walking the face of the earth let him look on Talhah ibn Ubaydullaah."

The Prophet (ﷺ) was hit by an arrow. Two rings of his helmet had found their way into his cheek. Abu Bakr (رضي الله عنه) came forward to pull one of them out. when Abu 'Ubaydah ibn al-Jarraah pleaded with him to let him pull it out, he grabbed the ring with his teeth and began to ease it out, taking care not to hurt the Prophet (ﷺ). He was able to pull it out, but his own front teeth came out. He pulled out the other ring carefully with his teeth and another one of his front teeth came out. The Prophet (ﷺ) all the while urged them to go and help Talhah who had been wounded in more than ten places.

'Ali ibn Abee Taalib (رضي الله عنه) cleaned the Prophet's wound with water. Faatimah (رضي الله عنها), his wife and one of the Prophet's daughters, helped him; when she saw blood flowing out of the wound, she burnt a straw-mat and put it on the wound to ensure that the bleeding stopped. Maalik ibn Sinaan sucked the blood out of the Prophet's wound to clean it. The Prophet (ﷺ) urged him to spit it out, but he refused. The Prophet (ﷺ) used to point at Maalik and say, "Whoever wants to look at a man from Paradise, let him look at this man."

As recorded in several authentic traditions, the Prophet (ﷺ) invoked Allah's curse upon the leaders of the pagan Quraysh during the Battle of Uhud. (Al-Bukhaaree, At-Tirmidhee and An-Nasaa'ee) When the Prophet (ﷺ) lay on the ground severely injured, he exclaimed, "How could those people prosper after having done this to their Prophet who but invites them to their Lord?"

When it was time for prayer, the Prophet (ﷺ) led the Muslims in prayer, sitting down.

Wonders of Love and Sacrifice

Zayd ibn Thaabit (رضي الله عنه) relates that at Uhud, the Prophet (ﷺ) asked him to seek Sa'd ibn Ar-Rabee'. Zayd went out and found him in the throes of death, with seventy wounds on his body. He said to him, "Sa'd, Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) sends his greetings and is enquiring after you." He answered, "Give Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) my greetings and tell him that I smell the fragrance of Paradise. Tell my people, the *Ansaar*, that they will have no excuse with Allah if the Prophet (ﷺ) comes to any harm while any of them is still alive." With these words his soul departed.

'Abdullaah ibn Jahsh (رضي الله عنه) was heard that day praying. "O Allah, I beg of You to let me meet the enemies tomorrow. Let them kill me for Your sake. Let them cut open my abdomen and cut off my nose and ears, so that when You ask me the reason, I will say, 'It was done for Your sake.'"

'Amr ibn al-Jamooh (رضي الله عنه) had four sons who used to go on military expeditions with the Prophet (ﷺ). Despite his bad limp, 'Amr ibn al-Jamooh wanted to join the fighting at Uhud. His sons told him that Allah had excused him from doing so and that he did not have to go. So he went to the Prophet (ﷺ) and said, "My sons are preventing me from going out to fight with you. By Allah, I pray to Allah that I will be martyred, and that with this very limp I would walk into Paradise." The Prophet (ﷺ) allowed him to go to war.

The eye of Qataadah ibn an-Nu'maan was injured badly. It fell out of the socket onto his cheek. The Prophet (ﷺ) put it back into the socket and it subsequently became better and sharper than the other eye.

Ziyaad ibn as-Sakan (رضي الله عنه) fought alongside five of the *Ansaar* in front of the Prophet (ﷺ). They were killed one by one. Ziyaad fought until he was badly wounded. Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said, "Bring him to me. As a pillow for the dying man's head, he put out his foot, which he kept motionless until he died with his cheek resting upon it.

The Great Rejoicing

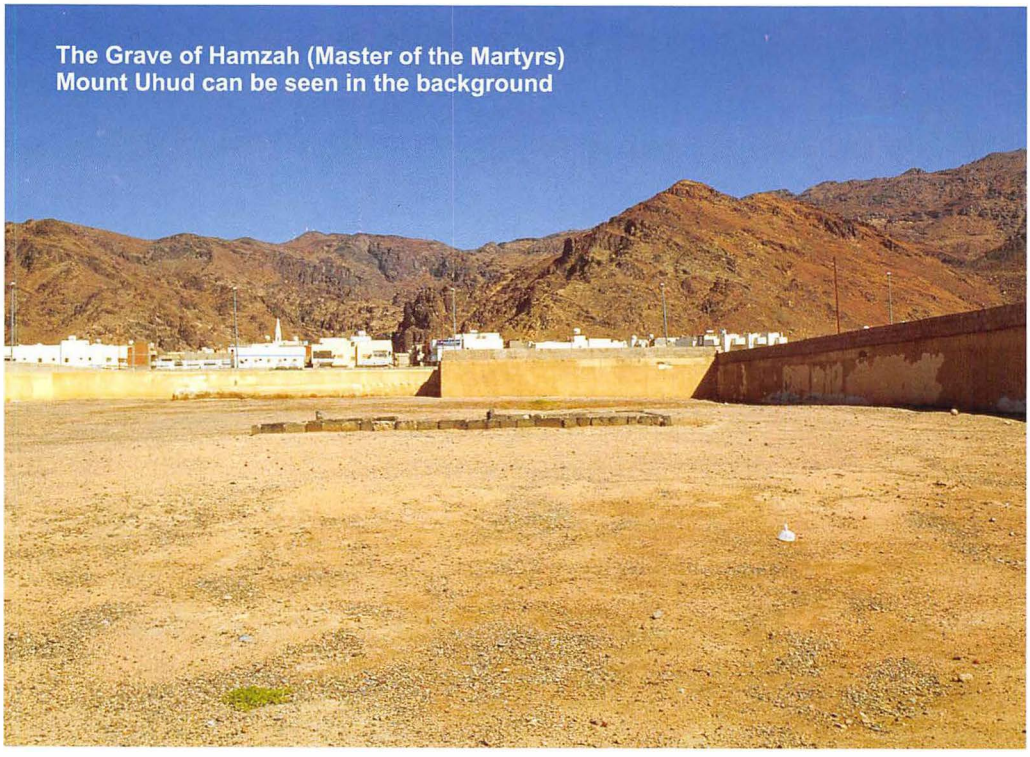
As the Prophet (ﷺ) and his small band of companions moved up the glen, they were seen by some of those who had already taken refuge at Uhud, and they came down to meet them. Ka'b ibn Maalik (رضي الله عنه) was ahead of the others. He was the first one to realize that the Prophet (ﷺ) was alive. He turned and shouted to those behind him, "O Muslims, be of good cheer! This is the Messenger of Allah!" The Prophet (ﷺ) motioned him to be silent, and the former did not shout the good news again. But it soon spread from mouth to mouth. Men came hurrying to reassure themselves that it was true.

So great was the rejoicing that it was as if the defeat had suddenly been changed into victory. The news ran a new life among the Muslims.

But Ka'b's joyful shout was heard by a Qurayshite horseman whose name was Ubayy ibn Khalaf. He had sworn that from the back of his horse 'Awd, which he was riding, he would kill the Prophet (ﷺ).

He rode up the glen until he was heard on the heels of the Muslims. They turned to face him, and he called out, "O Muhammad! If you escape, then may I not escape!" Some of the companions closed round the Prophet (ﷺ). Others were about to attack Ubayy when the Prophet (ﷺ) ordered them to hold off their hands. Then the Prophet (ﷺ) took a spear from Al-Haarith ibn as-Simmah and stepped in front of them all. Ubayy approached with a drawn sword, but before he could strike a blow, the Prophet (ﷺ) had thrust it in his neck. He bellowed like a bull and then swayed and almost fell from his horse. But he recovered his balance and turned and galloped down the slope until he reached the Makkan camp. "Muhammad has slain me," he cried in a trembling voice. They looked at his wound and made light of it. But Ubayy was sure that the wound was mortal. He said, "He told me he would kill me, and by Allah if he had spat upon me, he would have certainly killed me."

When the fighting subsided, the Prophet (ﷺ) saw Hamzah's body. He stood next to him, deeply overcome with grief, and said, "I shall suffer no greater loss than this one."



The Grave of Hamzah (Master of the Martyrs)
Mount Uhud can be seen in the background

Burial of the Dead

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) then ordered that martyrs of Uhud be buried where they felled, rather than be taken back to Madeenah. The Prophet (ﷺ) supervised the burials, with two or three bodies interred in the same grave. He would enquire which of the martyrs had been well-versed in the Qur'an and he would then let that person be buried before the others.

'Abdullaah ibn 'Amr ibn Haraam and 'Amr ibn al-Jamooh were buried together as they were known to have been very close friends. The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "Bury them together; they loved each other when they were alive."

Mus'ab ibn 'Umayr, Allah's Messenger's (ﷺ) standard-bearer, was one of the richest young men of the Quraysh before embracing Islam. Only a small piece of cloth could be found for his shroud. When his head was covered, his feet showed; when his feet were covered, his head was exposed. The Prophet (ﷺ) then advised, "Cover his head and put grass on his feet."

There were seventy martyrs. A report in *Saheeh Al-Bukhaaree* gives the number of martyrs as seventy.

The Prophet (ﷺ) would wrap two martyrs in one shroud. He ordered that they should be buried with their blood still on their bodies. He did not wash them and said, "I will be a witness for them on the Day of Resurrection."

Safiyyah bint 'Abd Al-Muttalib, Hamzah's full sister, came to look at him. The Prophet (ﷺ) was distressed to see Safiyyah (رضي الله عنها) approaching; so he called to Az-Zubayr ibn al-'Awwam, "She must not see what has happened to her brother." So Az-Zubayr went to her and said, "Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) bids you return." But Safiyyah had already learnt the news at the edge of the field. She said, "Why should I return? I have heard that my brother's body has been mutilated, but it was for the sake of Allah. I hope he will be rewarded." So she came and looked at her brother and prayed for him and said, "To Allah we belong, and to Him we will certainly return." She remained calm and patient.

As was Allah's will, the situation led to a bitter outcome and heavy sacrifices for the Muslims at Uhud. The most serious of these was the wounding of the Prophet (ﷺ) himself. This had been very painful and distressing for the companions. Thus they paid a heavy price, but they learnt a most profound lesson. Allah willed to test their hearts and purify their ranks.

A Believing Woman's Concern for the Prophet (ﷺ)

As they returned to Madeenah, the believers passed by a woman of Banu Dinaar who had lost her husband, brother and father in the battle. When she learnt of their deaths, she only asked, "What happened to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ)?" The Muslims said, "He is well." She praised Allah and requested them to point him out so that she could see him.

When Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) was pointed out to her, she said to him, "Now that you are safe, every misfortune is negligible."

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) gave good news to the believers of the great rewards which Allah had bestowed on the martyrs. He said to the daughter of 'Abdullaah ibn 'Amr, the father of Jaabir, "Why are you weeping? The angels provide him shade with their wings until he is lifted to his heavenly abode."

Concerning the martyrs, the following Qur'anic verse was revealed,

"Do not think of those who are slain in Allah's cause as dead. They are alive and well provided for by their Lord." (*Surat Aal-'Imraan*, 3: 169)

The martyrs are indeed alive, having all the essential qualities of life. They receive for their needs from their Lord. They have all that Allah bestows on them of His grace. Death is not the end of life. The *aayah* gives an order not to think of people killed while serving Allah's cause as dead, even though they have departed from the world and are no longer seen by the living. It also gives an assurance that they are very much alive, with their Lord and are well provided for by Him.

In this life, we do not know what type of life the martyrs have, except for whatever the Prophet (ﷺ) has told us about in authentic traditions, and the Prophet (ﷺ) was the most trustworthy and truthful of all people. Even his opponents and enemies admitted that. He was called 'the trustworthy' even before he announced his Prophethood in Makkah. He once said, "By Allah, I am the trustworthy one in the heavens and the trustworthy one on earth.' (At-Tirmidhee)

He also said, "Every believer wounded in Allah's cause will be raised by Allah on the Day of Resurrection, while his wounds will still be bleeding. The colour shall be that of blood, the fragrance that of musk." (Al-Bukhaaree and Muslim)

When Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) saw and heard the people of Madeenah weeping and wailing for their dead, he said, "But there is no one to weep for Hamzah." Some of the women of the *Ansaar* began to weep for Hamzah (رضي الله عنه). The Prophet (ﷺ) spoke kindly to them but strongly forbade them to wail loudly. Thus loud wailing was forbidden for all time; tears of grief were permitted.

Exercises

A. Fill in the blanks.

1. _____ took advantage of the archers' retreat, which turned the tide of the battle.
2. _____ was the only woman fighter among the companions who was fighting around the Prophet (ﷺ).
3. _____ shielded the Prophet (ﷺ) from the volley of arrows.
4. "By Allah, I am the trustworthy one in the _____ and the trustworthy one on _____."

B. Answer the following questions.

1. Describe what happend to the Prophet (ﷺ) in this battle.

2. What effect did the false news of the Prophet's death have on the Muslims?

3. Who removed the helmet rings from the Prophet's cheek?

4. What did Faatimah (رضي الله عنها) do to ensure that the Prophet's wound stopped bleeding?

5. Why did the Prophet (ﷺ) bury the martyrs without washing off their blood?

C. Reference to context

1. "... with this very limp, I would walk in Paradise."

2. "...they shall have no excuse with Allah if the Prophet (ﷺ) comes to any harm..."

3. "O Muslims, be of good cheer. This is the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ)!"

4. "Muhammad has slain me."

5. "I shall suffer no greater loss than this one."

Prophet Muhammad ﷺ Part 4

31

In Pursuit of the Retreating Makkans

Injury had afflicted the Muslims at the Battle of Uhud. They had sustained great losses. But the battle was over.

The defeat at Uhud was to test their faith (*eemaan*) in several ways. The path of *eemaan* is full of trials and tests. When it was decided to take the fight outside of Madeenah, the people of weak faith and the hypocrites withdrew. This segregated the true Muslims from the hypocrites. Then some of them who were entrusted to guard a very important post disobeyed the Prophet's orders and engaged themselves in the collection of war booty resulting in the Muslims' severe setback. The Muslims were taught the painful lesson that they could not attain victory unless they were disciplined and obeyed the orders of the Prophet (ﷺ). Thus Uhud was such a test, to teach them these lessons.

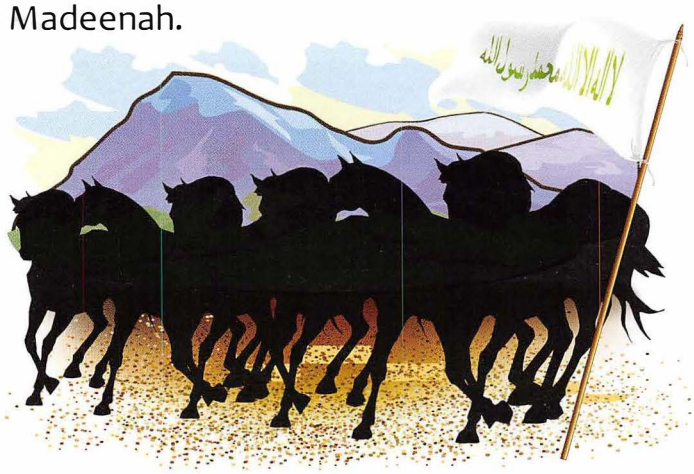
The true believers came out with firmer faith. They were ready to fight and die in the way of Allah. The hypocrites, on the other hand, were exposed as excuse seekers. They wanted to remain safe within Madeenah, away from the battlefield. The Muslims also learnt the lesson of complete obedience to the Prophet (ﷺ), which is the prerequisite of *eemaan*.

Seventy believers were martyred at Uhud, four of them were from the Emigrants, while the rest of them were from the Helpers. The Quraysh, on the other hand, lost twenty-four men. When they had buried their own dead and taken their fill of revenge on the enemy, the Quraysh told their slaves to strike the camp. They now prepared to set off.

They began to move in the direction of Makkah. Somewhere along the way a disagreement broke out among them. Some of them argued that they had achieved very little at Uhud. Some urged their men to go back to Madeenah to wipe the Muslims out once and for all.

The Prophet (ﷺ) and the Muslims had returned to Madeenah late in the evening of the 15th of *Shawwaal*, 3 AH. Overnight the Prophet (ﷺ) thought deeply. There

was a possibility that the Quraysh might regret not having destroyed the Muslims and might return to attack Madeenah.



The Muslims were exhausted. Many were wounded. But early the next morning after the dawn prayer had been offered, the Prophet (ﷺ) told Bilaal (رضي الله عنه) to announce to them and to others that the enemy must be pursued, "But none shall go out with us," he said, "except those who were present at the battle of yesterday."

Upon hearing the Prophet's summons, the believers bandaged their wounds as best as they could and made themselves ready to set out once again. The Prophet (ﷺ) himself was one of the first to be ready, although he was wounded, as were those who had defended him.

All the Muslims, who had fought the day before, went out with the Prophet (ﷺ). No one stayed behind. Of all the clans, only one man went out who had not fought at Uhud, and that was Jaabir ibn 'Abdullaah (رضي الله عنه). He said to the Prophet (ﷺ), " Messenger of Allah, I love to be with you in every battle, but my father asked me to look after his seven daughters on the day of Uhud, and I ask you to let me join you." The Prophet (ﷺ) gave him permission to march out with the others.

They made their first halt at Hamraa' al-Asad, about 13 km from Madeenah. The enemy was by that time encamped at Ar-Rawhaa', which was not far ahead. Thereupon, the Prophet (ﷺ) ordered his men to spread themselves over a wide area of ground. He commanded them to gather as much wood as they could find, piling it up, each man for himself, in a separate pile. By sunset they had prepared as many as five hundred beacons (fires lit on the top of hills). When night had fallen, every man set fire to his. The flames were sent far and wide. It looked as if a great army were encamped there. Some of the Quraysh had wanted to return and attack Madeenah. But now they decided to press on with all speed to Makkah.

Nonetheless, Abu Sufyaan sent back a parting message for the Prophet (ﷺ) by some riders. They were on their way to Madeenah for provisions. "Tell Muhammad from me that we are resolved to come against him and his companions. We will root them all out from the face of the earth." When they delivered the message to the Prophet (ﷺ), he

answered, "Allah is sufficient for us and is alone to be trusted." He and his companions spent Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday at their camp. They lighted fires every night and those were the days of much needed rest. On Thursday, they returned to Madeenah.



The Event of Rajee' – Treachery and Deceit

In *Safar*, 4 AH, a delegation from the two tribes of Udhal and al-Qaarrah came to Madeenah and asked the Prophet (ﷺ) to send with them a group of his companions to teach them Islam. The Prophet (ﷺ) sent ten of his best companions under the command of 'Aasim ibn Thaabit (رضي الله عنه).

