

AKHLAQ SYLLABUS - CLASS 10

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LESSON 1: MEANING AND OVERVIEW OF THE SUBJECT OF AKHLAQ

21:16 *Not for (idle) sport did We create the heavens and the earth and all that is between!*

30:8 *Do they not reflect in their own minds? Not but for just ends and for term appointed, did God create the heavens and the earth, and all them: yet are there truly many among men who deny the meeting with their Lord (at the Resurrection)!*

38:27 *Not without purpose did We create heaven and earth and all between! That were the thought of Unbelievers! But woe to the Unbelievers because of the Fire (of Hell)!*

"I have been sent to complete the nobility of character."

[Prophet Muhammad (S)]

A child is born. What does it have to look forward to in life? Anything, anything at all?

If life is just to live, to use and then we are no more, then what is the point of living? What is the point of studying for 25 years of life, what is the point of working for a further 30 years of life, of being in debt, of paying a mortgage, of marrying, of bringing up children? All this effort is pointless if there is no higher purpose to life.

Conscience Will / Desire

If you look at animals, they can communicate, they can eat and drink. They are created for this world only. The only thing they lack is a conscience will, a desire to do something.

An animal eats when it is hungry, and sleeps when it is tired. A human being has been given an extra facet of intelligence. When we eat, we eat the food that we enjoy, we taste the food. Sometimes, we eat when we are not hungry, we laugh, we joke, we have friends, we study we learn, we have hobbies, we create. These are all characteristics that make us different from other animals.

Emotions

We also have emotions which animals do not share. On the positive side, we have emotions such as compassion, sympathy, consideration, loyalty, and friendship. On the negative side, we have jealousy, greed, hatred, enmity, and deceitfulness.

This shows us that man cannot be judged or compared to other creatures on the planet. If he uses his emotions of compassion and friendship than he can be the best of all the creatures, if he lets himself become mean and greedy, selfish and jealous, than he becomes the worst creature on the planet, because even the animals do not have these emotions.

Intelligence / Humour

Mankind has the ability to extrapolate and synthesize thought. This means to start off with a piece of information, and make conclusions, based on other pieces of information. Mankind has the ability to communicate in a social way, to interact and to laugh. Laughing is a very human characteristic, and according to many philosophers, is a fundamental difference between Man and Animal.

The result is that man is unlike the rest of creation. He has something extra that cannot be explained by science, can not be explained by evolution, can not be explained by any theory at all EXCEPT by religion and belief.

15:28 *Behold! your Lord said to the angels: "I am about to create man, from clay, from mud molded into shape;*

15:29 *"When I have fashioned him (in due proportion) and breathed into him My spirit, fall down in obeisance unto him."*

15:30 *So the angels prostrated themselves all of them together:*

Now that we have understood man is unique, the next point to ask is that why is he different?

Allah explains us that man was made for a purpose. It is that purpose which we have to try and discover.

Allah is our creator, He made us from nothing. After having created us, he placed in us a portion of His spirit, His will, the electricity that keeps us ticking. Allah had created the world and the stars, all the fabulous things that you see in space, but He had a plan, His plan was to create the BEST CREATURE, something that would not just obey His command because He who commanded, something that would obey His command with free will. Something that would search for Him until it found Him. This creature was MAN.

3:59 *This similitude of Jesus before God is as that of Adam: He created him dust, then said to him: "Be", and he was.*

Man was created and taught all the names of the heavens and the earth. Then he was placed on earth to live his life. He was given the tools to find Allah and then it was left to wander, to find the path.

When we are lost in the forest, we use a compass to find something that we cannot see. The compass follows a magnetic field which cannot be sensed with our eyes, ears, touch, taste or smell. Even then we know the field exists, because the compass points to it. Well there is another force, a light which flows through every object, every stone, tree, leaf. That is the Light of Allah, the light that keeps everything existing. Allah wants us to discover this light and to realise how great it is.

The tools we have been given for this search is our soul, our heart. Our soul is receptive to this light of Allah, the same way a compass can guide towards a magnetic field. We have to open our hearts to the world around us, and then follow the path which it takes us through.