When they reached al-Hadaah, between Usfaan and Makkah, their presence was known to a sub-tribe of Hudayl, called Banu Lihyaan. The Banu Lihyaan sent about one hundred archers after them who followed their track. When 'Aasim and his companions became aware of them, they took refuge on a hillock. But the foes surrounded them and said, "Come down and surrender! We give you our solemn promise not to kill any of you!" But 'Aasim ibn Thaabit (رضي الله عنه) answered, "for me, I shall never put myself under the protection of a polytheist. O Allah, inform your Prophet about us!"

So the Banu Lihyaan shot their arrows at them, and slew 'Aasim, together with six other Muslims. Three of the scouts surrendered on that solemn promise: Khubayb ibn 'Adiy, Zayd ibn Ad-Dathinah and another man. When the Banu Lihyaan got hold of them, they detached their bowstrings and bound their captives with them. The third man of the Muslims, 'Abdullaah ibn Taariq, cried out, "This is the first treachery! By Allah, I shall not go with you, nor shall I follow those others!" He meant thereby his slain companions' orders. The Banu Lihyaan dragged him along when he refused to go with them, they killed him. Khubayb ibn 'Adiy and Zayd ibn Ad-Dathinah were taken along and were sold in Makkah in revenge for some of the polytheists who were killed at Badr. This event is known as "The Event of ar-Rajee', after the watering place, not far from Makkah, where it took place.

The sons of Al-Haarith ibn 'Aamir ibn Nawfal bought Khubayb. It was Khubayb who had killed their father, Al-Haarith ibn 'Amr on the day of Badr. Khubayb remained in their captivity until they decided to kill him.

One of the daughters of Al-Haarith reports, "By Allah, I never saw a nobler captive than Khubayb! I found him one day fettered in iron chains, eating from a bunch of grapes, which he held in his hand, and there was no fruit in Makkah at that time! Indeed, it was a bounty, which Allah had bestowed on Khubayb."

One day, they led him out of the Sacred Territory (the precincts – the boundaries of the Haram of Makkah) to kill him. Khubayb (رضي الله عنه) said to his captors, "Let me pray two *rak'ahs*." They let him do so. He prayed two *rak'ahs* and then he said, "By Allah, were it not that you would think I do it out of fear, I would pray more." Then he supplicated, "O Allah, count their number. Slay them one by one. Let none of them remain alive." Then he recited,

I care not, when I am to be slain as a Muslim,
In what way I fall for the sake of Allah,
If He Wills, He will bless the mangled limbs of my body.

Thereupon, one of his captors rose and killed him. And it was Khubayb (رضي الله عنه) who instituted the two-*rak'ahs* prayer before death to Muslims, when condemned to be slain in captivity.

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) informed his companions in Madeenah on the day these martyrs were slain of what had happened to them.

Zayd ibn Ad-Dathinah's Faith in Action

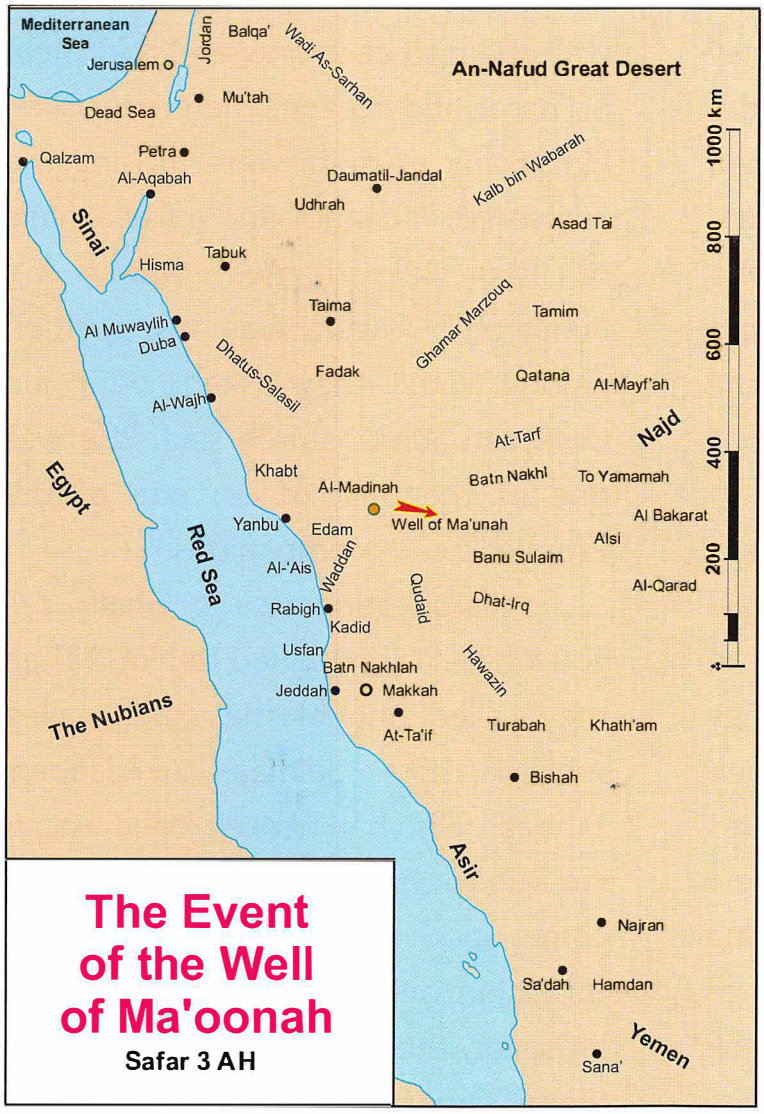
Khubayb's fellow captive was also put to death. Before he was killed, Abu Sufyaan asked him, "Do you not wish that Muhammad were in your place, and that you were comfortably sitting at your home?"

He replied, "I would not wish that Muhammad (ﷺ) should be pricked by a single thorn that I might thereby be sitting comfortably at home." Abu Sufyaan exclaimed, "I have never seen a man so loved as Muhammad's companions love him." Then they killed Zayd ibn Ad-Dathinah (رضي الله عنه).

Allah Protects Whom He Wills Even after Death

When some of the Quraysh were told of the death of 'Aasim ibn Thaabit, they sent out messengers with the order to bring a part of his body. They wanted that his death might be known for certain. 'Aasim had killed one of their leaders at Badr. But Allah sent a swarm of bees as a protection for 'Aasim. The bees shielded his body from their messengers until nightfall. They were thus unable to cut off a piece of his body. During the night, his

body was swept away by flood to an unknown destination.



The Event of the Well of Ma'oonah
Safar 3 AH

The Event of the Well of Ma'oonah

This took place in the month of *Safar* of the year 4 AH. The event started when a man from Najd named Abu Baraa' 'Aamir ibn Maalik came to Madeenah and met the Prophet (ﷺ). The Prophet (ﷺ) put Islam before him, but the old man did not accept it. He, however, made it clear that he was not averse to it. He then asked the Prophet (ﷺ) to send some Muslims to Najd, where they could instruct his tribesmen in Islam. The Prophet (ﷺ) said that he was afraid other tribes would attack them.

But Abu Baraa' promised that no one would violate the protection which, as chief of the tribe of 'Aamir, he would give them. Thereupon the Prophet (ﷺ) chose seventy of his best companions who were eminently representative of Islam, both in piety and knowledge. They were proficient reciters of the Qur'an and were known as *al-qurraa'*.

These seventy companions went on until they halted at Bi'r Ma'oonah – the well of Ma'oonah. Once there, they sent Haraam ibn Milhaan with the Prophet's letter to 'Aamir ibn At-Tufayl, who was the nephew of Abu Baraa'. When he came to him he rushed at the man and killed him before he even looked at the letter. When Haraam ibn Mailhaan was stabbed, he said, "This I do with my blood." He then began wiping his face and head. Then he exclaimed, "I have succeeded, by the Lord of the Ka'bah!"

'Aamir ibn At-Tufayl then called out to the tribes of Ibn Sulaym of Usayy, Ri'l and Dhakwaan, and they came out against the unsuspecting

against the unsuspecting Muslims in their camp by the Well of Ma'oonah. They surrounded them as they were with their camels. Seeing them, they drew their swords and fought to the last man, except for two men who had gone to pasture the camels. All were killed except for Ka'b ibn Zayd who was still alive. He was picked up from among the slain and lived until the Battle of the Trench, where he was martyred.

'Amr ibn Umayyah adh-Dhamree and AI-Haarith ibn As-Simmah, who had fought so valiantly at Uhud, were both with their camels out at pasture. They did not know of the martyrdom of their companions until they saw vultures circling round the camp. They knew that this must mean that something serious had happened. So they went to investigate and there were the men lying in their blood and the horsemen who had killed them standing near.

'Amr's opinion was that they should join the Prophet (ﷺ) and tell him the news, but AI-Haarith said, "I am not one to hold back from fighting on a field where AI-Mundhir has been slain," and he threw himself on the enemy, killing two of them before he was finally martyred. 'Amr was overpowered and taken captive. His captors were strangely unwilling to kill him, so they set 'Amr free after shaving his head off as a sign of humiliation. Then they asked him to tell the names of all his dead companions. He went with them to each one, and told them his name and lineage. Then they asked him if any of them were missing. He answered, "I cannot find a freed slave of Abu Bakr named 'Aamir ibn Fuhayrah." "What was his position among you?" they asked. 'Amr ibn Umayyah adh-Dhamree said, "He was one of the best of us; one of the Prophet's early companions."

His questioner said, "Shall I tell you what has happened to him?" Then they called one of their men called Jabbaar ibn Salmaa AI-Kilaabee. Jabbaar, who had himself killed 'Aamir ibn Fuhayrah, recounted how he had come upon 'Aamir from behind and thrust him between the shoulders with his spear. The point had come out from 'Aamir's chest, and with his last breath the words "I have triumphed by Allah" came out of his lips. "What could that mean?" thought Jabbaar. He felt that he himself had more right to claim a success. In amazement, he drew out his spear.

He was still more amazed when unseen hands carried the body of 'Aamir ibn Fuhayrah high up in the air until it had gone out of sight. When it was explained to Jabbaar that 'triumph' meant Paradise, he embraced Islam.

The Prophet (ﷺ) said when he heard of the event that the angels had taken 'Aamir to *'illiyyoon*.

The men of Sulaym returned to their tribe. The story of what had happened at the Well of Ma'oonah was repeated again and again. As far as the freed survivor, 'Aamir, they told him that Banu 'Aamir had instigated the massacre. On his way back to Madeenah, two men of Banu 'Aamir turned up and stopped with him in the shade. 'Aamir killed both of them, thinking to avenge his dead companions. But both men were innocent. They were loyal to Abu Baraa'. They recognized his protection of the believers. Allah's Messenger (ﷺ), therefore, insisted that blood-wit should be paid for them to their nearest of kin.

'Amr ibn Umayyah adh-Dhamree returned to Madeenah and gave the news to the Prophet (ﷺ). He was freed by 'Aamir ibn At-Tufayl because of an oath taken by his mother. The Prophet (ﷺ) was sad, outraged and deeply hurt at what had happened. He said, "This is the result of Abu Baraa's advice. I was unwilling to send them. I feared the consequences."

Perhaps the Prophet (ﷺ) never felt as much sorrow as he felt for his companions who were martyred in this incident. It was nothing less than murder in cold blood together with treachery.

In his sorrow, the Prophet (ﷺ) prayed to Allah to punish the clans which took part in the killing of his companions. He did so everyday for a month during the dawn prayer. He mentioned each clan by name. He also prayed to Allah for certain individuals who were held back in Makkah by the Quraysh.

Abu Baraa' 'Aamir ibn Maalik felt resentment and anger at what had happened. The incident had taken place in spite of the protection provided by him. He succumbed to his grief and died after a fortnight. 'Aamir ibn At-Tufayl died of plague.

Exercises

A. State whether these statements are true (T) or false (F).

1. Everyone was allowed to go to pursue the Makkan army. _____
2. The Quraysh army sped off towards Makkah. _____
3. The Banu Lihyaan killed all the ten companions. _____
4. Zayd ibn ad-Dathinah wished that the Prophet (ﷺ) would be in his place. _____
5. 'Aamir ibn Fuhayrah was physically lifted by the angels to *Illiyyoon*. _____

B. Fill in the blanks.

1. The Prophet (ﷺ) sent _____ companions to educate the Muslims of 'Udhal and Qaarrah.
2. _____ tribe attacked the group.

C. Answer the following questions.

1. What lesson can we draw from the Battle of Uhud?

2. Why did the Prophet (ﷺ) decide to pursue the Makkans?

3. Why did the Prophet (ﷺ) ask each man to light his own separate beacon?

4. What act did Khubayb institute in Islam?

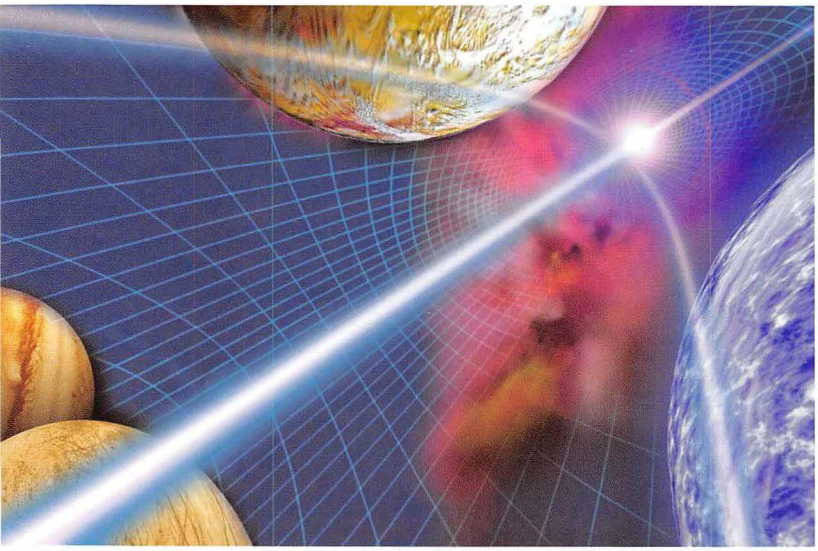
5. How did Allah protect 'Aasim's body?

D. Think-up

What is *'Illiyyoon*?

The Light Verses (*Surat An-Noor*, 24: 35-40)

ٱللَّهُ نُورُ ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ
وَٱلْأَرْضِ ۚ مَثَلُ نُورِهِۦ كَمِشْكَوٰةٍ فِيهَا مِصْبَاحٌ ۖ ٱلْمِصْبَاحُ فِى زُجَاجَةٍ ۖ
ٱلزُّجَاجَةُ كَأَنَّهَا كَوْكَبٌ دُرِّىٌّ يُوقَدُ مِن شَجَرَةٍ مُّبَٰرَكَةٍ زَيْتُونَةٍ
لَّا شَرْقِيَّةٍ وَلَا غَرْبِيَّةٍ يَكَادُ زَيْتُهَا يُضِىٓءُ وَلَوْ لَمْ تَمْسَسْهُ نَارٌ ۚ
نُّورٌ عَلَىٰ نُورٍ ۗ يَهْدِى ٱللَّهُ لِنُورِهِۦ مَن يَشَآءُ ۚ وَيَضْرِبُ ٱللَّهُ ٱلْأَمْثَٰلَ
لِلنَّاسِ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَىْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٣٥﴾ فِى بُيُوتٍ أَذِنَ ٱللَّهُ أَن تُرْفَعَ
وَيُذْكَرَ فِيهَا ٱسْمُهُۥ يُسَبِّحُ لَهُۥ فِيهَا بِٱلْغُدُوِّ وَٱلْءَاصَالِ ﴿٣٦﴾
رِجَالٌ لَّا تُلْهِيهِمْ تِجَٰرَةٌ وَلَا بَيْعٌ عَن ذِكْرِ ٱللَّهِ وَإِقَامِ ٱلصَّلَوٰةِ وَإِيتَآءِ
ٱلزَّكَوٰةِ ۙ يَخَافُونَ يَوْمًا تَتَقَلَّبُ فِيهِ ٱلْقُلُوبُ وَٱلْأَبْصَٰرُ ﴿٣٧﴾
لِيَجْزِيَهُمُ ٱللَّهُ أَحْسَنَ مَا عَمِلُوا۟ وَيَزِيدَهُم مِّن فَضْلِهِۦ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ يَرْزُقُ
مَن يَشَآءُ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ ﴿٣٨﴾ وَٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوٓا۟ أَعْمَٰلُهُمْ كَسَرَابٍ
بِقِيعَةٍ يَحْسَبُهُ ٱلظَّمْـَٔانُ مَآءً حَتَّىٰٓ إِذَا جَآءَهُۥ لَمْ يَجِدْهُ شَيْـًٔا
وَوَجَدَ ٱللَّهَ عِندَهُۥ فَوَفَّىٰهُ حِسَابَهُۥ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ سَرِيعُ ٱلْحِسَابِ ﴿٣٩﴾
أَوْ كَظُلُمَٰتٍ فِى بَحْرٍ لُّجِّىٍّ يَغْشَىٰهُ مَوْجٌ مِّن فَوْقِهِۦ مَوْجٌ مِّن
فَوْقِهِۦ سَحَابٌ ۚ ظُلُمَٰتٌۢ بَعْضُهَا فَوْقَ بَعْضٍ ۚ إِذَآ أَخْرَجَ يَدَهُۥ لَمْ
يَكَدْ يَرَىٰهَا ۗ وَمَن لَّمْ يَجْعَلِ ٱللَّهُ لَهُۥ نُورًا فَمَا لَهُۥ مِن نُّورٍ ﴿٤٠﴾



35. Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The likeness of this Light is a niche, wherein is a lamp, the lamp is in a globe of glass, the globe of glass as it were a brilliant star, kindled from a blessed tree — an olive that is neither of the east nor of the west, whose oil will well-nigh light up, even if no fire touched it; Light upon Light. Allah guides to His Light whomever He wills. And Allah gives examples for men, and Allah has knowledge of everything.

36. [This light is now lit] in the houses [of worship] which Allah has enjoined to be raised, wherein His Name is remembered, in them they glorify Him in the mornings and the evenings.

37. [By] men who are not distracted by trade or commerce from the remembrance of Allah, the performance of prayers and the

giving of the purifying dues; they fear a day on which hearts and eyes will be agitated.

38. So that Allah may give them the best reward for their deeds and grant them even more out of His bounty; and Allah provides without measure to whomever He wills.

39. As for those who deny the truth, their deeds are like a mirage in a desert, which the thirsty man thinks to be water until he comes to it and finds nothing there — but he finds Allah near him, Who then pays him his account; and Allah is swift at reckoning.

40. Or [their deeds are] like thick darkness in a vast and deep sea, which waves cover, over which there are other waves, above which are clouds. Layers of darkness, one upon another. When he holds out his hand, he can hardly see it. And whomever Allah gives no light, has no light at all.

Explanation

Allah's Light in the Muslim's Heart

Verse 35: Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth.

The Light Verses form some of the countless, most prized and brilliant passages of the Qur'an. Speaking of the literary charm of the Glorious Qur'an, and taking this particular verse as a specimen, an English lady now happily a Muslim says, "It is impossible to give a translation that can convey the poetry, the subtle meaning that floods the soul when read in the original. To me the grandeur of the diction, the varieties of the imageries, and the splendour of the wood-painting differentiates the Qur'an from all other scriptures." (Lady Cobbord: *Pilgrimage to Mecca*. Quoted in *Tafseer Maajidi*)

Ibn 'Abbaas (رضي الله عنه) said that the word '*noor*' alludes to Allah's guidance found in every believer's heart. Some other Qur'an scholars believe that it is the *noor* – the Light – of the Qur'an. Allah Most High has named His Book *Noor*:

﴿وَأَنزَلْنَآ إِلَيْكُمْ نُورًا مُّبِينًا﴾

"We have sent down to you a clear Light." (*Surat An-Nisaa'*, 4: 174)

We have a report in *Saheeh Al-Bukhaaree* and *Saheeh Muslim* that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) would say when he rose for his pre-dawn prayer:

«اللَّهُمَّ لَكَ الْحَمْدُ أَنْتَ نُورُ السَّمَواتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَنْ فِيهِنَّ، وَلَكَ الْحَمْدُ أَنْتَ قَيِّمُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَنْ فِيهِنَّ»...

"O Allah, praise be to You, You are the Light of the heavens and the earth and what is in them; and praise be to You, You are the Upholder of the heavens and the earth and what is in them, etc."

Ubayy ibn Ka'b (ﷺ) used to say, "The likeness of His light takes place in the Muslim's heart. This light, which Allah has placed in the heart, comes from faith, belief, love and remembrance of Allah. It consists in developing a correct understanding and grasp of His Names and Attributes, which He has described in His Book."

It is the light that He has sent down to His servants, by which He guides them. It is about this Light – its abode, its bearer, and its fuel — that Allah has coined the parable of the niche. In this niche lies a globe made of pure glass, like a glistening star. It is white and pure like a radiant star — a similitude for the believer's heart! In the glass there is a lamp, which bears the light. The fuel for his light is oil pressed from an olive tree, which grows in a place so adequate that the sun reaches it at both the beginning and the end of the day. This makes its oil the purest and the clearest — so clear that it almost glows by itself, without fire.

Such is the fuel for this lamp's light!

Such is the fuel of the lamp in the believer's heart! It comes from the Tree of Revelation — the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*! Indeed, it is the most central of all things, the most balanced and the most excellent. It seeks the middle way in all things. Such is the fuel for the Lamp of Faith, which burns in the believer's heart.

The oil is so transparent that it glows by itself. When it is mingled with fire, its glow becomes more intense. Its content is strengthened, and there is light upon light! Similarly, the heart of the believer is so illumined that he could almost know Allah merely by way of his own *fitrah*. The *fitrah* is the pure nature given to man by Allah. The light of the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* adds up to the light of his own pure nature. The two combine to become light upon light. The glass is transparent. It does not keep the light within, but protects and allows it to spread, which is why it is likened to a star! As the Prophet (ﷺ) once said, "When light enters one's heart, there is an expansion and broadening." (At-Tirmidhee)

The believer then turns towards the life of the hereafter. He turns away from the false hopes of this world. He starts preparing for death before it arrives. It makes his heart glow. His soul is quickened. He feels inclined to Allah's worship willingly. And Allah guides to His light whomever wills to be guided.

Verse 36: "[This light is now lit] in the houses [of worship] which Allah has enjoined to be raised, wherein His Name is remembered, in them they glorify Him in the mornings and the evenings."

"In houses Allah has enjoined to be raised up":

The word raised up may be understood in the concrete sense of 'set up', meaning house of worship built especially for the constant remembrance of Allah, a house ennobled by the constant remembrance of Allah.

Verse 37: "Men who are not distracted":

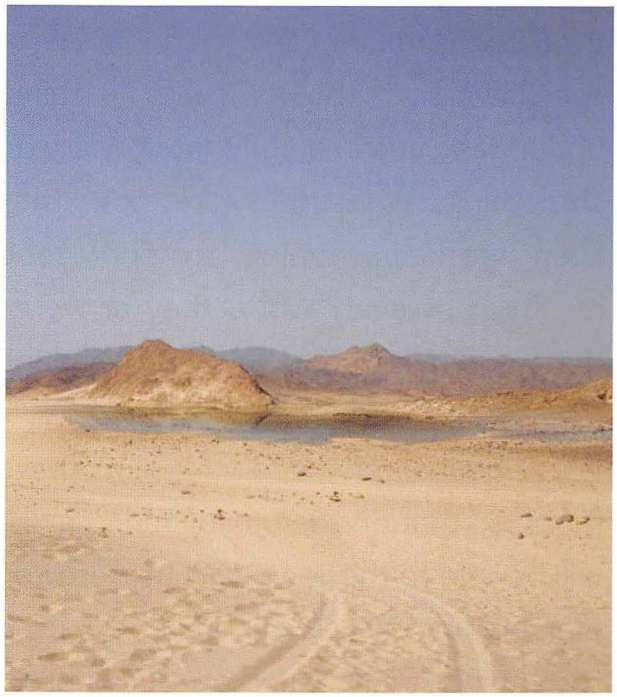
This refers to people whose worldly occupations do not distract them from constant and complete devotion to Allah.

The Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) were the first generation of people to which this verse applied perfectly. 'Abdullaah ibn Mas'ood (رضي الله عنه) was once in the market place when the *adhaan* (call to prayer) was called out. Seeing that the traders left their trade and goods and were preparing to proceed to the mosque, he remarked, "These are indeed the ones Allah speaks of in the verse: "men who are not distracted by trade or commerce from the remembrance of Allah."

It is, however, important to realize that the word 'houses' signify both the mosques as well as the houses of believers, for Islam does not restrict Allah's worship only to the mosques. The ordinary houses of believers are also a place of worship like the mosques, and everyone may worship Allah in them. Men, however, must perform the obligatory prayers in mosques.

Verse 38 is self-explanatory.

Verse 39: By the word 'deeds' is meant the good deeds of the disbelievers who reject the truth. They look bright here but would be worthless in the hereafter. They are bound to realize on the Day of Judgment that all their supposedly 'good' deeds have been rendered worthless by their deliberate refusal to listen to the voices of truth.



'Abdullaah Yusuf 'Ali writes: "The mirage, of which I have seen instances in the Arabian deserts and in Egypt, is a strange phenomenon of illusion. It is a trick of our vision. In the language of our parable, it rejects the Light, which shows us the Truth, and deceives us with Falsehood. A lonely traveller in a desert, nearly dying of thirst, sees a broad sheet of 'water'. He goes in that direction, lured on and on but finds nothing at all. He dies in agony."

Verse 40: "Or [their deeds are] like thick darkness":

This again refers to the deeds of the deniers of the truth who refuse to acknowledge the Source of all beings. Ubayy ibn Ka'b once remarked that the example is that of the disbelievers who live in a five-fold darkness: of speech, deed, entry, exit, and the destination into the Fire (*Tafseer Ibn Katheer*).

Ibn Katheer adds, "These two verses give us the example of two classes of disbelievers: those who think, understand and imagine that they are on something, while they are not. They keep working, hoping to find good results. However, when they arrive at the terminal end, they find nothing there.

Al-Bukhaaree and Muslim have reported that on the Day of Judgment it will be said to the Jews, "What were you worshipping?" They will reply, "We used to worship Uzayr, the son of Allah!" It will then be said to them, "You have lied. Allah has not begotten any son. What do you want now?" They will say, "O Lord, we are thirsty, give us something to drink." It will be said to them, "Can you see?" At that moment, the Fire will be made to look like a mirage, waves upon waves. They will rush into it, one upon another. The verse speaks of the ignorant masses who blindly follow their leaders; they know nothing and understand nothing.

"When he holds out his hand, he can hardly see it":

The ignorance and the blindness of the ungrateful not only hinders them from the truth of what is near at hand. **"And whomsoever Allah gives no light, has no light at all"**: Since there is no light in the whole universe except the Light of Allah, and everything becomes visible by Allah's Light alone, anyone who remains deprived of this light will have no light whatsoever. Such a person is doomed to remain in darkness.

Exercises

A. Fill in the blanks.

According to Ubayy ibn Ka'b (رضي الله عنه), the disbelievers live in five-fold darkness:

_____, _____, _____, _____ and _____.

B. Answer the following questions.

1. In the Light Verses, what does the word 'noor' mean? Explain in detail.

2. What is the fuel that burns the lamp's light?

3. Explain the phrase 'light upon light'.

4. Where are those that are guided by this light?

5. Who are the 'people who are not distracted'?

C. Think-up

The disbelievers do a lot of good deeds in their lives, sometimes even dedicating their lives to 'causes'. What do these deeds account for in the hereafter?

Prophet Muhammad ﷺ Part 5

33

Expulsion of Banu Qaynuqaa' Jews — A Review

There were altogether eleven Jewish settlements in north Arabia during the time of the Prophet (ﷺ). There were three Jewish tribes: Banu Qaynuqaa', Banu An-Nadheer and Banu Quraydhah.

The Jews lived in their own quarters and villages. Banu Qaynuqaa' had their special settlement inside the city of Madeenah. Banu An-Nadheer had their quarters about two or three miles to the north of Madeenah in a fertile valley called Baadhaan. The settlement of Banu Quraydhah was situated at a distance called Mahdhoor, a few miles to the south of Madeenah. All Jewish tribes had their fortresses and districts where they lived independently. Every Jewish leader had an Arab ally from among the chiefs of the Arab tribes.

As you have learnt earlier, the conflict with the Jews of Banu Qaynuqaa' was the first ever conflict between Muslims and the Jews. This incident took place in the year 2 AH, after the Battle of Badr. A Jewish jeweller dealt indecently with a Muslim woman customer. She had refused to unveil, but he managed to expose her body by means of a nasty trick. The Muslim woman cried for help and a Muslim instantly killed the Jewish dealer. Jews in turn killed that Muslim.

The Prophet (ﷺ) hurried to the scene and addressed the Jewish gathering in the marketplace of the city, which was situated in the Jewish quarter. Banu Qaynuqaa' was very unfriendly towards the Muslims. They were the first of the Jews to break the agreement they had with the Muslims.

The Prophet (ﷺ) reminded Banu Qaynuqaa' Jews of the agreement they had with the Muslims and demanded that they abide by its provisions and not break it again. He warned them sternly against any future violations of the agreement. In reply they arrogantly boasted of their military strength. They unwisely warned the Prophet (ﷺ) that he would be defeated should he try to engage them on the battlefield. The Prophet (ﷺ) considered their reply a breach of the agreement. He proceeded immediately to take action against them. This led to the expulsion of Banu Qaynuqaa' Jews from Madeenah.

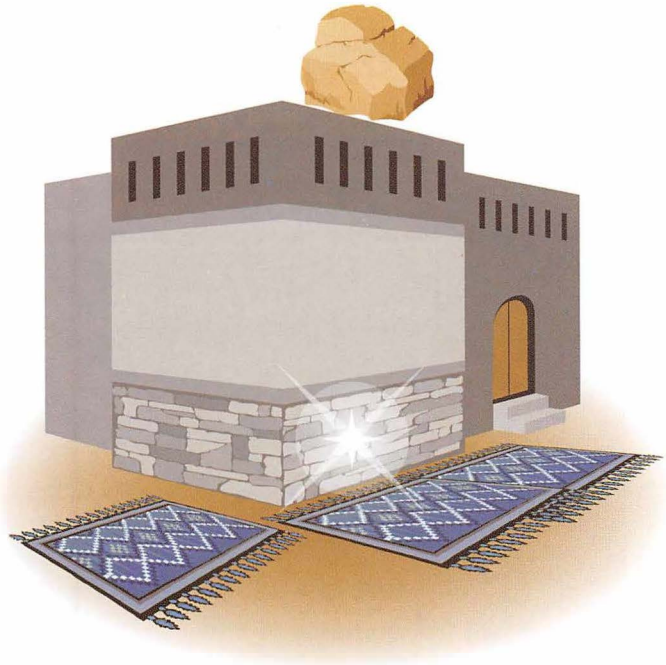
Expulsion of Banu An-Nadheer Jews: 4 AH (625 CE)

The Jewish tribe of Banu An-Nadheer had long been confederates (allies or together in agreement) of the Banu 'Aamir. Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) decided to ask them to help him pay the blood-wit. It was due to Banu 'Aamir for the two men killed accidentally by 'Amr ibn Umayyah Adh-Dhamree while he was returning to Madeenah from Bi'r Ma'oonah.

The Prophet (ﷺ) then went to them with Abu Bakr and 'Umar ibn al-Khattaab and some other companions of his and presented the matter before them. The Prophet (ﷺ) asked their chiefs to contribute to the blood money he had to pay. According to the provisions of the agreement, they were expected to contribute some money towards such payment. The agreement called upon the various parties to it to help each other in such matters.

Treachery of the Jews

Banu An-Nadheer apparently agreed to do what the Prophet (ﷺ) requested, and invited them to stay until a meal could be prepared for them. The Prophet (ﷺ) accepted the invitation. Some of the Jews withdrew, pretending to give instructions about the entertainment of their guests. But then some of them met secretly. They decided that they would never have a better opportunity to assassinate the Prophet (ﷺ), since he was seated by the



wall of one of their fort-like houses. They asked for a volunteer to climb to the top of the fortress to drop a huge rock down on his head to get rid of him. 'Amr ibn Jihaash ibn Ka'b volunteered to do this. He climbed up to drop the rock as suggested. Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) had been accompanied by his companions, who included Abu Bakr, 'Umar and 'Ali. While they were sitting there, in front of one of their fortresses, Jibreel (ﷺ) came to the Prophet (ﷺ), unseen by any except him, and informed him that the Jews were planning to kill him and that he must return to Madeenah at once.

The Prophet (ﷺ) then rose and left his company without a word. Everyone assumed that he would quickly rejoin them. But when some time had passed and he had not returned, Abu Bakr suggested to the other companions that they also had to go. So they took their leave of the Jews and went to the Prophet's house. The prophet (ﷺ) explained to them what had happened.

He then sent Muhammad ibn Maslamah to the Banu An-Nadheer, telling him what to say to them. The Prophet's messenger hurried to their fortresses. When some of their leaders came out to meet him, he told them, "Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) has sent me to you, and he says, 'By your scheming to kill me, you have broken the pact I made with you.'" He then recounted to them the exact details of their plot, as the Prophet (ﷺ) had bidden him do. Finally he delivered the main point of his message, "I give you ten days to depart from my country," said the Prophet (ﷺ), "and if any of you is seen after that, he will be killed."

The Role of 'Abdullaah Ibn Ubayy

Most of the Jews had already started making preparations to leave. But in the meantime they secretly conspired with the hypocrites among the Arabs of Madeenah who were led by 'Abdullaah ibn Ubayy, the main hypocrite. He promised the Banu An-Nadheer armed support by two thousand warriors in case they decided to remain in their fortified settlements on the outskirts of Madeenah, saying, "Do not leave your homes; if the Muslims fight against you, we shall fight side by side with you; and if they succeed in driving you away, we shall leave Madeenah with you."

Huyayy ibn Akhtab, one of the Jewsih chiefs, with much difficulty, persuaded them to stand firm. He felt sure that their Bedouin allies would not fail them in this crisis. He dispatched urgent appeals to the Jews of Banu Quraydhah for help. He then sent his brother to the Prophet (ﷺ) with the message, "We shall not leave our dwellings and our possessions, and so do what you will." "*Allaahu Akbar* (Allah is the Greatest)!" the Prophet (ﷺ) exclaimed, "The Jews have declared war." Then he immediately collected an army and, placing the banner in the hands of 'Ali, he set off for the settlements of Banu An-Nadheer, a little to the south of the city. He appointed 'Abdullaah ibn Umm Maktoom in charge of the city.

Huyayy ibn Akhtab was very excited by 'Abdullaah ibn Ubayy's offer. He felt that there was an excellent chance to defeat the Muslims. The Muslims' morale, he imagined, was very low after their near-defeat at Uhud and the massacre of their companions at Ar-Rajee' and Bi'r Ma'oonah.

The Muslims prayed the afternoon prayer in the spacious courtyard, which the Jews had now vacated since it was outside their defences. After the prayer, the Prophet (ﷺ) led his troops towards the fortresses.

The ramparts were armed with archers and slingers. They had also rocks at their disposal in case the walls came to be attacked. The two sides kept up an

exchange of arrows and stones until dark. The Jews thought help would come from Banu Quraydhah and 'Abdullaah ibn Ubayy. Their allies of Ghatafaan would be with them in a couple of days, they thought. Meanwhile the Muslim army surrounded the enemy on all sides. The Prophet (ﷺ) prayed with them, and then returned with ten of his companions to Madeenah, leaving 'Ali in charge of the camp.

The Banu An-Nadheer remained under siege all night long, until it was time for the dawn prayer. After Bilaal (رضي الله عنه) called out the *adhaan*, the Prophet (ﷺ) rejoined them and the believers offered the *Fajr* prayer.

The days passed. The Banu An-Nadheer began to despair of the help, which many of them had thought to be certain. The Banu Quraydhah did not come. The Banu Ghatafaan remained silent. 'Abdullaah ibn Ubayy admitted that he could do nothing. The hopes of the besieged Banu An-Nadheer dwindled. They were completely cut off from the outer world. There was no sign of help from any direction. The situation had become intolerable. In the meantime, after ten days or more, the Prophet (ﷺ) gave orders to cut down some of the palm-trees, which were in sight of the walls. This was done by Allah's Leave (*Soorat Al-Hashr*, 59:5). This was done to facilitate the military operations against the strongholds of the Jews. It should, however, be noted that apart from such severe military needs, all destruction of enemy property — and in particular of trees and crops, had been and continue to be prohibited by the Prophet (ﷺ).

Most of *Surat Al-Hashr* refers, directly or indirectly, to the conflict between the Muslim community and the Jewish tribe of Banu An-Nadheer.