Whenever we do something, we get a feeling which is deep down inside us, which tells us whether that action is taking us towards Allah or away.

This feeling is provided by our conscience. If you do something Haraam, then stop for a second and think, you will feel a small tugging feeling that will try and pull you back toward the right path, the more you listen to this the stronger this sensation will become until your thoughts themselves become pure. In the same way, the less you listen to this conscience, the weaker it will get, until a stage comes when you will not even hear it when it is trying to tell you something. That is the day Shaitan will jump up and down with glee, because he will have gained a new follower.

So Allah has set this task, this test, for every human being and to make it easier for us, He gave each of us the ability to pass this test, to reach the end of the journey.

One point about this Universe is that everything has been created in pairs, each has its opposite. There is black and white, strong and weak, good and bad, heaven and hell. Inside of man there are also these pairs. For every good emotion that takes man towards Allah, there is an evil emotion which will take him away. Allah has given man the ability to judge between right and wrong. To make matters easier, to every single group of people Allah sent a Warner, to show the way towards him, so that on the Day of Judgment people could not say, "We did not know, we were unaware". All we have to do is choose which way we want to follow.

10:47 *To every people (was sent) an Apostle: when their Apostle comes before them), the matter will be judged between them with justice, they will not be wronged.*

If the choice is so easy to see, why is this world so unjust?

There is one main reason why this simple choice between good and evil is made difficult.

Man forgets easily. Man always thinks of the present and leaves the future to sort itself out. If you want to do something Haraam, the pleasure is immediate.

If you want to steal then you receive the goods immediately. If you obtain power, then you can control others at once. If you want to eat Haraam, then the pleasure of eating is there as soon as you swallow the food. If you have a sexual desire, then you can satisfy it as soon as you commit the act. However, when you want to do something good then the rewards are not immediate, they come later. The same way when you study, the rewards come after you have finished your exams and you are shown the results. When you plant a seed, it will be many years before the tree matures, and you taste the fruit. Well, the reward for the good deeds you perform are not only physical such as the pleasure of the bad deeds. You do not get money for helping someone, nor do you feed your hunger by fasting. So when a human being has a choice, if he is ignorant and cares nothing for the next life, then he will make the choice that will benefit him immediately.

This is where the whole concept of Akhlaq comes in. Akhlaq is not just good and bad deeds, but learning to understand that good deeds actually help you in the long run, and learning to enjoy helping others, and most importantly knowing that good Akhlaq is a torch that will guide you towards Allah amidst the darkness.

24:35 *God is the Light of the heavens and the earth.*

2:257 *God is the Protector of those who have faith: from the depths of darkness He will lead them forth into light. Of those who reject faith the patrons are the Evil Ones: from light they will lead them forth into the depths of darkness. They will be companions of the fire, to dwell therein (for ever).*

So we have understood that man is different from other creation, that he has a purpose to his life, and we now know what the purpose is and how to fulfill it.

The next point to understand is: **Why should he follow that purpose?**

When we accept that Man can be the greatest of creation, and can reflect the light of Allah, then we should realise that those who reach such a stage, where their purpose has been fulfilled, will be elevated to such a high level that they will be brought as close to Allah as it is possible to be.

The reward for man, for his effort to find his Creator, to find the one who made him is the closeness of Allah's mercy for eternity.

This reward is paradise or heaven, lasting forever and ever. This is not governed by time, because time is a creation just like the earth, and when this creation ceases, and a new one occurs, then time will also cease to exist, and man will be in a dimension without time, without age.

So if man obeys Allah's commands then he will receive the promised reward, but if he fails, then he has also been promised punishment.

People argue that punishment is unfair and unjust, and that only an uncaring god punishes his creatures. Such people should try to understand the following.

- if a person harms others then it is fair that he is punished
- if there are two people, one who puts in effort to do good, and one who does not, is it fair that both people are rewarded equally, or that both are punished equally?
- if you are warned of a danger, and you do not heed the warning, fully aware of the consequences than it is your own fault that you have to bear the consequences.
- Allah has given the chance for us to repent, if we do so sincerely, but a person who disbelieves and commits acts which hurt others until his dying breath can not expect to be forgiven, especially when he did not even request forgiveness.

So punishment will occur for those who deserve it, but those who try and perfect their Akhlaq will find it a shield from the fire of hell.

2:24 *But if you cannot, and of a surety you cannot, then fear the fire whose fuel is Men and Stones, which is prepared for those who reject Faith.*

LESSON 2: GUNAH E KABIRA (THE MAJOR SINS)

4:111 *And if anyone earns sin, he earns it against his own soul: for God is full of knowledge and wisdom.*

4:112 *But if anyone earns a fault or a sin and throws it on to one that is innocent, He carries (on himself) (both) a falsehood and a flagrant sin.*

6:120 *Shun all sin, open or secret: those who earn sin, will get due recompense for their "earnings."*

11:116 *Why were there not, among the generations before you, persons possessed of balanced good sense, prohibiting (men) from mischief in the earth--except a few among them whom We saved (from harm)? But the wrongdoers pursued the enjoyment of the good things of life which were given them, and persisted in sin.*

34:28 *We have not sent you but as a universal (Messenger) to men, giving them glad tidings, and warning them (against sin), but most men understand not.*

83:29 *Those in sin used to laugh at those who believed,*

83:30 *And whenever they passed by them, used to wink at each other (in mockery);*

83:31 *And when they returned to their own people, they would return jesting;*

83:32 *And whenever they saw them, they would say, "Behold! these are the people truly astray!"*

83:33 *But they had not been sent as Keepers over them!*

83:34 *But on this Day the Believers will laugh at the Unbelievers.*

83:35 *On Thrones (of Dignity) They will command (a sight) (of all things).*

83:36 *Will not the Unbelievers have been paid back for what they did?*

Allah has given us Islam as a way of life. This way of life has rules which are to be obeyed. To live effectively, there are always rules which are to be followed so that no-one breaks or infringes the rights of others.

The question then arises, why can't we make our own rules. Why do we have to follow what someone else (i.e. Allah) says ?

This question can be answered with the aid of the following examples, firstly, if you were organising a party, or an occasion for a group of youngsters, would you tell them to organise, or would you prepare beforehand so that things occur smoothly. The answer to that is quite obvious.

Secondly, if you had a small child who was by the beach, he wants to go into the water, but you can see the red flag is up indicating that the water is unsafe. Would you allow him to enter the water?

Lastly, if you were an architect or an engineer, and designed a suspension bridge, crossing a river. If the wind starts to blow, and you feel the bridge is not safe for normal traffic flow, and you decided to shut the bridge, who should the officials listen to, you as the creator of the bridge, or the users, who just want to get across?

From this, we can understand, that for a society to function effectively, the rules it should follow should be from "someone" who is aware of how the individuals of that society behave. Who else knows the weakness and behaviour of a human being more than its Creator, He Who says that "*I am closer to you than your Jugular vein*"

50:16: *It was We who created man and We know what dark suggestions his soul makes to him: for We are nearer to him than (his) jugular vein.*

Also, we should realise that Islamic Laws are there to protect oneself from dangerous or harmful effects, since every rule in Islam is to help you overcome the causes of such harm. The harm doesn't have to be to you only, it could also be to those around you.

If we deliberately reject the rules of Islam, we commit a sin, and we actually are harming ourselves in one way or another.

We should avoid committing forbidden acts, and worship Allah. This can be done for a number of reasons explained by the following words of the Prophet (S)

"There are people who worship Allah for the sake of (fulfilling their) desires and that is the worship of business people. And verily there are those who worship Allah out of fear of Him, this is the worship of slaves. But there are those who worship out of thanks giving to Him, this being the worship of free minded people and is the best of worship"

Below is a list of the prohibited acts (Gunahe Kabira) in Islam:

1. Polytheistic belief
2. To lose hope of receiving any mercy from Allah
3. To completely disregard God's punishment
4. To disrespect one's parents
5. To commit murder, adultery and fornication
6. To accuse a chaste woman of unchastity (fornication or adultery)
7. To take the property of orphans by force
8. To run away from the armed forces
9. To take illegal interest in trade
10. To have sexual relations beyond the limit of marriage, sexual enjoyment through homo-sexuality, masturbation or lesbianism
11. To use magic
12. To swear falsely by the names of Allah (God) or to use his names in vain
13. To ignore the payment of religious dues (Zakat, Khums)
14. To testify falsely against others
15. To drink intoxicating liquors
16. To give up daily prayers or any other religious obligations
17. To break one's promise