The siege lasted for about twenty-one days, without actual fighting. Finally, when the promised help did not arrive, the Banu An-Nadheer Jews surrendered in the month of *Rabee' Al-Awwal*, 4 AH and pleaded for peace. This they were granted by the Prophet (ﷺ) on condition that they would leave Madeenah, taking with them their movable properties, but not their arms and armour.

Most of them immigrated to Syria in a caravan of about six hundred camels. Only two families chose to settle in the oasis of Khaybar. A few individuals went as far as al-Heerah, in lower Iraq. Their fields and plantations were seized.

The doors of their houses and even the lintels were loaded on to their camels. When all was ready, they set off for the north upon the road to Syria. People had never seen such a caravan of magnificence within their living memory. As they made their way through the crowded market of Madeenah, the camels went into a single file. Each one as it passed was an object of wonder. The Banu An-Nadheer Jews were known to be wealthy, but until now only a small

portion of their riches had been seen by other than themselves.

According to *Soorat Al-Hashr*, the land of Banu An-Nadheer and all that they left behind them was the possession of the Prophet (ﷺ). It was to be given to the poor and the needy, and in particular to the poor emigrants who had been driven from their homes. Only two of the Helpers were given a share and that was on account of their poverty — one of them was Abu Dujaanah and the other was Sahl ibn Hunayf. Only two men of Banu An-Nadheer accepted Islam: Yaameen ibn 'Umayr ibn Ka'b and Abu Sa'd ibn Wahb. They both retained their property.

The Banu An-Nadheer Jews left behind their weapons, which included fifty coats of mail, fifty helmets and three hundred and forty swords.

As always in the Qur'an, these historical events serve to illustrate a spiritual truth. In the expedition of Banu An-Nadheer, the lesson for the believers is that even if they are inferior in number, wealth and equipment, they are bound to triumph over their opponents so long as they remain truly conscious of Allah.

The date of the *Soorat Al-Hashr* is the year 4 AH. Some of the Prophet's companions — for example, Ibn 'Abbaas used to refer to it as *Soorat Banu An-Nadheer*.

Events Following the Expedition of Banu An-Nadheer

During the months which followed, Faatimah (رضي الله عنها), the daughter of the Prophet (ﷺ), gave birth to another son. Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) was so pleased with the name al-Hasan that he now named al-Hasan's younger brother al-Husayn, which means 'the little beautiful one'.

About the same time, Zaynab bint Khuzaymah (رضي الله عنها), the Prophet's wife, fell ill and died. He led her funeral prayer and buried her in Al-Baqee', not far from the grave of his daughter Ruqayyah. Zaynab bint Khuzaymah was twice married and widowed before the Prophet (ﷺ) married her. She was known for her piety and love for charity. This quality of giving won her the title of *Umm Al-Masaakeen*, or the Mother of the Poor.

The next month Abu Salamah of Banu Makhzoom died of a wound from Uhud. The wound had closed soon but it broke out afresh. The Prophet (ﷺ) was with him at the end and prayed for him as he was breathing his last. It was the Prophet (ﷺ) who closed his eyes when he died on the 8th *Jumaadaa al-Aakhirah* in 4 AH.

The Prophet's Marriage to Umm Salamah

Abu Salamah and his wife, Umm Salamah, had been a most devoted couple. She had wanted Abu Salamah to make a pact with her that if one of them died, the other would not get married

again, but he told her that if he died first, she should marry again. Her real name was Hind bint Abu Umayyah. Abu Salamah's actual name was 'Abdullaah ibn Abd Al-Asad of the Banu Makhzoom clan. He migrated to both Abyssinia and Madeenah and was seriously wounded in the Battle of Uhud, and died a martyr a month afterwards, as we have pointed out earlier.

Four months after his death, the Prophet (ﷺ) asked for Umm Salamah's hand in marriage. She replied that she feared she was not a suitable match for him. "I am a woman whose best time has gone," she said, "and I am the mother of orphans. What is more, I have a nature of exceeding jealousy, and Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) has already one wife."

The Prophet (ﷺ) replied, "As to age, I am older than you. As to jealousy, I will pray to Allah to take it away from you. As to your orphan children, Allah and His Prophet will take care of them." And so they got married.

Imam Muslim has reported Umm Salamah as saying, "I heard Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) say, "There is no servant of Allah who is afflicted with some misfortune and who says,

«إِنَّا لِلهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ، اللَّهُمَّ أْجُرْنِي فِي مُصِيبَتِي وَأَخْلِفْ لِي خَيْرًا مِنْهَا»

(Truly, we belong to Allah, and to Him we shall return. O Allah, reward me for bearing my misfortune [with patience] and replace it with something better),

without Allah rewarding him, and replacing his loss with something better.'"

Umm Salamah (رضي الله عنها) said, "When Abu Salamah died, I said as the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) had ordered me, and Allah gave me someone better than him: the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ)."

Afterwards, the Prophet's marriage to Umm Salamah proved a successful and an affectionate one. Umm Salamah had many of the qualities of Khadeejah (رضي الله عنها). Like her, she came from a noble Quraysh family, being of Banu Makhzoom clan. Like Khadeejah (رضي الله عنها), she was an excellent and a pleasing companion. Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) married her towards the end of the month of *Shawwaal*, 4 AH. She died in *Dhul-Qa'dah*, 59 AH.

The Expedition of Dhaat Ar-Riqaa'

After the expedition of Banu An-Nadheer, the Prophet (ﷺ) stayed in Madeenah for a few months when it was reported to him that Banu Muhaarib and Banu Tha'labah of the Ghatafaan tribe were gathering an army in order to attack Madeenah. Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) proceeded towards Najd at the head of four hundred soldiers. He met some men of Ghatafaan, but there was no fighting.

There is a difference of opinion among the scholars as to when this expedition (*ghazwah*) actually took place. According to some, it was in *Jumaadaa al-Oolaa*, in the fourth year of

Hijrah, that this expedition took place. According to some other scholars, it was in *Muharram* 5 AH that this campaign took place. The most authentic opinion in this regard is that of Imam Al-Bukhaaree, who states that this event took place after the fall of Khaybar in the seventh year of *Hijrah*.

This expedition is known as *Dhaat Ar-Riqaa'*. It is also known as the expedition of Najd and the expedition against Banu Muhaarib and Banu Tha'labah of Ghatafaan. The Muslims approached the gathering of Ghatafaan but no fighting took place. The enemy vanished when the Muslims were almost upon them.

There is some disagreement among the scholars as to why this campaign is called *Dhaat Ar-Riqaa'*, but Muslim in his *Saheeh* reports Abu Musaa Al-Ash'aree as saying that for each group of six men there was one camel, which they rode in turn. Their feet were injured. Abu Moosaa adds that his feet were so badly injured that his nails dropped off. They covered their feet with rags, so this expedition was called Dhaat Ar-Riqaa' (the expedition of rags), because they bandaged their feet with rags on that day.

Salaat Al-Khawf: The Prayer of Fear

It was on this expedition that when they were nearest to an encounter, the Prophet (ﷺ) received the revelation instructing him how to pray 'the Prayer of Fear'. The revelation instructed how an army should offer the obligatory prayer and modify the movements of it at times of danger, and how some should keep watch while others pray.

Allah Has a Hundred Mercies

One of the helpers who went out with this campaign was Jaabir ibn 'Abdullaah. He used to tell an incident which took place at one of their encampments, "We were with the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) when a companion brought in a fledgling, which he had caught. One of the parent birds came and threw itself into the hands of the man who had taken its young. I saw men's faces full of amazement, and the Prophet (ﷺ) said, 'Do you wonder at this bird? You have taken its young and it has thrown itself down in merciful tenderness towards its young. Yet I swear by Allah, your Lord is more merciful to you than this bird is to its fledgling.' He then asked the man to put back the young bird where he had found it."

He also said, "Allah has a hundred mercies. One of them He has sent down amongst *jinn* and men and cattle and beasts of prey; thereby they are kind and merciful towards each other; thereby the wild creature inclines in tenderness towards its young. And ninety-nine mercies has He reserved unto Himself, that therewith He may show mercy towards His slaves on the Day of Resurrection." (Muslim)

Uninterrupted Prayer: Faith in Action

One more incident that took place during this expedition is worth mentioning because it sheds light on the Muslims' faith in Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ). The Prophet (ﷺ) had encamped close to a mountain trail and he asked for volunteers to keep a night watch. Two men came forward to volunteer for the task: one of them was 'Ammaar ibn Yaasir of the Emigrants and the other was 'Abbaad ibn Bishr of the Helpers. The Prophet (ﷺ) asked them to remain close to the opening of the trail. When they reached the mouth of the valley, 'Abbaad asked 'Ammaar, "Which part of the watch would you like me to take care of, the first or the last?" "You take the first watch," answered 'Ammaar, and then settled down to sleep, while 'Abbad stood up to offer the night prayers.

Apparently a polytheist was following the Muslim army. When he drew near, he noticed the figure of 'Abbaad, performing his prayer. He aimed an arrow at him and shot it at him. 'Abbaad did not move but drew the arrow out, laid it down and continued praying. The polytheist then shot again and struck him. 'Abbaad again removed the arrow and went on praying. A third time, the polytheist struck him, and once more 'Abbaad withdrew the arrow, put it down and continued his prayer with a bow and prostration. He then aroused his companion saying, "Remain seated. I am wounded."

'Ammaar stood up. When the man saw the two of them together, he fled. Realizing that 'Abbaad was badly wounded, 'Ammaar asked him, "Why did you not wake me up when he hit you the first time?" 'Abbaad ibn Bishr replied, "I had begun to recite a *soorah* of the Qur'an and I did not like to stop until I had finished it. When the shooting continued I bowed in prayer and woke you up. By Allah, unless I was to lose a post which the Prophet (ﷺ) had ordered me to hold, he could have killed me before I would break off my recitation until I had finished the *soorah*."

This is just one example of the devotion of the Prophet's companions to their cause and their love and attachment to the Book of Allah. The Qur'an was the life of their hearts. It was the life of their breasts!

The Story of Ghawrath ibn al-Haarith

Jaabir ibn 'Abdullaah (رضي الله عنه) used to say that he had accompanied the Prophet (ﷺ) on the expedition of Dhaat Ar-Riqaa'. When the Prophet (ﷺ) was on the way home, the time for the afternoon rest came when they were in a valley with many thorny trees. The force divided up as the companions sought the shade of trees. The Prophet (ﷺ) stopped in the shade of a tree on which he hung up his sword.

Jaabir (رضي الله عنه) used to recount, "And so we slept. Then suddenly, the Prophet (ﷺ) called on to us. We responded and found that there was a Bedouin seated near him. The Prophet (ﷺ) said, 'This man drew my sword right over my head and asked me, "Who is there to protect you from me?" I answered, "Allah!" And the sword fell from the man's grasp. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) then picked up the sword and asked him, 'And who would protect you from me?' 'Be compassionate,' the man urged. The Prophet (ﷺ) asked him, 'Do you testify that there is no god but Allah?' The man replied, 'No, but I will not oppose you nor associate any others who do so.'"

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) did not punish the man but released him. The man then returned to his men and said, "I come to you from the very best of men." According to Imam al-Bukhaaree, the name of the man was Ghawrath bin al-Haarith.

Exercises

A. State whether the following statements are true (T) or false (F).

1. Jibreel (عليه السلام) informed the Prophet (ﷺ) of Banu An-Nadheer Jews' treacherous plan. _____
2. 'Abdullaah ibn Ubayy, the hypocrite, sent an army to aid Banu An-Nadheer as promised. _____
3. Allah sent two mercies on the earth. _____

B. Fill in the blanks.

1. The Prophet (ﷺ) sent _____ to Banu An-Nadheer to give them an ultimatum.
2. The siege of Banu An-Nadheer lasted for _____ days.
3. Ibn 'Abbaas (رضي الله عنهما) used to refer to *Surat* _____ as *Surat Banu An-Nadheer*.
4. _____ was also known as *Umm Al-Masaakeen*, the Mother of the Poor.
5. The expedition of Dhaat Ar-Riqaa' is also known as the expedition of _____ and the expedition against _____ and _____.

C. Answer the following questions.

1. Where were the three main Jewish tribes settled?

2. Why do you think the Prophet (ﷺ) ask Banu An-Nadeer Jews's help in paying blood money to Banu 'Aamir?

3. What did Banu An-Nadheer Jews decide to do as the Prophet (ﷺ) waited at their dwelling?

4. Why did Banu An-Nadheer Jews decide to defy the Prophet's orders?

5. What lesson do we learn from the incident of Banu An-Nadheer Jews?

6. In what way was Umm Salamah's *du'aa* at the time of her husband's death answered?

7. Why is the expedition of Dhaat Ar-Riqaa' named as such?

8. What is *salaat al-khawf*?

D. Think-up

In which *surah*, and in which verse, does Almighty Allah mention the manner of offering the prayer of fear, or *salaat al-khawf*? Write the verse down.

The Campaign against the Banu Al-Mustaliq: 5 AH.

The campaign against the Banu Al-Mustaliq took place in Sha'ban 5 AH. The Banu Al-Mustaliq was a branch of the Khuzaa'ah tribe. They lived in Qudaid, which lies on the Red Sea Coast between Jeddah and Raabigh. There was a spring called Muraysi' in the area where all the families of Banu Al-Mustaliq lived. This is why this expedition is also known as the Expedition of Muraisi'.

In *Sha'ban* 5 AH, the Prophet (ﷺ) learnt that the Banu Al-Mustaliq, together with some other tribes under the leadership of Al-Haarith ibn Abee Dhiraar, the father of Juwwayriyah, who afterwards became the wife of the Prophet (ﷺ), were preparing to mount an attack on Madeenah. As soon as the Prophet (ﷺ) came to know about this, he marched in its direction at the head of an armed force to nip the evil in the bud.

'Abdullaah ibn Ubayy joined the Prophet (ﷺ) on this expedition along with a large number of hypocrites. Never before had the hypocrites joined the Prophet (ﷺ) in an expedition in such large numbers. The Prophet (ﷺ), however, surprised the enemy by the speed at which he reached al-Muraysi'. After a very limited fighting, most of tribe members were taken captive, and goods in their possession were seized. Only one Muslim was killed, and of the enemy no more than ten. About two hundred families were taken captive. The booty included some one thousand camels and five thousand sheep and goats. On that very day, Juwwairiyah bint al-Haarith was also taken captive.

The Hypocrite Leader 'Abdullah ibn Ubayy's Mischief

Soon after the completion of this mission, while the Muslim army was still encamped at al-Muraysi', a quarrel broke out about water between a servant of 'Umar named Jahjaah ibn Mas'ood al-Ghifaaree and Sinaan ibn Wabar al-Juhanee – the two coastal tribesmen. One group called upon the Helpers for help and the others asked the Emigrants to come to their aid. People from both groups responded and the matter was resolved.

'Abdullaah ibn Ubayy made an issue of this minor incident seeking to exploit it to the full. He began to incite the *Ansaar*, telling them, "These *Muhaajiroon* have now pounced on us. They have become our enemies. Our example in relation to these Quraysh rags is that of a person who feeds fat to his dog and eventually it mangles him. By Allah, when we return to Madeenah, the higher and the mightier of us will

drive out the lower and the weaker. You brought these people here. You made them share your wealth and property. If you were to withdraw your support from them even today, they would be forced out."

When these disturbing reports reached the Prophet (ﷺ), 'Umar suggested that he should forthwith have the traitor beheaded. The Prophet (ﷺ), however, decided otherwise. He said that if such a thing were done, people would go about saying that the Prophet (ﷺ) killed his own companions. The Prophet (ﷺ) thus let it seem as if the incident were closed: but a surer way of avoiding trouble to busy men's minds with something else and the Prophet (ﷺ) gave order to break camp immediately.

Never before had he been known to move off at that hour. It was not long after midday. With brief halts at prayer times, they were kept on the march throughout the heat of the afternoon. The march continued all throughout the night and from dawn until the heat of the next day became oppressive. When they were finally told to pitch camp, the men were too tired to do anything but sleep.

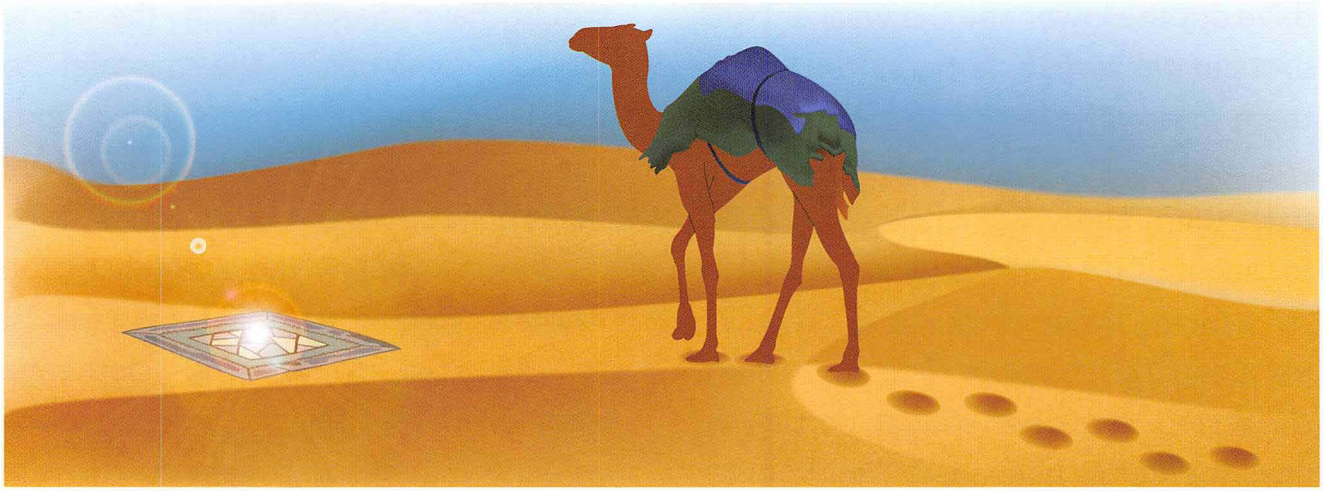
Al-Ifk: The Vicious Slander

'Abdullaah ibn Ubay's mischief did not die down. He now came forth with something even graver. It was so grave that had the Prophet (ﷺ) and his companions not acted with utmost self-control and wisdom, a conflict would have flared up in the rising Muslim community. The mischief to which we are referring is the vicious campaign of slander against 'Aa'ishah, the Prophet's wife.

We give below the account of the whole incident in 'Aa'ishah's own words, as reported in several authentic traditions. What follows brings out the whole content and context of the incident.