18. To disregard one's family (rejecting them , avoiding them, not showing enough love and affection towards them or not doing them the favours that one is supposed to do)
19. To become a resident of a place where one may lose his religion
20. To Steal
21. To ascribe false statement to Allah or to any of his apostles
22. To Lie
23. To deny or hide Allah's revelations or miracles
24. To eat the flesh of dead animals, blood, pork or an animal that is slaughtered without being consecrated with the name of Allah, or is not slaughtered according to the prescribed rules.
25. To Gamble
26. To make ones living from filthy and un-Islamic ways such as money obtained from the selling of wines or any other intoxicating liquors, the money from illegal interest in trade, accepting or giving money in bribery, receiving salary for witchcraft or magic, receiving money from an unjust government, the wages for singing, the sale of prohibited things as a means to earn one's living such as the instruments of games as chess, backgammon or other instruments used for gambling, making statues of animals or human beings.
27. To give less than due measure in business transactions
28. Not to pay one's debts when one has the means and the payment is due
29. To display haughtiness and pride.
30. To be a spend-thrift (Extravagant, spend lavishly)
31. To act proudly and boastfully.
32. To ignore a pilgrimage or abandoning it when it is due.
33. To fight a divine leader
34. To get involved in an un-Islamic business such as singing for fun, playing guitar, dancing just for enjoyment and other useless acts.
35. To persist in minor sins
36. To back-bite (to talk bad behind other's back about things which they dislike)
37. To accuse someone of fault or a defect
38. To abuse or hurt a believer
39. To be a slanderer, causing discord, schism among people
40. To become a pimp
41. To defraud the believers
42. To belittle one's sins
43. To be a hypocrite
44. To use picture, statues to represent Allah

LESSON 3: HAPPY FAMILY LIFE

Charity begins at home. The most important part of charity is that time of yours which you give in aid of others. So before you rush off to make the world a better place, stop, think, and spend a bit more time at home.

The family is the unit, the building block of any society. If you have a pile of bricks on top of each other, and you damage the bottom one, the whole wall will come tumbling down.

Similarly, if you start damaging the families in a society, it will not be long before the society begins to disintegrate around you. This is what we are witnessing in the modern era of the 21st century.

This topic can be discussed from so many angles, but I think what is necessary in today's society is simply understanding the natural feelings that should be present to make the family strong and secure so that those within it will be safe from the destructive influences outside. Friends have often said, that the west is too corrupt, our children have no chance being brought up in such a permissive, devalued, uncaring world. The argument against is that if a family can teach values and morals to its children, and show them how to recognise virtues and how to shun evil, then no evil however great can overcome them. That is why Islam has emphasised family unity and careful upbringing of the children.

Before we discuss the way to a happy family life, let us just mention some of the benefits of a family.

- It is a stable environment for the upbringing of a child.
- It teaches a child how to behave how to recognise the difference between right and wrong in the first years of its life.
- It provides companionship for husband and wife, so that they can rely on each other and trust in each other.
- All members of the family can trust each other and share the same goals.

These are just some of the benefits of being in a family.

A sensible and well-balanced family system is the very foundation of a happy life.

The question is how do we make a family happy?

It all comes down to **CONSIDERATION**. This word is so easy to say, but means so much. With consideration and respect, then almost all those things which could cause unhappiness are avoided.

Think for a moment. In your family, the last time you were unhappy was it not because you felt that no one is trying to understand your feelings, or that you wished people would look at things from your point of view. There you are then!

If you think of the needs of others, brothers, sisters and parents, then the chances are that you will never be in their "bad books".

Of course in any relationship there must be a two-way flow. Things will not work if one party does all the giving, and the other does all the taking.

It is also important to be able to talk. A large percentage of family problems occur because people feel bad, and they hold it within. Then it builds up and then one day "**B A N G ! !**". It all comes out, and there goes the family. Anger and frustration all spilled out breaks a bond that took years to build. Therefore you must be able to talk with your parents and your brothers and sisters about any problems.

Only by identifying these problems and removing them can you move forward.

It is not wealth which makes a family happy. Nor is it fame or fortune, or clothes or cars..... It is love.

The love that the family shares should be the glue that holds it together.

The happy family is one where each brother/sister knows that the rest of the family is behind them and is there to help whenever the need arises.

WARNING !

Do not abuse the help. One of the best ways to turn any relationship sour, is to abuse the privileges. There is nothing worst then making a mess, and expecting others to pick up the pieces. Your family is there to be used by you, not **ABUSED**.

The final words in this topic, on which books after books have been written, are the words of Prophet Isa (A):

If you want to GUARANTEE a happy family life as well as a healthy friendship,

"Treat others the way you yourself would like to be treated"

LESSON 4: ISLAMIC MANNERS

There are certain Islamic manners which are taught, which are often found trivial. These manners might be something that people think should be taught to children only, but it is important that they are reinforced at a more mature age so they can become part of the character.

Manners are not something that are worn on the surface, and then taken off when not required, like a hat or shoes. Manners are something that should be part of your nature, to be present at all times. It is this attitude which is becoming rarer, especially in today's society. The person who has manners and decency is a species on the verge of extinction.

Greeting (Salaam) and Shaking the hand (musafeha)

When one Muslim meets another, then to offer greeting is emphasised, and to return a greeting is wajib. An Islamic greeting is not "Hi" or "All right Mate". Salamun Alaykum is sincere and is meant as a wish that only the Peace of Allah should be on the other. The one who offers salaam is rewarded by Allah much more than the one who answers. Salaam makes us all equal, it is recommended that one who is higher gives salaam to one below, i.e. a man on a horse (or the modern day equivalent) should offer salaam to one who is walking, to combat his own pride.

The Muslim is the brother of another Muslim, when he meets him (Muslim) he greets him with peace and he returns him (greeting) that which is better and he does not refuse to give the necessities of life.

Eating

This habit is like a mirror. You can see a person's manners reflected in the way that they eat. How many people look polite and knowledgeable, pious and respectable, but give them a plate of food, and you have created a frankenstein. They eat as if there was no tomorrow.

There are two ways to defeat or make a man your slave. One through exploiting his desires, and the other through his appetite.

Begin your meal by remembering Allah. Eat when you are hungry, and not just for the sake of it. Do not overeat. When a guest comes to the house, you should begin eating first so that he may feel at home. You should eat in such a way as to respect food, not chewing with your mouth open, spilling it all over the table or floor. Just remember, there are people who do not know when their next meal will be, let alone what it will be; no one is asking you to go hungry, but don't waste or abuse food.

Drinking

Water is the nectar of life. Every living creature depends on it. When you drink water, do not gulp, but sip it. It is recommended to say "Oh Allah, send your blessings on Imam Husain (A), his family and his companions, and curse on those who refused him water." when drinking water.

Sleeping

When you sleep, you should do so on your right side preferably, or your back, or your left side. You should never sleep on your stomach. This is bad for your health.

It is sunnat to perform wudhu before going to sleep, as each breath you take will be counted as prayer. Recite Qur'an and du'a for a few minutes, who knows this may be our last chance to thank Allah.

Dressing

We all know that to dress indecently is Haraam. This has been explained in previous notes. However very few people realise the importance of dressing in their own home, and with their own family. One should not walk around scantily clothed at any time, even if you live by yourself.

Your body is precious and private. It has been lent to you from Allah is yours to look after. You should not abuse it, and you should not use it as a show for others.

You see, if something is expensive and important, it will be guarded and kept away so that people don't use it and damage it, but if something is cheap, it will be left there for everybody to see and use, and no one will care about it. What is more precious than your body, to keep it well guard its respect you should make sure that you dress it well so that it is not expose more than necessary.

When you dress, you should make sure that the clothes you wear are not too tight so that the shape of your body is seen. Also you should be careful not to wear certain clothes to certain places. You would not wear jeans if you were invited to see the Queen, so why wear jeans when you go to the mosque, to be closer to Allah? You can wear jeans at home or when you go out, but you should try and avoid them in places like the mosque.