"It was the custom of the Prophet (ﷺ) to decide which of his wives would accompany him on a journey by drawing lots[1]. For the expedition of Banu Al-Mustaliq, the lot fell to my name, so I accompanied him. On our way back home, as we approached Madeenah, the Prophet (ﷺ) camped for the night at a certain place. Some time before dawn, as preparations were made to set out, I went out to attend the call of nature. As I was about to return to the camp, I felt that my necklace was missing, so I started to look around for it. Meanwhile, the caravan proceeded. It was customary that I would sit in a litter, which was then put on a camel by four persons. Since we women were very lean and thin in those days because of lack of enough quantity of food, the

[1] It is significant to realize that this drawing of lots should not be misunderstood as some form of lottery, which is prevalent in the present-day world. All the wives of the Prophet (ﷺ) had equal rights. Hence, had the Prophet (ﷺ) himself chosen some in preference to others, this might have hurt their feelings. He, therefore, resolved the issue by drawing lots.



carriers of my litter did not even realize that I was not in it. They placed the litter on the camel and set off. When I returned to the camp after having traced my necklace, I could not find anyone there. I covered myself with a sheet and lay there thinking that when people discovered my absence, they would try to trace me and so eventually come back to the same spot. Meanwhile, I fell asleep. When morning arrived, Safwaan ibn Al-Mu'attal as-Sulamee passed by the spot where I lay asleep. He immediately recognized me since he had seen me before the verse commanding women to wear the *hijaab* was revealed. Safwaan was one of the companions who had participated in the Battle of Badr. Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) had assigned him the duty to retrieve whatever articles might have been left in the morning after the army had decamped.

"Safwaan halted his camel on seeing me and exclaimed. 'To Allah do we belong and to Him we are destined to return. Oh, the Prophet's wife has been left behind.'

"As he uttered the words, I woke up. I covered my face immediately with the sheet. Without saying a word to me, he made his camel kneel down beside me, while he himself stood aside. I rode the camel and Safwaan began to move ahead, leading the camel by the nose-string. Around noon, we joined the army when it was about to camp. This provided the slanderers an opportunity to hurl all kinds of calumnies. 'Abdullaah ibn Ubayy took a leading role in this slander campaign. I was, however, totally unaware of the raging storm of accusations directed against me."

According to some other reports, when 'Aa'ishah (رضي الله عنها) reached the camp on Safwaan's camel and it became known that she had been left behind, 'Abdullaah ibn Ubayy instantly remarked, "By Allah! She has not remained untouched. Look! The wife of your Prophet spent the night with another person and now he is openly bringing her back."

'Aa'ishah (رضي الله عنها) continues, "Upon reaching Madeenah, I fell ill. I was bed-ridden for a month. Slanderous

reports were in circulation. They even reached the Prophet's ears. I knew nothing about them. What worried me was the Prophet's (ﷺ) lack of attention towards me. When he entered the house, he went no further than asking some member of the family, "How is she?" This made me suspect that there was something behind it. Eventually I obtained his permission to move out to my mother's house so that she might look after me properly.

"One night, I went out of Madeenah to attend to the call of nature. Up till that time there were no toilets in our houses and we used to go out into the open fields for this purpose. I was accompanied by the mother of Mistah ibn Uthaathah who was the maternal cousin of my father. Along the way, Mistah's mother stumbled and exclaimed, "May Mistah perish!" I asked her, 'What kind of mother are you that you are cursing your own son who participated in the Battle of Badr?' Thereupon she narrated the whole story: how scandalmongers had launched a campaign of slander against me. Apart from the hypocrites, some Muslims had also become a party to this vicious campaign. The leading ones among them were Mistah, Hassaan ibn Thaabit and Hamnah bint Jahsh. Upon hearing this, I was horrified. I even forgot the purpose for which I had gone there and immediately returned to my house. I spent that whole night crying.

"In my absence, the Prophet (ﷺ) summoned Ali and Usaamah ibn Zayd and sought their advice. Usaamah spoke highly of me, saying, 'Messenger of Allah, we have seen in your wife nothing but goodness. It is all a lie.' 'Ali said, 'Messenger of Allah, there are plenty of women. You can take another wife in her place. Should you like to find out, send for her maidservant and ask her about the matter.'

"Hence the maidservant was summoned, and the Prophet (ﷺ) asked her, 'Burayrah, have you ever seen anything in 'Aa'ishah that might make you suspect her?' She replied, 'By Him Who has sent you with the truth, I know only good of her; and if it were otherwise, Allah would inform His Messenger. I have no fault to find with 'Aa'ishah but she is a girl, young in years, and when I knead the dough and bid her watch it, she would fall asleep and her pet goat will come and eat it. I have blamed her for that more than once."'

'Aa'ishah adds that when the news reached Safwaan ibn Al-Mu'attal, the man accused in the incident, he exclaimed, "By Allah, I have never ever uncovered a woman's shoulder in my life." In fact, Safwaan died a martyr later in the Battle of Armenia, during the caliphate of 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) in the year 19 AH.

The Prophet (ﷺ) also consulted his wife Zaynab bint Jahsh (رضي الله عنها), sister of Hamnah bint Jahsh, about 'Aai'shah, and

she replied, "By Allah, I know nothing but good of her."

It is important to point out here that 'Ali ibn Abee Taalib (رضي الله عنه) was not involved in this incident. All that happened was that he found the Prophet (ﷺ) highly distressed about the matter and that he asked 'Ali for advice. On that occasion, 'Ali said that Allah had placed no limit on the Prophet (ﷺ) in this matter. There were many women, and thus he could take another wife in place of 'Aa'ishah (رضي الله عنها). This does not mean that 'Ali in any way considered valid the lie that had been spoken against 'Aa'ishah. He merely wished that the grief of the Prophet (ﷺ) should end.

'Aa'ishah, the mother of the believers, continues, "Talks about the slander had been in circulation in Madeenah for about a month. It made the Prophet (ﷺ) suffer great anguish. My parents and I were in great distress. We all felt much disturbed. Finally, the Prophet (ﷺ) came out and sat beside me. During all this period he had not sat beside me. My parents, Abu Bakr and Umm Roomaan, both felt that some decision was at hand. Hence they too joined me.

"The Prophet (ﷺ) said, 'O 'Aa'ishah, I have been told such-and-such a thing about you. If you are innocent, I hope Allah will declare your innocence. And if you have done anything that is wrong, then ask forgiveness of Allah and turn to Him. Whenever a servant of Allah confesses his sin and repents, Allah pardons his sin.'

"No sooner had he spoken than my tears stopped to flow and I said to my father, 'Answer the Prophet (ﷺ) for me.' Thereupon he said, 'I do not know what to say.' When I turned to my mother, she said the same, and I was a young girl. Then I said, 'I know well that you have heard what men are saying, and it has settled in your mind and you seem to have believed it. If I say that I am innocent, you will not believe me. And if I confess something which I have not done — and Allah knows I did not do any such thing — you will believe me.'

"Then I groped in my mind for the name of the Prophet Ya'qoob, but I could not remember it, so I said, 'But I will say as the father of Yoosuf said, **"Beautiful patience must be mine, and Allah is He whose help is to be asked against what they say** (12: 18)." Then I returned to my couch and lay on it, hoping that Allah would declare my innocence. It had not occurred to me though that Allah would proclaim my innocence by sending down a *surah*, which will be recited till the Last Day.

"The Prophet (ﷺ) remained sitting in our company and all of us were still present when revelation came down to him. He was seized with the pangs, which seized him at such times, and as it were pearls of sweat dripped from him, although it was a wintry day. Then, when he was relieved of the pressure, he said in a voice that vibrated with gladness, 'O 'Aa'ishah, rejoice, praise Allah, for He has declared you innocent.'

"Then the Prophet (ﷺ) recited the ten verses of *Surat An-Noor* (24: 11-21). When my mother asked me to rise and thank the Prophet (ﷺ), I said, 'I will neither thank him nor you (i.e. my parents). I thank Allah Who has declared my innocence. You never even rejected the slander against me.'" (We might remind ourselves that these words are spoken by a girl in her teens — May Allah be pleased with her).

The Prophet (ﷺ) then went out to the people. He addressed them and recited to them what Allah had revealed to him on the subject.

The new revelation (*Surat An-Noor*) dwelt upon the whole question of adultery. It prescribed its punishment, the punishment for slandering honourable women and the scourging of the slanderers. This sentence was carried out upon Mistah ibn Uthaathah, Hassaan ibn Thaabit and Hamnah bint Jahsh. They were believers who, out of some weakness or error, had become a party to mischief. 'Abdullaah ibn Ubayy, the leader of the hypocrites, was not punished.

The believers who had been outspoken in spreading the calumny had confessed their guilt. The hypocrites did not confess to having any part in it. So the Prophet (ﷺ) did not take any action against them. He preferred to leave them to Allah and their punishment kept for the hereafter.

Allah is Forgiving, Most Merciful

Abu Bakr as-Siddeeq (رضي الله عنه) had been in the habit of giving his kinsman Mistah ibn Al-Mu'attal an allowance of money on account of his poverty. But now he said, "Never again will I give to Mistah. Never again will I show him favour after what he has said against 'Aa'ishah.' But there now came the revelation, **"Let not the men of dignity and wealth among you swear that they will not give to kinsmen and to the needy and to those who have emigrated for the sake of Allah. Let them forgive and let them overlook. Do you not long that Allah should forgive you? And Allah is Forgiving, Most Merciful."** (*Surat An-Noor*, 24: 22)

Then Abu Bakr (رضي الله عنه) said, "Indeed, I do long that Allah shall forgive me." And he returned to Mistah and gave him what he had been used to giving him, saying, "I swear I will never withdraw it from you."

All the scholars, without exception, agree that whoever blames or profanes 'Aa'ishah (رضي الله عنها), the mother of the believers, after she has been clearly declared innocent by the Glorious Qur'an, is a disbeliever, a blasphemer, because he contradicts the Qur'an.

Release of the Captives of the Banu Al-Mustaliq

The spoils of the expedition of the Banu Al-Mustaliq were divided as usual. One of the captives, as we have learnt earlier, was Juwwayriyah, the daughter of al-Haarith ibn Abu Dhiraar, who was the chief of the defeated clan. She fell to the lot of a Helper, Thaabit ibn Qays ibn Shammaas, who fixed a high price for her ransom. She came to the Prophet (ﷺ) to ask for his intervention on her behalf. He was on that day in the apartment of 'Aai'shah. 'Aa'ishah (رضي الله عنها) opened the door to her. She said afterwards, recounting what had taken place,

"Juwwayriyah was a woman of great loveliness and beauty. No man looked at her but she captivated his soul. She entered and said to the Prophet (ﷺ), 'Messenger of Allah, I am Juwwayriyah, the daughter of al-Haarith who is the chief of his people. You know the distress that has fallen upon me, and I have come to seek your help in the matter of my ransom.' The Prophet (ﷺ) answered, 'Would you like to have something better than that?' 'What is better than that?' she asked. The Prophet (ﷺ) replied, 'That I should pay the ransom and marry you.'

"Juwwayriyah gladly accepted the offer and accepted Islam. The news spread that the Prophet (ﷺ) had married Juwwayriyah. When it became known that the Banu Al-Mustaliq were now the Prophet's kinsmen by marriage, the Emigrants and the Helpers set free their captives who had not yet been ransomed. About a hundred families were released. I know of no woman who was a greater blessing to her people than she."

Although Juwwayriyah is reported to have been beautiful, this was not the main factor in the Prophet's decision to marry her. More important to him was the cause of spreading Islam.

Exercises

A. State whether these statements are true (T) or false (F).

1. The hypocrites used to join the Prophet (ﷺ) in all battles, in large numbers. _____
2. The Prophet's drawing of lots was the same as lottery. _____
3. 'Aa'ishah (رضي الله عنها) covered her face as soon as she realized someone was there. _____
4. For a long time, 'Aa'ishah (رضي الله عنها) did not know about the calumnies that were spreading. _____
5. 'Ali (رضي الله عنه) believed in the slander against 'Aa'ishah (رضي الله عنها). _____

B. Fill in the blanks.

1. The Banu Al-Mustaliq was a branch of the _____ tribe.
2. The Prophet (ﷺ) took his wife _____ for the expedition of Banu Al-Mustaliq.
3. _____ ibn _____ passed by 'Aa'ishah (رضي الله عنها) the morning after she was left behind.
4. Safwaan died a martyr in the Battle of _____.

C. Answer the following questions.

1. Why is the campaign against Banu Al-Mustaliq also known as the Expedition of Muraisi'?

_____

_____

_____

2. Why did 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) suggest to the Prophet (ﷺ) to have 'Abdullaah ibn Ubayy beheaded?

3. Who were the three Muslims who were particularly at the forefront of the slander against 'Aa'ishah (رضي الله عنها)?

4. What method did Allah choose to prove 'Aa'ishah's innocence?

5. What punishment does the Qur'an lay down for slandering honourable women?

6. Why did Abu Bakr (رضي الله عنه) change his decision of never favouring Mistah, his kinsman?

D. Think-up

Why did Muhammad (ﷺ) marry Juwwayriyah?

Thaabit ibn Qays al-Ansaaree ﷺ

35

Thaabit ibn Qays al-Ansaaree hailed from the city of Madeenah. He was a prominent noble of the tribe of Al-Khazraj. He was well known as an eloquent orator. His interest in eloquence took him to the young preacher Mus'ab ibn 'Umayr (ﷺ), who was sent by the Prophet (ﷺ) to teach the people of Madeenah about Islam. Thaabit listened as Mus'ab recited from the Book of Allah and was amazed at his sweet, resonant voice and the serene rhythm of his recital. Thaabit's heart and mind were drawn to the verses of the Qur'an and their contents almost immediately. He soon embraced Islam and became one of the early Muslims of Madeenah.

Thaabit was an upright, talented man. He had a pure heart. He was an excellent speaker and had a wonderful voice. Whenever he spoke, he impressed his audience. He devoted his talents, energies, heart and mind as a speaker in the service of Islam.

When the Prophet (ﷺ) emigrated to Madeenah, Thaabit welcomed him with a group of his tribes' horsemen. He received the Prophet (ﷺ) and Abu Bakr as-Siddeeq (ﷺ) with warm hospitality. Thaabit stood before him and made an eloquent speech. He praised Allah and His Prophet (ﷺ) and ended his speech saying, "Messenger of Allah, we promise to protect you from everything from which we protect ourselves, our children and our women. What shall we get in return?"

"Paradise," the Prophet (ﷺ) replied. Everyone's face lit up and exclaimed, "We accept, Messenger of Allah!" From that day, the Prophet (ﷺ) chose Thaabit ibn Qays (ﷺ) to be his speaker, just as Hassaan ibn Thaabit was his poet. Each time an Arab deputation came to exhibit their talent in poetry and eloquence, the Prophet (ﷺ) assigned Thaabit ibn Qays for speeches and Hassan ibn Thaabit for poetry.

Thaabit's Mindfulness of Allah

It is narrated on the authority of Anas ibn Maalik that when the verse: **"Believers, do not raise your voices over the voice of the Prophet and do not speak loudly to him, as you speak loudly to each other, lest your acts be in vain without your realizing"** (49: 2) was

revealed,; Thaabit ibn Qays confined himself to his house and said, "I am one of the dwellers of the Fire." He then deliberately avoided coming to the Prophet (ﷺ) and told his wife Jameelah bint 'Abdullaah ibn Ubayy to nail the bedroom door shut after he had entered it. She dutifully did so. When the Prophet (ﷺ) noticed Thaabit's absence from the mosque, he asked Sa'd ibn Mu'aadh (ﷺ) about him and said, "How is Thaabit? Has he fallen sick?" Sa'd replied, "He is my neighbor. I do not know of his illness." Sa'd then came to Thaabit and conveyed to him the message of the Prophet (ﷺ). Upon this Thaabit said, "This verse was revealed, and you are well aware of the fact that among all of you my voice is louder than that of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), and so I am one of the dwellers of Fire." When Sa'd informed the Prophet (ﷺ) about this, he observed, "Not so, but he (i.e. Thaabit) is one of the dwellers of Paradise." (Muslim, Vol. 1, *Hadeeth* no. 214, English Translation by 'Abdul Hameed Siddeeqee)

This *hadeeth* is indicative of the fact that a naturally heavy and loud voice is no sin. What is prohibited is that one should try to drown the voice of the Prophet (ﷺ) by deliberately talking louder than him. Good manners demand that one should not speak loudly in the presence of one's superiors. The companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) used to reflect on the meaning of the Qur'anic verses and apply the teachings of the Qur'an to themselves whenever they seemed appropriate. To them verses of the Qur'an were instructions and messages. They were to be acted upon and not merely memorized, melodiously recited or read. Most Muslims today read the Qur'an in Arabic, without understanding a word of it. It is important to realize that it was not the mere sounds of the Qur'an which changed the lives of the Prophet's companions but rather the divine message contained in it.



Martyrdom of Thaabit ibn Qays

Thaabit ibn Qays (ﷺ) participated in all the Prophet's battles except that of Badr. Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) had predicted martyrdom for him, but he survived in all the Prophet's battles. However, after the death of the Prophet (ﷺ), during the caliphate of Abu Bakr as-Siddeeq (ﷺ), an opportunity to achieve martyrdom came for him.

Battle against Apostasy: Abandoning of Islam

Towards the end of the life of the Prophet (ﷺ) and during the caliphate of Abu Bakr, a number of false prophets appeared in Arabia. The foremost of them was Musaylimah who claimed to have received divine revelations, and spoke of himself as the Rahmaan (which is a name of Allah) of the Yamaamah, the east-central region of Arabia.



The Battle at Aqarabah in the Yamaamah between the Muslim forces and those of Musaylimah was one of the bloodiest that Arabia had ever seen. The followers of Musaylimah had already defeated one Muslim force led by 'Ikrimah. At Aqarabah, Khaalid ibn al-Waleed, the leader of the Muslim army, divided his army into Bedouins, the *Ansaar* and the *Muhaajiroon*, to spur competition among them to fight to the utmost. Thaabit ibn Qays took part in this battle and was martyred. Musaylimah was slain in battle by Wahshee, the slave who killed Hamzah at Uhud.

At his death, Thaabit (ﷺ) had on his body a precious armor, but one of the Muslims who happened to pass by him, took the armor and wrongfully kept it for himself.

That night, when the fierce sounds of battle had died down and the men had fallen asleep, another of the Muslims had a dream. He saw Thaabit and heard him speaking to him. He narrates the conversation they had in the dream, "I am Thaabit ibn Qays. I want to pass down a responsibility to you. When I was slain yesterday, a Muslim took my armor. He went to his tent at the border of the camp and hid it under a cooking-pot. He placed a saddle on top of the pot. Go to Khaalid ibn al-Waleed and tell him to take possession of the armor from this man. It is still in its place. There is one more thing you have to do for me. Tell Khaalid ibn al-Waleed that when he returns to Abu Bakr, the caliph, he must inform him that I have some debt to settle. Let him pay my debt and set free two of my slaves."

When the man woke up, he went straight to Khaalid ibn al-Waleed and told him what he had seen. Khaalid sent someone to fetch the armor, which was found under the cooking-pot, under the saddle, as described by Thaabit. When Khaalid returned to Madeenah, he told Abu Bakr about Thaabit ibn Qays and his will. Abu Bakr as-Siddeeq (ﷺ) accepted it. May Allah be pleased with Thaabit ibn Qays.

Exercises

A. Fill in the blanks.

1. Thaabit (ﷺ) belonged to the tribe of _____.
2. The Prophet (ﷺ) chose Thaabit to be his _____.
3. The Prophet (ﷺ) had predicted _____ for Thaabit.
4. _____ was the most famous false prophet.
5. _____ managed to kill Musaylimah.

B. Answer the following questions.

1. What specific talent did Thaabit possess?

2. What, in particular, warmed Thaabit's heart to Islam?

3. In which battle was Thaabit martyred?

C. Reference to context

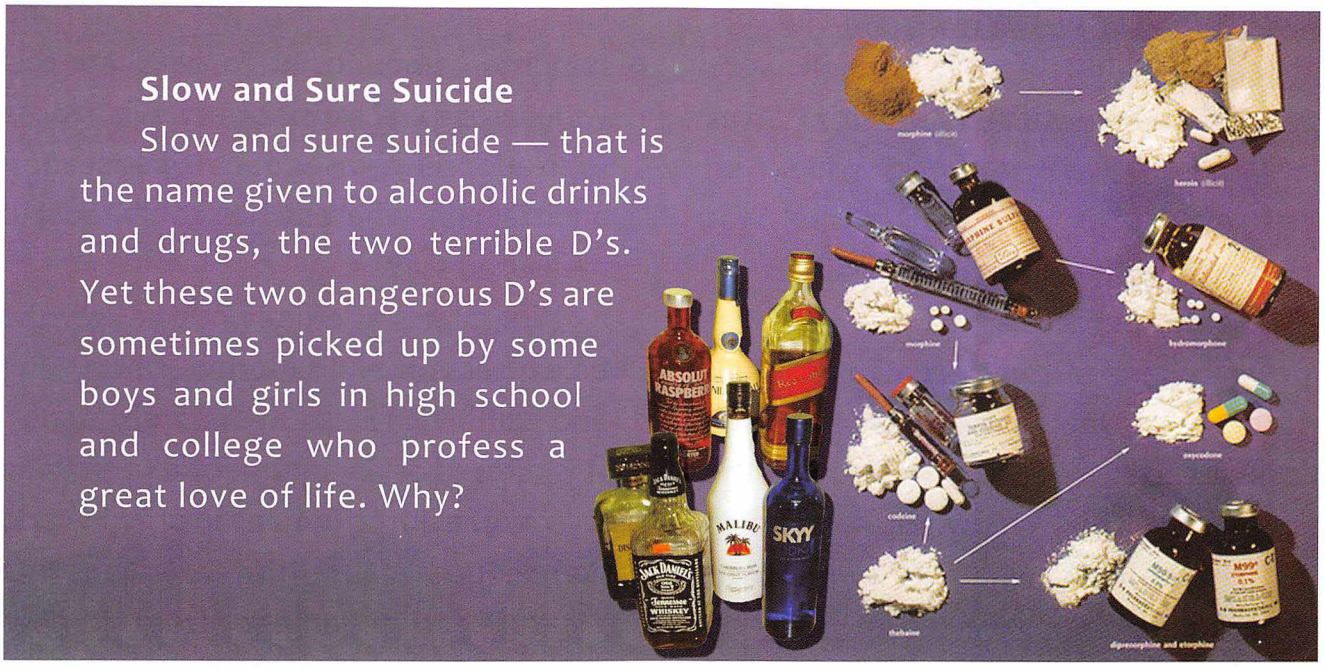
"Not so, but he (i.e. Thaabit) is one of the dwellers of Paradise."

D. Think-up

Why do you think the Qur'an changed people's lives in the olden days? Why do you think many Muslims' lives do not seem to change for the better despite the fact that they recite the Qur'an and observe the prayers?

The Terrible Web of the Two Dangerous D's — Drinks and Drugs

36



Slow and Sure Suicide

Slow and sure suicide — that is the name given to alcoholic drinks and drugs, the two terrible D's. Yet these two dangerous D's are sometimes picked up by some boys and girls in high school and college who profess a great love of life. Why?

Alcohol Is an Evil

Alcohol is an evil. Both its use and abuse are evil. There is no moderate or temperate drinker in Islam. Islam does not recognize it. It is the moderate drinker who easily degenerates into the obstinate alcoholic. Users rapidly grow into abusers. Taking a little wine, beer or liquor at table does great harm. The little use of alcohol or any substance that intoxicates quickly develops. Substances which intoxicate have little appeal at first. One feels that one should not touch them, but the one who gets the close to them soon acquires a great liking for them without even realising it. Once formed, the habit of taking even small quantity of intoxicants readily leads to severe drug addiction, especially as an escape from problems.

Drinks and Drugs are Forbidden In Islam

Allah forbids drinks and drugs. The Qur'an says,

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوٓاْ إِنَّمَا ٱلْخَمْرُ وَٱلْمَيْسِرُ وَٱلْأَنصَابُ وَٱلْأَزْلَٰمُ رِجْسٌ
مِّنْ عَمَلِ ٱلشَّيْطَٰنِ فَٱجْتَنِبُوهُ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٩٠﴾ إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ
ٱلشَّيْطَٰنُ أَن يُوقِعَ بَيْنَكُمُ ٱلْعَدَٰوَةَ وَٱلْبَغْضَآءَ فِى ٱلْخَمْرِ وَٱلْمَيْسِرِ
وَيَصُدَّكُمْ عَن ذِكْرِ ٱللَّهِ وَعَنِ ٱلصَّلَوٰةِ ۖ فَهَلْ أَنتُم مُّنتَهُونَ ﴿٩١﴾

"O you who believe, surely, intoxicants and games of chance, and stone-altars, and divining arrows are but a loathsome evil of Satan's handiwork; so avoid them that you may be successful. Satan only desires create enmity and hatred among you by means of wine and the games of chance and to turn you away from the remembrance of

Allah and from *salaat*. Will you not then desist?" (*Surat Al-Maa'idah*, 5: 90-91)

When these verses were revealed to the Prophet (ﷺ), it was announced that those who possessed alcohol were forbidden to consume it or sell it. It was ordered that all the stocks should be destroyed. It is then that alcohol was poured into the drains of Madeenah.

Some people asked the Prophet (ﷺ) whether they could offer their stocks to the Jews as a gift. That which is forbidden is not a fit gift was the Prophet's (ﷺ) reply. It was also suggested that whatever wine was available may be converted into vinegar, but the Prophet (ﷺ) did not approve of the idea and insisted that it should be destroyed. One person specially asked whether alcohol could be used as a medicine. The Prophet (ﷺ) repled, "It is not a medicine; it is a disease." (At-Tirmidhee and Abu Daawood)

The Word '*Khamr*'

Khamr is an Arabic word which signifies any alcoholic drink, drug or substance, which causes intoxication.

According to E. W. Lane, *khamr* denotes anything that clouds, or obscures (literally covers) the intellect. (*Arabic-English Lexicon*, Vol. 1, p. 808. 2003 reprint) Drinking blurs a person's ability to distinguish between right and wrong.

During the period of ignorance, before the advent of Islam, the Arabs were very fond of wine and drinking parties. Their love for wine is reflected in their language, which has nearly one hundred names for it. To eradicate this widespread evil from society, Allah Most High adopted a wise course of education and training, whereby He prohibited it in measured stages.

The first stage does not go beyond an expression of disapproval of drinking and gambling **(*Surat Al-Baqarah*, 2: 219)**. It is offered as an argument to persuade the people not to indulge in drinking and gambling, because they derive some pleasure or advantage from it. The excitement and enjoyment, which drinking and gambling provides is not denied, but in the long run they produce unfortunate and disastrous results.

The second phase forbade the people from coming to the mosque to offer their prayers in a state of drunkenness **(*Surat An-Nisaa'*, 4: 43)**. This state is not necessarily produced by alcohol alone, but could be the result of the use of any drugs or intoxicants.

In the third and final phase, prohibition was total. **(*Surat Al-Maa'idah* 5: 90-91)**

All that Intoxicates Is *Haraam*

Any drink, drug or substance, which intoxicates, in whatever form or name it may appear is *hraam* (forbidden). Thus, for instance, beer and similar things are strictly *haraam*.

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said, "Every intoxicant is *khamr*, and every *khamr* is forbidden." (Muslim)

He also said, "Of that which intoxicates in a large quantity, a small quantity of it is forbidden." (Abu Daawood and A-Tirmidhee)

Hence, if a bucket of *khamr* intoxicates, a sip of it is *haraam*.

The Terrible Web of Dope – Intoxicating Modern-Day Drugs

The practice of selling narcotics[1] to teenagers, taking a ride on LSD or acid[2] and glue-sniffing[3] are relatively new evils.

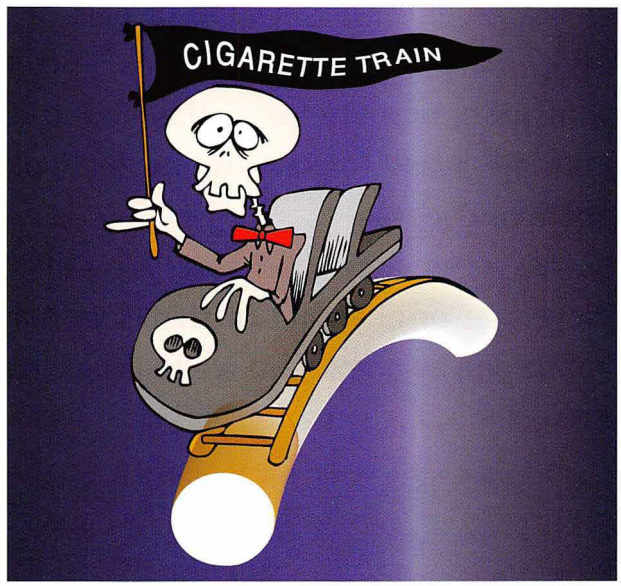
LSD (or acid) is a white powder. Drug-takers take it as a tablet or even on sugar cubes. After a couple of hours or so, the user begins his LSD trip, which can last up to 10 hours or even more.

[1] These are drugs that intoxicate or affect the mind in a harmful way.
[2] This is a powerful drug that affects people's minds and makes these see or hear things that are not really there.
[3] This is the habit of breathing in the gases from some kinds of glue in order to produce a state of excitement.

Amphetamines (also known as speed) is sniffed or injected into the body. Their effect is at first pleasant. Users get excited, more alert, livelier and even slightly giggly. But soon after, many become depressed, unable to sleep and feeling at the same time tormented. There is still another substance called cannabis (also called dope or pot). It is smoked and produces intoxication, talkativeness and often a heightened feeling of sounds and colours.

Cocaine is a white substance. It is usually sniffed. It produces first relaxation and pleasure, but soon it causes irrational fears and extreme anxiety. Heroin (also known as skag or smack) is a powder. It is heated to give fumes, which are then inhaled. It makes the user feel far more alert, but this is soon followed by drowsiness.

Finally there are several kinds of magic mushrooms, which when taken take users on trips in which excitement often combines with loud laughter and extraordinary daydreams and images.



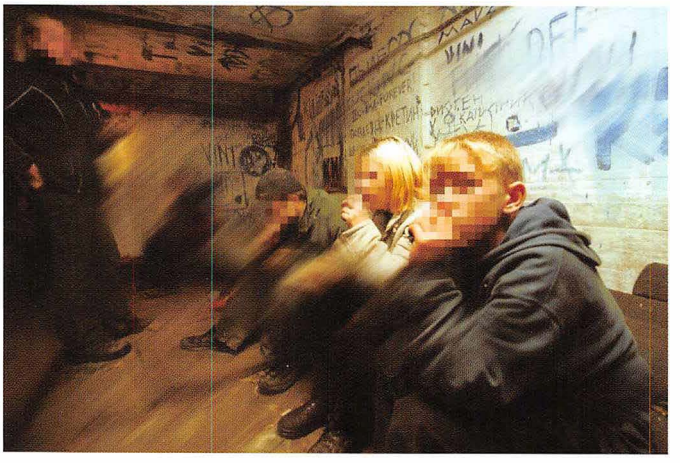
Cigarettes, tobacco-smoking, is another such thing. Tobacco-smoking is responsible for hundreds of thousands of premature deaths worldwide every year. Lung cancer and infections, blood clots, strokes and heart attacks are all made more likely by smoking. It is alarmingly possible to become dependant on cigarettes and other intoxicants, and thus become unable to do without one more dose of them for long.

How Does it all Happen? What is the Remedy?

The only safe way or the golden rule is to keep away from these evils. You should always remain on guard.

Some take the first dose to experiment, but many others become merely innocent victims of these evils. They accept a cigarette from a stranger, or even a so-called close friend, without knowing what it contains. They sometimes sip a seemingly harmless beverage in a delicatessen or chew a lump of sugar. Do you know what a delicatessen is? It is a shop or part of a shop selling prepared foods, often unusual or brought from other countries that are ready for serving, for example meat or cheeses.

A seemingly harmless sip of a beverage or anything of that sort may make one a complete slave to drugs in a short time, such as a few days.



How can One Discover drug Addiction?

It is easy and possible to discover drug addiction by watching for a mix of the following signs: loss of weight, lack of interest in things that ordinarily interest boys and girls, aches and pains, a runny nose, vomiting, nausea, tiredness, unnatural amount of sleep or lack of it, and long and deep periods of depression followed by short periods of excitement.

It you should be as unfortunate as to note these signs in your brothers, sisters, friends or classmates, you should tell your parents or teachers at once. They should then report the matter to their doctors and ultimately to the police. Any delay or attempt to cover up the facts will only work worse harm upon the poor victims. If steps are taken quickly, the youth may be cured and saved and dope peddlers or the drug-pushers may be caught.

Teens certainly do not wish or expect to fall into the drug habit. But this world of ours is unfortunately filled with injustice and oppression. The earth has become filled with greedy and evil folks who do not fear Allah at all. They do not fear Allah even so much as one fears the sting of a bee or a wasp. This is why we must be alert regarding our choice of friends and places of entertainment and amusement. We must be firm and resolute about avoiding hangouts with questionable reputations. It is not enough to be heedful of the dangers involved; we must avoid them altogether. That is what Allah wants us to do. This is what your parents expect. This is what your country expects. Heedful teens do not

hesitate to see that a friendship with someone about whom they are doubtful is broken off. Keep your head on your shoulders. Stay on your guard. Read up on drug addiction. Read up on commands in the Qur'an and the prophet's *Sunnah* concerning drinks and drugs.

Illegal traffic in narcotics is a serious danger today. You must keep yourself informed for your own present and future safety and the good of the family you will some day form. Remember that the use and the abuse of drugs is both a disease. The only inoculation against them is the right kind of knowledge.

We have been discussing a number of drug-related issues that are very relevant to your life right now as well as to your future. In Grade Nine, *inshaa Allah*, we will touch on a few more topics like trading in alcohol and drugs. We end this module with a very thought-provoking *hadeeth* of Allah's Messenger (ﷺ):

"Truly, Allah has cursed *khamr*, the one who produces it, the one for whom it is made, the one who consumes it, the one who serves it, the one who carries it, the one for whom it is carried, the one who sells it, the one who earns from the same of it, the one who buys it and the one for whom it is bought." (A reliable recording in At-Tirmidhee and Ibn Maajah)

Exercises

A. Fill in the blanks.

1. Allah refers to the evil of intoxicants as _____ handiwork.
2. "Alcohol is not a medicine; it is a _____."
3. It is not enough to be _____ of the dangers involved. We must _____ them altogether.

B. Answer the following questions.

1. Does Islam tolerate or accept 'moderate drinkers'?

2. What suggestions did the Prophet (ﷺ) receive on the use of alcohol instead of destroying it?

3. Explain in detail the word *khamr*.

4. Mention a few drugs and their ill-effects.

5. Explain how Islam gives not only remedies to problems but also ways to prevent them.

C. Think-up

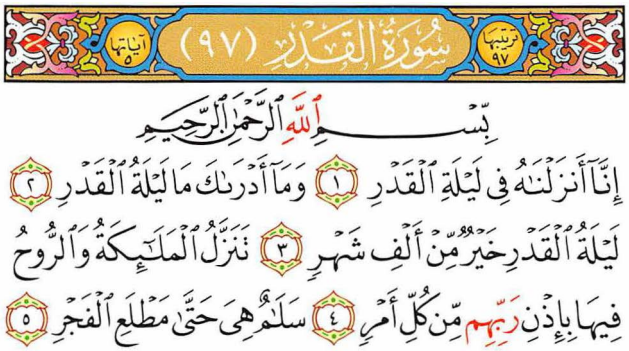
1. Why do you think Allah prohibited alcohol and intoxicants in a slow stepwise manner?

2. Do you think drinks and drugs have benefits? If so, then why did Allah prohibit them?

Laylat Al-Qadr
The Night of Power or Destiny

37

Let us first consider the words of Allah:



"In the name of Allah, Most Beneficent, Most Merciful

We have indeed revealed this [Qur'an] during the Night of Power. And what will explain to you what the Night of Power is? The Night of Power is better than a thousand months. Therein come down the Angels and the Spirit by their Lord's leave, with the decree of every affair. Peace it is until the rising of dawn." (*Surat Al-Qadr*, 97: 1-5)

Surat Al-Qadr, as a whole, highlights the importance of the Qur'an and its blessings. Allah Most High calls the night in which the revelation of the Glorious Qur'an began the Night of Power. In *Surat Ad-Dukh-khaan*, it is called the Blessed Night. (44:1-3)

The revelation of the Qur'an began in the month of *Ramadhaan*, thus, *Laylat Al-Qadr* is one of the nights in *Ramadhaan*.

The Word '*Qadr*'

What does '*qadr*' mean? *Qadr* means power, destiny, decree, honour or glory. It also means almightiness, majesty, value and importance.