Even at home, you should make sure that you are dressed properly. It is bad Akhlaq to walk around the home without a shirt, or to walk around wearing only your underwear or boxer shorts. It may sound funny, but many people do this. There is nothing Haraam in wearing boxer shorts by themselves or walking around in underwear in the house, but it is very poor Akhlaq, and not the character befitting to a Muslim.

If you start to treat your own body as cheap, then don't complain when others also treat you as if you were cheap and worthless.

Talking / Conduct in Public

When you talk, you should not shout or speak so much that others cannot get a word in edgeways. More importantly, even if you talk with a soft voice and polite smile, you guard against backbiting or lying. Your actions in public are what people will judge you by. If you do not want any respect, and want people to think that you are still a child, that carry on shouting, but for those who want to maintain dignity and want people to respect them, then speak less and listen more. *"Guard your words as you would your gold"* said Imam Ali (A).

LESSON 5: BATHROOM MANNERS

There is no shame in religion.

When it comes to what a Muslim should know and practise, in public or in private, Islam does not hide behind flowery language or frills. Islam is the religion meant for all human beings and therefore talks directly to them.

People may ask, what sort of religion is it that has rules on going to the bathroom?

The reason why Islam explains topics which people often consider personal, is because Islam is a complete religion, and as such offers complete guidance on all aspects of life.

If Islam was not to explain these points, no one else would and so there would be **NO STANDARD** for people to act by.

Islam **SETS THE STANDARD** for the most complete codes of personal hygiene and highest moral standards anywhere in the world.

In today's society we have the convenience of modern toilets, but these facilities will not be available everywhere you go, i.e. Haj, countryside, woods etc..

In these situations (and all others), certain actions should be performed. Not all acts have been mentioned since the rules should be dealt with more fully in fiqh lessons.

The major reason why this topic is being discussed in this class, is that although all of you have been taught the concept of Taharat in younger classes, it is vital that this is emphasised since you will all be Baligh within the next 1-1½ years, and without Taharat prayers are not valid.

In the majority of the places you visit, school, sports clubs, service stations, and other public areas you will be faced with toilets which do not contain water.

The most common facilities available will be those which are against Islamic codes such as "standing urinals" for boys. Since you are now responsible for your Ibadaat, it cannot be emphasised strong enough that you **MUST** understand how Islam expects you to maintain your hygiene.

- The area where you choose to relieve yourself should be not belong to someone else, unless you have their permission. (wajib)
- If there is a defined place, like a bathroom, you should enter with the left, and leave with the right foot. This has the effect that you are remembering rules and therefore remembering Allah, and are not entering the bathroom absent minded. This means that you will be more conscience about the other acts you are to perform. (sunnat)
- It is sunnat to cover the head while in the toilet. This can be traced back to areas where hygiene is not very good, and covering the hair prevents infection from "little nasties". (sunnat)

- You must not sit in a position where you are facing Qiblah or where your back is to Qiblah. This is respect for the Sajdah which we perform in the direction of Qiblah. (wajib)
- It is Makruh to urinate in a standing position. This also applies to those places where there are special facilities to urinate while standing, i.e. school toilets etc..
- It is Makruh to hold yourself from going to the toilet when the urge arises, as this is unhealthy.
- It is sunnat to visit the toilet before prayers, any sexual relations and before going to bed.
- It is Makruh to talk while in the toilet or to extend the "visit" for longer than is necessary, i.e. listening to the radio or reading the newspaper etc..
- It is also Makruh (in open areas) to sit where there is a strong wind, or where the wastage will be close to people (i.e. roads, side-walks, by the entrance of a house, by water (especially still water) or under a tree).
- To wash the private parts twice (wajib) three times (emphasised). This must be done otherwise Namaaz will not be acceptable since you will be in a state of Najasat.

What do you do if you are in a public toilet where there are no facilities for washing yourself?

If possible, you should try and carry a collapsible cup which you can fill with water and use to clean yourself.