We Sent it down on the Night of Power

"We sent it down (*anzalnaahu*)" is an allusion to the Qur'an. Allah sent it down from the Preserved Tablet (*al-Lawh al-Mahfoodh*) to the heaven of this lower world on the Night of Destiny. The entire Qur'an had come down on the Night of Power in the month of *Ramadhaan* to the heaven of this world. Jibreel (عليه السلام) then revealed it to the Prophet (ﷺ), with the permission of Allah, from time to time over a period of twenty-three years.

It is a tremendous Night (*laylah 'adheemah*). It is called the Night of Power (*Laylat Al-Qadr*) in order to proclaim the great significance of the night itself, and to emphasize its glory (*qadr*) because it is then that Allah decrees (*yuqaddiru*) how things are to be throughout the year, until the same night of the year that lies ahead. Thus it is a blessed night. It is the night of Sublime Majesty and Wisdom.

Allah Most High says, **"The Night of Power is better than a thousand months."**



In other words, good deeds therein are better than those performed in a thousand months that are without the Night of Power. It has been reported that the companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) never felt so happy about anything as they felt about these words: better than a thousand months.

What is meant by "the angels come down" is that they come down in succession from the setting of the sun until the rising of the dawn. The Spirit (*Ar-Rooh*) means Jibreel (عليه السلام). He is the most noble of all the angels in the sight of Allah.

"Peace it is (*Salaamun hiya*)" has exactly the same meaning as "It is peace, which signifies that it is perfectly safe and pleasant." It has also been maintained that peace means the greeting of peace, with which the angels salute the believers among the people of the earth, for they say to them: Peace, peace until the rising of the dawn.

Which Night of *Ramadhaan* is *Laylat Al-Qadr*?

The *mufassiroon* (plural: *mufassir*, scholars who explain the meanings of the Qur'an) differ in pinpointing the specific night of *Qadr*. In an authentic (*saheeh*) *hadeeth*, Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) instructs us to seek it in the last ten nights of *Ramadhaan*, and it is further indicated that it is one of the odd nights, that is the 21st, 23rd, 25th, 27th, or 29th



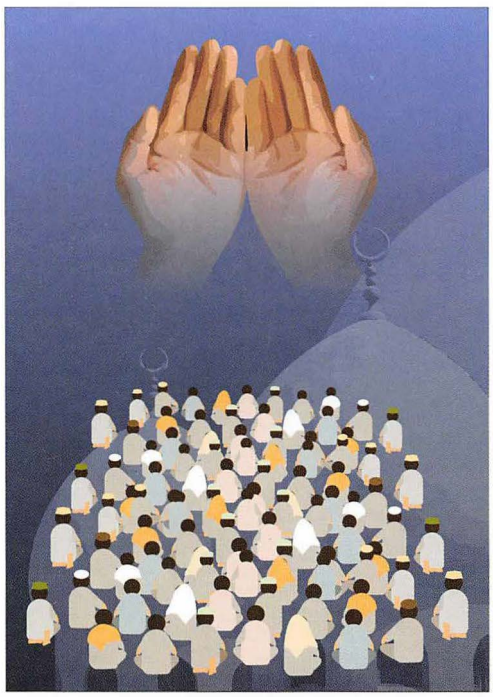
night. Most scholars believe it is the 27th night. Thus the majority of Muslims celebrate *Laylat Al-Qadr* on the 27th night. In most mosques, *khatm-ul-Qur'an* (the completion of the Qur'an) is held on the 27th night of *Ramadhaan*.

However, the reason behind concealing the exact night of Qadr is that for us to receive the blessing of

Laylat Al-Qadr, we should spend most nights of the last ten days of *Ramadhaan* in *'ibaadah* and not limit ourselves to one night only. Since no one can be sure which night that is, the believer is invited to prepare himself, to open the gates of awareness, sharpen his gaze and tune his hearing to receive what comes when it comes!

Allah's Wisdom in Concealment

A. Special time for supplications on Friday



Abu Hurayrah (ﷺ) reports that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said, "There is a special time on Friday, and if a Muslim spends it while praying and asking for something from Allah, then Allah will definitely grant his request." The Prophet (ﷺ) then pointed out the shortness of the length of its time with his hands. (al-Bukhaaree and Muslim)

When does this time occur? Does this time remain fixed or does it move from one Friday to the next? It is Allah's secret. The wisdom behind that is that Muslims should spend most of the day in supplication and seeking that special time.

B. Special time for supplications every night



Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said, "Truly, in the night there is a period of time, which no Muslim man comes upon and wherein he asks Allah for something good from the things of this world and the hereafter, without this being given it — and this is so every night." (Muslim)

According to another *hadeeth*, this time occurs in the middle of the final part of the night. What is the exact point of time of its occurrence? It is in Allah's

C. Allah has concealed His response to supplications so that the believers might resort to them oftener. He has concealed His Supreme Name (*al-Ism al-A'dham*) so that all His Names might be respected deeply. He has concealed *As-Salaat Al-Wustaa* (the middlemost prayer) so that His servants might pay special attention to every prayer. Allah has concealed the time of death, so that people might never be forgetful about it.

D. Finally, had the Night of Power been known, the sins of the sinners in that night might have weighed heavily upon them. To commit sins on a known blessed occasion is greater in magnitude than committing sins on the same blessed occasion without knowing its blessedness.

The Night of Power in the *Hadeeth*

Al-Bukhaaree and Muslim record from Abu Hurayrah (ﷺ) that Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said, "Whoever prays during the Night of *Qadr* with firm belief and hope for its reward will have all his previous sins forgiven."

What should we ask Allah Most High on this Blessed Night? This was the question the Mother of the Believers, 'Aa'ishah (ﷺ), once asked the Prophet (ﷺ). He taught her this supplication:

«اللَّهُمَّ إِنَّكَ عَفُوٌّ تُحِبُّ الْعَفْوَ فَاعْفُ عَنِّي»

(O Allah, You are Most Forgiving and You love forgiveness, so do forgive me.' (Ahmad and At-Tirmidhee)

Thus, in the last ten days of *Ramadhaan* we should concentrate on *'ibaadah*, seek forgiveness from Allah and pray to Him to save us from the Fire.

Exercises

A. Fill in the blanks.

1. *Laylat Al-Qadr* means _____.
2. The Night of Power is better than _____.
3. The Spirit refers to _____.

B. Answer the following questions.

1. What special event took place on the Night of Power?

2. What is the meaning of the word '*qadr*'?

3. How was the Qur'an sent down on the Night of Power?

4. By what different names is the Night of Power known?

5. When exactly does *Laylat Al-Qadr* fall?

6. Why do you think Allah has concealed the exact Night of Power from us?

At-*Taghaabun* (Loss and Gain)

38

The word *taghaabun*, occurring in verse 9, is the keyword by which this *surah* is titled. This *surah* (*Surah* 64) contains 18 verses.

سُورَةُ التَّغَابُنِ (٦٤)
ترتيبها ٦٤ آياتها ١٨

بِسْمِ ٱللَّهِ ٱلرَّحْمَٰنِ ٱلرَّحِيمِ

يُسَبِّحُ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَمَا فِي ٱلْأَرْضِ لَهُ ٱلْمُلْكُ وَلَهُ ٱلْحَمْدُ وَهُوَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿١﴾ هُوَ ٱلَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ فَمِنكُمْ كَافِرٌ وَمِنكُم مُّؤْمِنٌ وَٱللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ﴿٢﴾ خَلَقَ ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضَ بِٱلْحَقِّ وَصَوَّرَكُمْ فَأَحْسَنَ صُوَرَكُمْ وَإِلَيْهِ ٱلْمَصِيرُ ﴿٣﴾ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضِ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا تُسِرُّونَ وَمَا تُعْلِنُونَ وَٱللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ ٱلصُّدُورِ ﴿٤﴾ أَلَمْ يَأْتِكُمْ نَبَؤُا۟ ٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا۟ مِن قَبْلُ فَذَاقُوا۟ وَبَالَ أَمْرِهِمْ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿٥﴾ ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّهُۥ كَانَت تَّأْتِيهِمْ رُسُلُهُم بِٱلْبَيِّنَٰتِ فَقَالُوٓا۟ أَبَشَرٌ يَهْدُونَنَا فَكَفَرُوا۟ وَتَوَلَّوا۟ وَّٱسْتَغْنَى ٱللَّهُ وَٱللَّهُ غَنِيٌّ حَمِيدٌ ﴿٦﴾ زَعَمَ ٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوٓا۟ أَن لَّن يُبْعَثُوا۟ قُلْ بَلَىٰ وَرَبِّي لَتُبْعَثُنَّ ثُمَّ لَتُنَبَّؤُنَّ بِمَا عَمِلْتُمْ وَذَٰلِكَ عَلَى ٱللَّهِ يَسِيرٌ ﴿٧﴾ فَـَٔامِنُوا۟ بِٱللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِۦ وَٱلنُّورِ ٱلَّذِيٓ أَنزَلْنَا وَٱللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ ﴿٨﴾ يَوْمَ يَجْمَعُكُمْ لِيَوْمِ ٱلْجَمْعِ ذَٰلِكَ يَوْمُ ٱلتَّغَابُنِ وَمَن يُؤْمِنۢ بِٱللَّهِ وَيَعْمَلْ صَٰلِحًا يُكَفِّرْ عَنْهُ سَيِّـَٔاتِهِۦ وَيُدْخِلْهُ جَنَّٰتٍ تَجْرِي مِن تَحْتِهَا ٱلْأَنْهَٰرُ خَٰلِدِينَ فِيهَآ أَبَدًا ذَٰلِكَ ٱلْفَوْزُ ٱلْعَظِيمُ ﴿٩﴾ وَٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا۟ وَكَذَّبُوا۟ بِـَٔايَٰتِنَآ أُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ أَصْحَٰبُ ٱلنَّارِ خَٰلِدِينَ فِيهَا وَبِئْسَ ٱلْمَصِيرُ ﴿١٠﴾ مَآ أَصَابَ مِن مُّصِيبَةٍ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ ٱللَّهِ وَمَن يُؤْمِنۢ بِٱللَّهِ يَهْدِ قَلْبَهُۥ وَٱللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴿١١﴾ وَأَطِيعُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا۟ ٱلرَّسُولَ فَإِن تَوَلَّيْتُمْ فَإِنَّمَا عَلَىٰ رَسُولِنَا ٱلْبَلَٰغُ ٱلْمُبِينُ ﴿١٢﴾ ٱللَّهُ لَآ إِلَٰهَ إِلَّا هُوَ وَعَلَى ٱللَّهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ ٱلْمُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١٣﴾ يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوٓا۟ إِنَّ مِنْ أَزْوَٰجِكُمْ وَأَوْلَٰدِكُمْ عَدُوًّا لَّكُمْ فَٱحْذَرُوهُمْ وَإِن تَعْفُوا۟ وَتَصْفَحُوا۟ وَتَغْفِرُوا۟ فَإِنَّ ٱللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿١٤﴾ إِنَّمَآ أَمْوَٰلُكُمْ وَأَوْلَٰدُكُمْ فِتْنَةٌ وَٱللَّهُ عِندَهُۥٓ أَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿١٥﴾ فَٱتَّقُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ مَا ٱسْتَطَعْتُمْ وَٱسْمَعُوا۟ وَأَطِيعُوا۟ وَأَنفِقُوا۟ خَيْرًا لِّأَنفُسِكُمْ وَمَن يُوقَ شُحَّ نَفْسِهِۦ فَأُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ هُمُ ٱلْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴿١٦﴾ إِن تُقْرِضُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا يُضَٰعِفْهُ لَكُمْ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ وَٱللَّهُ شَكُورٌ حَلِيمٌ ﴿١٧﴾ عَٰلِمُ ٱلْغَيْبِ وَٱلشَّهَٰدَةِ ٱلْعَزِيزُ ٱلْحَكِيمُ ﴿١٨﴾

In the Name of Allah, Most Beneficent, Most Merciful

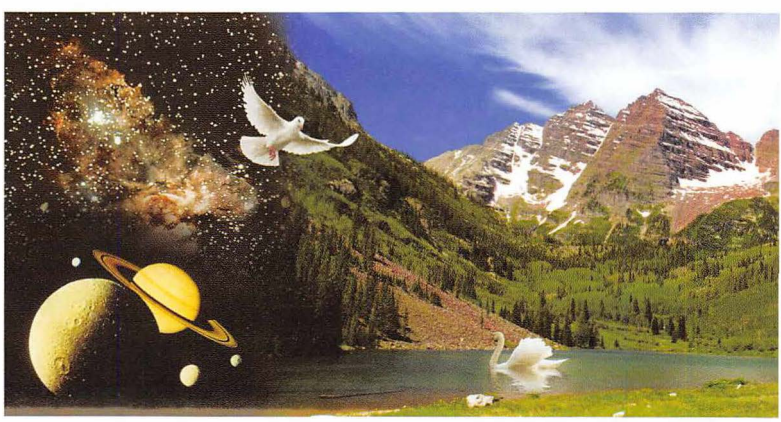
1. All that is in the heavens and all that is on earth glorify Allah's limitless glory: His is all dominion, and to Him all praise is due; and He has power over all things.
2. It is He Who crated you, and among you are some that are disbelievers and some that are believers, and Allah sees well all that you do.
3. He has created the heavens and the earth with the truth and has formed you, giving you the best of forms; and to Him is the final return.

4. He knows all that is in the heavens and on earth; and He knows what you conceal and what you reveal, and He has full knowledge of what is in the hearts.
5. Has the news not reached you of those who denied the truth, in earliest times, and tasted the evil outcome of their own doings? They will have a painful punishment.
6. That is because their Messengers brought them the Clear Signs but they said, "Shall [mere] human beings guide us?" And so they rejected [the message] and turned away. But Allah was not in need of them. Allah is free of all needs, worthy of all praise.
7. The disbelievers claim that they will never be raised [for judgment]! Say, "Yes, by my Lord, you will certainly be raised again, then you will surely be informed about what you did, and that is easy for Allah."
8. So believe in Allah and His Messenger and in the Light which We have sent down. Allah is fully aware of all that you do.
9. [Think of] the day when He shall gather you all together for the Day of Gathering — that will be a day of loss and gain!

   As for those who believe in Allah and work righteousness, He will [on that Day] remove from them their bad deeds, and will admit them into gardens, beneath which rivers flow, to dwell therein for ever. That is the supreme triumph!
10. But as for those who reject faith and deny Our signs, they are the Companions of the Fire, to dwell therein forever; and evil is that goal!
11. No misfortune occurs except by Allah's permission, and whoever believes in Allah, Allah guides his heart [aright], and Allah has knowledge of all things.
12. Obey Allah and obey the Messenger, but if you turn away, Our Messenger's only duty is a clear delivery of this message.
13. Allah — there is no god but Him, and on Allah, then, let the believers place their trust (*tawakkul*).
14. O you who believe, some of your spouses and children are an enemy to you, so beware of them. But if you forgive and overlook and cover up [their faults], surely Allah is Ever-Forgiving, Most Merciful.
15. Your wealth and your children are only a trial, whereas with Allah there is a tremendous reward.
16. So fear Allah as best as you can, and listen and obey and spend for your own benefit; and those who are saved from the covetousness of their own selves, they are the ones that are the successful.
17. If you lend to Allah a goodly loan, He will multiply it for you, and will forgive you; and Allah is All-Thankful, Most-Forbearing.
18. [He is] the Knower of the unseen and the visible, the All-Mighty, the All-Wise.

Explanation

1. All things by their very existence proclaim the glory and praises of Allah, Most High. He has dominion over all things. He uses His dominion for just and praiseworthy ends. He can combine justice with mercy. His plan and purpose cannot be frustrated.
2. It is not that He does not see disobedience and evil. It is not that He cannot punish them. He created all things pure and good. If evil creeps in by His granting of a limited free will, it is not unforeseen. It is His Wise and Universal plan that He has given men a chance of rising higher and higher. One person's denial of the Truth and another's belief in it is in fact an outcome of free choice.
3. Allah's creation is beautiful and grand. He has given us special faculties and special excellence, which raise us at our best to the position of inheritors of the earth. A time will come when all things created will return to Allah. As they derive their origin from Him, so will the return of all of them be to Allah.
4. Allah creates, develops and sustains all things. He has full knowledge of all thoughts, motives, feelings, intentions, ideas and events. There is nothing that is not known to Him. Nothing can escape His Sight. His plan is wise and is good in its fullest compass. Our intelligence is narrow and very limited. Sometimes we do not see its wisdom and goodness because we see only a broken fragment of it.
5. Verse 5 alludes to the disasters and the suffering which, as history shows, inevitably befall every community or nation bent on rejecting the basic ethical truths, and thus, all standards of morality.
6. Allah raised Prophets from their people's midst. They brought divine messages specially meant for them, but they rejected them. They could not accept the idea that a divine message could be brought through human beings. They expected something supernatural about them.
7. They refused to believe in resurrection and the life to come. In other words, they were convinced that no one would be called upon after death to answer for what he did in this life.
8. Therefore, the Qur'an urges people to believe in Allah and His Messenger. It urges them to believe in the light of revelation which Allah has sent down. It is the light by



which we may know Allah and His Will.

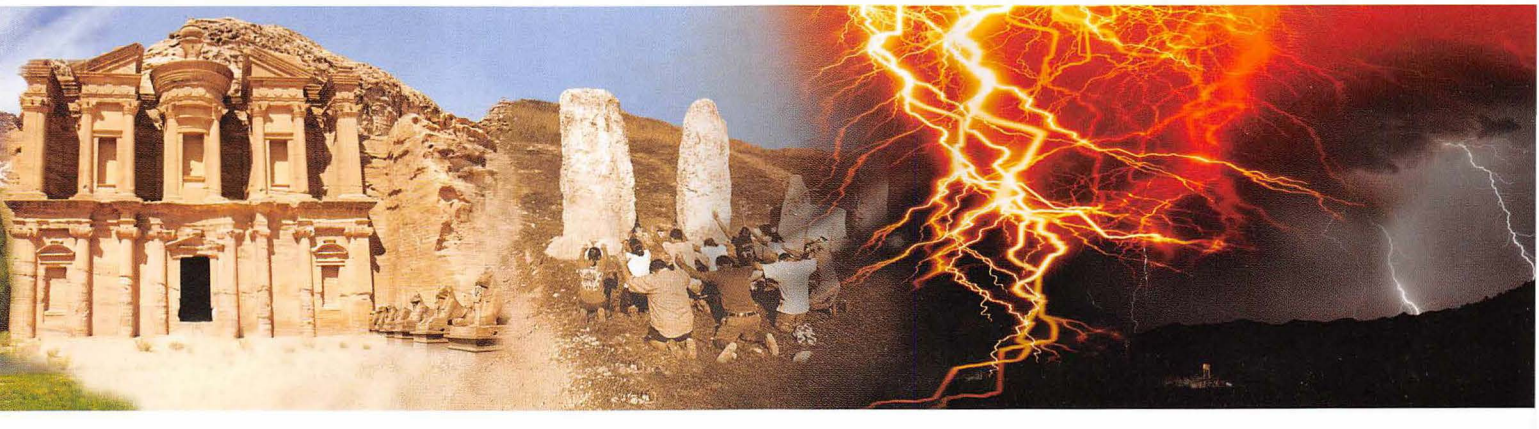
9/10. Allah calls people to reflect on the Day of Judgment, which will truly be a day of loss and gain. The believers will be rewarded, while the rejecters of the Truth will be punished.

11. What we consider misfortunes might be blessings in disguise. Pain in the body is often a signal of something wrong, which we can cure by remedial measures. So in the moral and spiritual world, we should in all circumstances hold firmly to the faith that nothing happens without Allah's knowledge. There is always justice and wisdom in Allah's plans. Our duty is to find out our shortcomings and remedy them. We should be grateful to Allah in times of ease, and we should be patient in times of misfortune. Hence, whoever believes in Allah guides his own heart towards the truth!

12. Verse 12 makes it clear that realization of Allah's Existence, Oneness and Almightiness is the innermost aim of Allah's Message to man. His Prophets can do no more than to deliver and expound this message. It is left to people's reason and free choice to accept or reject it.

13. *Tawakkul* means trust in Allah. This means acceptance of His Divine Decree (*qadhaa'* and *qadar*) in every aspect of life. *Tawakkul* means that the believer's heart has faith in the absolute power, wisdom and justice of Allah. He believes that it is Allah who is in control of all things. Indeed, *tawakkul* is one of the most important sources of a believer's psychological strength and energy. It is the source from which spring patience, tolerance, determination, contentment and happiness. The true Muslim is patient in times of trial, and he thanks Allah when he is blessed with something. Likewise, when he experiences a good fortune in this life, he is content, and if misfortune strikes him, he remains patient and trusts Allah. He expects to find his reward in the hereafter. He believes that his efforts will pay off in the end, that the truth will ultimately prevail and that falsehood will fall in the end and its supporters will finally be defeated.

It is very important to note that



It is very important to note that *tawakkul* is not the same as *tawaakul* (Notice the difference in pronunciation and spelling). *Tawaakul* means accepting what happens or is done to one without responding actively or asserting oneself. In other words, it means to remain 'not active'. *Tawakkul* is something different. One who places his trust in Allah uses the appropriate means and follows the natural laws. He strives hard to find out his shortcomings. He corrects his mistakes and continues to strive, while placing his trust in Allah. *Tawaakul*, on the other hand, contains elements of inaction — inertia. It contains elements of incompetence, inability and laziness. Hence when a Bedouin who had confused *tawakkul* with *tawaakul* came to the Prophet (ﷺ) and told him that he had left his camel untied out side the mosque and had thus placed his trust in Allah, the Prophet (ﷺ) explained it clearly, "tie up your camel, and then place your trust in Allah." *Tawaakul* is unnatural. Islam does not teach it.

14. This applies equally to both the male and the female partners in a marriage. Love of his or her family may sometimes tempt a believer to act contrary to the demands of conscience and faith. Occasionally, one or another of the loved ones — be they a wife, husband or child — may consciously try to induce the person concerned to leave some of his or her moral commitments in order to satisfy some real or imaginary family interests. Thus, he or she might become each other's spiritual enemy. The Qur'an urges the believers to be aware of them.

15. The Qur'an here describes the worldly goods and a desire to protect one's family by two words 'trial and temptation'. This is because love of worldly goods and love of one's family may lead a person to transgression. It may, thus, lead him to a betrayal of moral values taught in Allah's Message.

16. Thus, greed, miserliness and covetousness are pointed out here as the main obstacles to man's attaining of a happy state in this world and in the hereafter. Man's obsessive striving for more and more comforts, more material goods, greater power over his fellow men, to the exclusion of everything else, bars him from all spiritual insight. Indeed, it prevents him from accepting any restrictions



based on purely moral values. The result is that not only individuals but also whole societies gradually lose inner stability. Thus they lose all chances of happiness. The Qur'an declares: **"Those who are saved from the covetousness of their own selves, they are the ones that are the successful."** Modern civilization is a materialistic civilization in which living the present life is revered above all else. Life after death is derided and dismissed as absurd nonsense. The Qur'an urges the believers to lead lives of self-restraint and righteousness.

Allah Most High says, **"So have fear Allah as best you can."** Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) once observed, "When I command you to do something, do as much as you can of it, and whatever I forbid for you, then avoid it." (Muslim)

17/18. If you lend to Allah a handsome loan, He will double it for you and will forgive you. This means whatever you spend for the pleasure of Allah, He will surely repay it to you and will certainly give you reward for whatever you give in charity. Allah considers giving charity as if it is a loan to Him. He will multiply it for the giver and will forgive him. He will erase his sins, for Allah is *Shakoor*, All-Thankful. He gives in return plentifully. He is All-Knower of the seen and the unseen. He is All-Wise, All-Powerful.



Exercises

A. Fill in the blanks.

1. The Day of Judgment will be a Day of _____ and _____.
2. The innermost aim of Allah's Message to man is _____.
3. The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "_____ and whatever I forbid for you, then avoid it."

B. Answer the following questions.

1. Is evil unforeseen by Allah? If not, then why is it there?

2. How is man, as the inheritor of the earth, different from other creation?

3. Allah's Plan is wise. Why does man many a time doubt it?

4. On what basis did the earlier people reject their messengers?

5. How is *tawakkul* different from *tawaakul*?

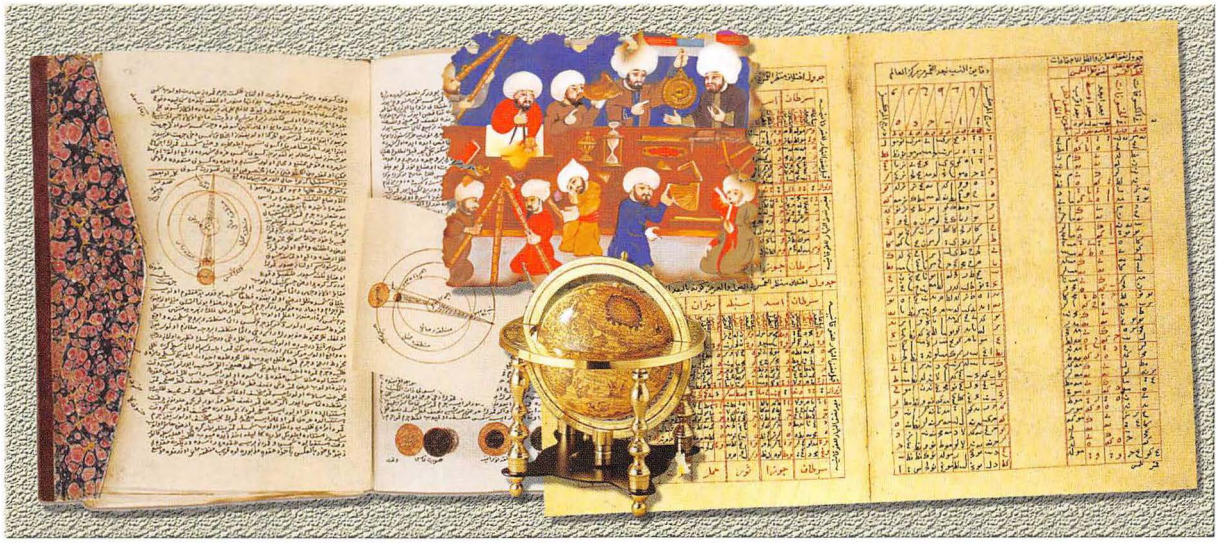
6. What does Allah mean by "Lend to Allah a goodly loan"?

C. Think-up

1. How does Almighty Allah guide a believer's heart to the truth?

2. How do worldly goods and family lead a person to transgression?

Islam and the World of Sciences



The Quest for Knowledge

The Qur'an and *Hadeeth* are replete with statements about the merits of knowledge and the learned. Allah Most High says, **"Allah will raise in ranks those who believe among you and those who have been granted knowledge."** (*Surat Al-Mujaadilah*, 58: 11) **"Of all His servants who stand in awe of Allah are those who are knowledgeable."** (*Surat Faatir*, 35: 28)

Hadeeth and Knowledge

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said, "The superiority of a learned man (*'aalim*) over a mere worshipper (*'aabid*) is like the superiority of the moon at night when it is full over all other stars." (Abu Daawood, At-Timidhee and An-Nasaa'ee)

"If anybody goes on his way in search of knowledge, Allah will thereby make easy for him the way to Paradise." (Muslim)

Abu Daawood narrates the following *hadeeth* on the authority of Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه), "Whoever is asked about something he knows and conceals it shall be made to wear a bridle of fire on the Day of Rising."

Young Muslims, therefore, should remind themselves that seeking real knowledge is not simply recommended; it is an obligation.

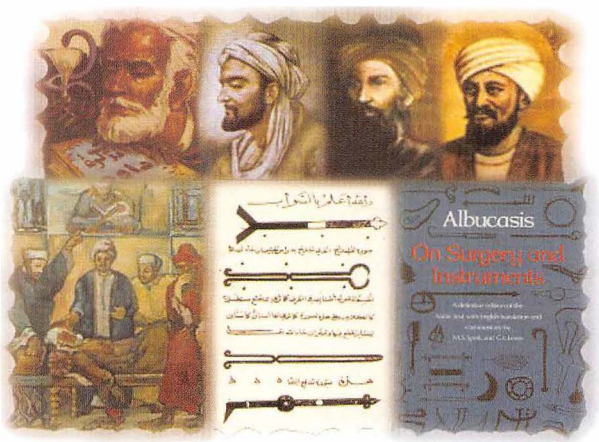
Islamic Science

Islamic science, according to Sayyid Husayn Nasr, refers to the sciences developed by Muslims from the second Islamic century onwards. It is one of the great achievements of Islamic civilization.

The achievements of early Muslim scientists were great. Sayyid Husayn Nasr, in his scholarly work *A Young Muslim's Guide to the Modern World*, remarks, "For some seven hundred

years, from the second to the ninth Islamic centuries, Islamic civilization was perhaps the most productive of all civilizations in the domain of science and Islamic science and was at the forefront in many fields ranging from medicine to astronomy. Gradually, from about the ninth century, activity in the Islamic sciences diminished in the Islamic world, but it did not by any means die out. Especially in the fields of medicine and pharmacology, a great deal of important activity took place in the eastern lands of Islam during the later period of Islamic history."

A Glimpse at the Achievements in the Fields of Islamic Sciences



❑ In their conquests, Muslims absorbed and preserved scientific works and added to them their own special knowledge. Arab physicians were especially skilled in the use of herbs, surgery and the treatment of eye diseases.

❑ It was the Arabs who took the figures we use in mathematics today from the Hindu and Sanskrit scholars of India and introduced them to the West. Before then, Europe had used Roman numerals.



❑ It was due to the Arabs that the various branches of mathematics and all the sciences that depend on mathematics began to develop in Western Europe.

❑ About a thousand years ago, students from all over Europe thronged at the great centers of teaching at Cordoba and Toledo in Muslim Spain (Andalusia), Baghdad in Iraq, and Cairo in Egypt.

❑ The word Algebra comes from the Arabic word *al-jabr*, which was used in the title of a textbook written by an Arab mathematician in Baghdad in about 925 CE.

❑ It was the Arab mathematicians who learnt how to use the decimal point.

❑ Words like rocket, alchemy, chemistry, admiral, almanac, elixir, and zero have their origin in the Arabic language.

❑ The Arabs also became experts on navigation and astronomy because these two sciences are closely related to each other.

3. What lesson do you learn from the incidents mentioned from the lives of Khabbaab ibn al-Aratt, Bilaal, Habeeb ibn Zayd and 'Abdullaah ibn Hudhaafah (may Allah be pleased with them all)?

A Moving Supplication

41



«مَا قَالَ عَبْدٌ قَطُّ إِذَا أَصَابَهُ هَمٌّ أَوْ حَزَنٌ: اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي عَبْدُكَ ابْنُ عَبْدِكَ ابْنُ أَمَتِكَ، نَاصِيَتِي بِيَدِكَ، مَاضٍ فِيَّ حُكْمُكَ عَدْلٌ فِيَّ قَضَاؤُكَ، أَسْأَلُكَ بِكُلِّ اسْمٍ هُوَ لَكَ، سَمَّيْتَ بِهِ نَفْسَكَ، أَوْ أَنْزَلْتَهُ فِي كِتَابِكَ أَوْ عَلَّمْتَهُ أَحَدًا مِنْ خَلْقِكَ، أَوْ اسْتَأْثَرْتَ بِهِ فِي عِلْمِ الْغَيْبِ عِنْدَكَ أَنْ تَجْعَلَ الْقُرْآنَ رَبِيعَ قَلْبِي وَنُورَ بَصَرِي وَجَلَاءَ حُزْنِي وَذَهَابَ هَمِّي، إِلَّا أَذْهَبَ اللهُ هَمَّهُ وَأَبْدَلَهُ مَكَانَ حُزْنِهِ فَرَحًا»

Translation of the meaning of this soul-stirring *du'aa*:

The Prophet (ﷺ) once said, "Neither worry nor sorrow has afflicted a servant [of Allah] when he says, 'O Allah, I am Your servant and the son of Your servant and the son of Your bondmaid; my forelock is in Your Hand (i.e. I am under Your control); Your judgment is carried out on me; Your decision about me is just. I ask You by every name that is Yours and by which You have named Yourself or that You have sent down in Your book or have taught to one of Your creation or that You have kept with Yourself in the knowledge of the unseen that You have: to make the Qur'an the life (literally the spring) of my heart, the light of my breast, the disperser of my sorrow, the remover of my worry' without Allah removing his worry and his sorrow and replacing them with freedom from distress." (Ahmad and Ibn Hibbaan)

Selected Vocabulary

Hamm

The word *hamm* signifies anxiety or disquiet, or trouble of mind; care or grief, or sorrow affecting the heart or mind, by reason of some harm or annoyance that is *expected to happen*; differing from *ghamm*, which signifies distress or disquiet affecting the heart or mind by reason of what has happened. (*Arabic-English Lexicon*: E. W. Lane, Vol. 2, p. 3045. Published by the Islamic Texts Society, 2003)

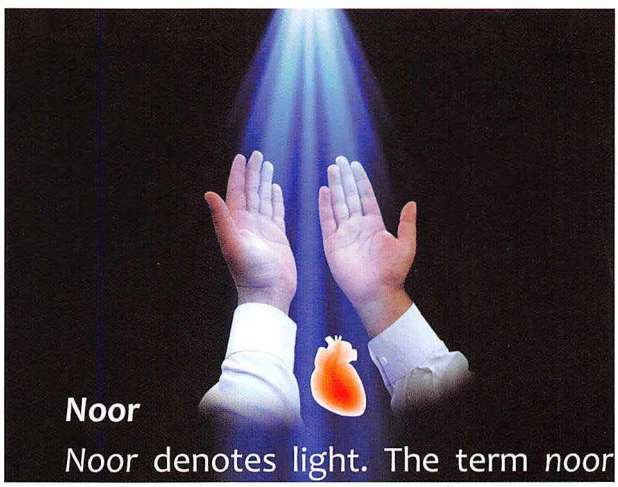
Hamm also denotes the anxiety of the morning and evening meals, or all grieving anxiety of the means of subsistence (livelihood), or the grief of punishment or of death. (Lane Volume 1, p. 563)

Huzn

The word *huzn* signifies grief, mourning, sorrow, sadness or unhappiness. It signifies grief arising on account of an unpleasant event that has happened, or on account of an object of love that has passed away. Hence, we find the phrase *'Aam-ul Huzn* 'the Year of Grief', in which Khadeejah (﵂) and Abu Taalib, the Prophet's uncle, died.

Rabee' al-Qalb

To be the life, or ease of my heart; because the heart of man becomes lively, or at ease in the season called *Rabee'* (literally spring). Hence also, the bird hoopoe is called in Arabic *abur-rabee'* because it appears with the season called *ar-rabee'* or the spring season. *Rabee'* is in fact the spring of Arabia – properly the herbage (the greenery) that is produced by the first rain in the quarter, which is called the *Rabee'*. It also signifies a rivulet or a streamlet. (Lane: Volume 1, page 1019)



has a very important connotation in the Qur'an. It is closely related to the concepts of being guided, guidance and following guidance. Allah uses the word *noor* to describe the moon and *dhiyaa'* (illumination) to describe the sun. (*Surat Yoonus*, 10:5)

Noor itself is light. Light guides. Generally, it is not harmful in any way. *Noor* is the light without any burning to it, while *dhiyaa'* is the thing that shines brightly and gives off extreme heat. It is the source of light but can be harmful or can cause discomfort when for instance, touched. It is significant to note that Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) compared prayer to light by saying "Prayer (*salaat*) is light." (Fragment of a *hadeeth* recorded by Muslim and by Imam an-Nawawee in his famous *Forty Hadeeth*: see *hadeeth* no. 23).

The prayer guides the person and keeps him along the Straight Path. Its effects are such that it keeps a person away from sins and evil deeds because it builds up a believer's relation with Allah. Hence, the Prophet (ﷺ) taught us to supplicate by saying, "O Allah, make the Qur'an the light of my breast." It can be called a guiding light. This demonstrates the importance of the supplications taught by the Prophet (ﷺ). The Qur'an is bound to guide us to and along the Straight Path. It will help us know where the Path is. It will also help us stay on it. It will be light for us in this life and light on the Day of Judgment, which will guide us to the Path of Paradise.

The light of the moon is very soothing. It is comfortable, and so is the case with prayer, which provides great comfort to the soul by bringing it into the presence of the Merciful Lord. It is interesting to realize that the guidance brought by Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) is often described as *noor*, while the guidance brought by the Prophet Moosaa (عليه السلام) is described as *dhiyaa'* (illumination). The sun's brightness (*dhiyaa'*) involves some kind of heat or burning with it. The Law of Moosaa (عليه السلام) was known for being difficult or burdensome due to the Jews' own responses to Allah's revelations. However, the Law of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) came and removed all those burdens from earlier times, as Allah states in *Surat al-A'raaf*, verse 157.

'Abdullaah ibn Mas'ood (رضي الله عنه) was once asked, "Should we learn this supplication?" He replied, "Whoever hears this *du'aa* should surely memorise it."

Memorization

Learn this beautiful *du'aa* by heart.