If you do not have a cup, then you can use tissue to dry yourself. This will protect your clothes from becoming Najis, since your private parts are dry. You can then go somewhere else to wash yourself with water to make yourself Pak, since you cannot pray until you are Pak.

LESSON 6: MANNERS OF TRAVELLING

When a person travels, he leaves the comforts of his own home, often to go and meet other people for either business or pleasure.

One important thing to realise is that, once you leave familiar surroundings you become a stranger, and in a sense you are free to do what you want. There is no pressure from family or friends, because here, no one knows you, and no one can report back on your activities.

This means that your nafs will make suggestions to you, to go to places that you would not do in your own area, for fear that others may see you.

It is consequently very important that when you leave your house, you should begin your journey with the name of Allah. You should recite Bismillah, ayatul Kursi and a few short du'as. In this way, you are asking Allah to protect you FROM YOURSELF as well as from other dangers.

When Prophet Nuh (A) left for the greatest journey of his life, with all the animals on his ark, Allah told him

11:41: *So he said: "Embark upon the Ark, in the name of God, whether it move or be at rest!"*

When you remember Allah, He will always remember you and watch over you. One way of remembering Allah is to take a few coins and put them in a box for sadqa (the poor).

2:152: *Then you do remember Me; I will remember you.*

Many journeys are undertaken for pleasure. If we really want to make Allah a part of our lives, then what better time to remember and praise Him when we are happy, and laughing?

Journeys are often very enjoyable, but they can also be very dangerous. Its a wide, wide world, and no one can predict what can happen. It is recommended that when a large family travels to a destination, they should not all go together. They should try to split up among a number of groups so that if anything happens to one group, at least others are still safe.

People tend to forget Allah when going on journeys. Once a man came to Imam (A) and asked him to do Istikhara as to whether he should go with a trading caravan. The Istikhara came out adverse, and Imam (A) advised against travelling. The man went anyway. He came back after the caravan returned and told Imam (A) that the journey had been the most successful he had ever been on, so the Istikhara was wrong. Imam (A) replied, do you remember than on this particular night you slept late, and in the morning you missed your Fajr prayers, it was because of this that the Istikhara came out bad.

This shows that no matter how important our journey, we must still perform our wajibaat.

When you travel through the world, try and see Allah's handiwork. We are told in Qur'an so often that we should try and understand how Mighty and Supreme Allah is by looking at the world around us, and the marvels which it holds. So do not be one track minded, open your eyes to appreciate the creation all around you and you will get even closer to Allah.

Other recommended du'as/suwer to be recited are:

- reciting Ayatul Kursi before leaving
- Sura al Ikhlas, Naas, Kaafiroon and Falaq
- Suratul Qadr
- Sura-e-Ale Imran

Imam Ja'far-asSadiq (AS):

"I begin in the name of Allah, Allah is enough for me and on Him I rely. Oh Allah, I pray Thee for the welfare of all my affairs and seek Thy shelter from the evils from in this world and the torments of the Day of Judgement." **(Allah will accomplish all his worldly and spiritual tasks of salvation).**

Therefore, before leaving for a journey, remember:

- create a will
- settle debts
- seek forgiveness from friends and relatives
- prepare kafan (this is a REALISTIC, not PESSIMISTIC, act)
- sadaqa
- thank Allah (s.w.t.) because the journey would not be possible without His help.

When leaving, Imam Musa-ibn-Ja'far (AS) has said to stand facing the house and recite Suratul Hamd followed by:

"Oh Allah keep me and all the things with me safe and sound and let them reach the destination safely."

The Holy Prophet (S) recommends to pray for your family:

"Oh Allah" I leave unto Thy care my life, my wife and children, my merchandise, my generation my world here and hereafter, deposits under my custody and place my end of life in Thy hands."

Staying as a guest

Remember that we represent our families and Islam so must have good Akhlaq, do not impose on those you are staying with and help the family you are staying with as much as possible.

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) advised Imam Ali (a.s.) to recite the following when arriving at a new place in order to keep safe from its mischief and avail of all the benefits of the place:

"Oh Allah! make my arrival over here rewarding, for Thou art the best host and caretaker."

On arrival to your destination, thank Allah before any other action. It was through His will and guidance that no calamities befell you, so show Him that you appreciate this.

If you stay with hosts, remember that you are a guest. Do not impose yourself on them and try and be as helpful as possible without disruption. You are representing your family and so have to maintain your self-respect.

If you are going on a fairly long journey where there is uncertainty of your return, it is important that you make a few provisions before you leave.

You should write a will, and ensure that all your debts have been paid. Make sure you do not owe people money and that you have returned everything that is not yours. It is also recommended that on a journey you should carry your own burial shroud (kafan). This is not morbid or pessimistic, but realistic. Should anything happen, you want to be ready to meet Allah with all your "accounts in order".

On return from any journey, again thank Allah. This thanking may seem very little or unnecessary but you do not realise how many accidents are avoided just by the words Bismillah and Alhamdulillah. When you recite these words, you are calling upon Allah to protect you, and Allah never forsakes those who have faith in Him.

17:110: *Say: "Call upon God, or call upon Rahman: by whatever name you call upon Him, (it is well): for to Him belong the Most Beautiful Names.*

LESSON 7: CONCEPT OF THE DAY OF JUDGEMENT

The Day of Judgement (*Yawmul Qiyamat*) is one of the pillars of the Islamic faith. In fact, if a person does not believe in the day of Judgement, then the whole concept of religion become nothing.

It is also referred to as the day of resurrection. On this day, Allah will raise every human being from his grave, and they will all be brought forth to answer for their actions.

This is the day for which we are waiting. It is the day that our examination results are announced. The day when we find out whether we have passed the test of this life, or have failed. Either we wait in fear or with hope for our success.

After all this, many people do not believe in it! It is a common human habit not to believe in something until you see it; but if we wait until we see the day of Judgement then it will be too late to do anything about it.

"The day of Judgement has been promised, but we do not care, why should we? It is far away, we are still young, and we have a long way to go. When I get old, then I will start worrying."

This is by far the most common attitude among people. They think that it won't happen to them, but if it does.....

It is a terrible and frightening day. For those who do not care to obey Allah, there is plenty to be afraid of.

We are taught that Allah is Merciful, that we should not fear Him out of dread or terror, but on that day if we have not tried to lead a meaningful life then we should be scared.

If we cannot raise enough self-motivation to live Islam, then think of that day, and think of the consequences.

Portions of Al-Infitar 'The Cleaving Asunder'

*In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.
When the Sky is cleft asunder;
When the Stars are scattered;
When the Oceans are suffered to burst forth;
And when the Graves are turned upside down--
(Then) shall each soul know what it has sent forward and (what it has) kept back.
O man! what has seduced you from your Lord Most Beneficent?- Him Who created you. Fashioned you in due proportion, and gave you a just bias;
As for the Righteous, they will be in Bliss;
And the Wicked --they will be in the Fire,
Which they will enter on the Day of Judgement.
And they will not be Able to keep away therefrom.
And what will explain to you what the Day of Judgement is?
Again, what will explain to you what the Day of Judgement is?
(It will be) the Day when no soul shall have power (to do) anything for another:
for the Command, that Day, will be (wholly) with God.*

Whenever we do something, we should ask ourselves whether it is right or wrong. If we are tempted to commit the action, knowing that it is wrong, just remember the wrath and chaos of the day of Judgement. We do not have to become *Ma'sum* (sinless), we do not have to give up school or sports or university or fun. All we have to do is be aware of our actions, and use them to do something positive for others.

This world is temporary and elusive. It does not mean that you should not enjoy it, but you should be careful that it does not deceive you. In Qunut, we ask Allah to help us in **this world and the hereafter**. The *Akhira* (next life) is determined by our actions here. We are in the world for only a short time, but we have been created to live forever. Ask yourself, where do you want to live, in heaven or hell for the rest of eternity?

The Prophet (S) said *"You have not been created to perish but to remain for ever; only you transfer from one home to another and the souls are strangers on earth and are in the bodies like prisoners."*

Imam Husain (A) said on the day of Ashura: *"Patience O children of noble souls, because death for us is nothing but a bridge which takes you from difficulties and troubles to the vast Paradise and everlasting bliss."*

Imams (A) were human beings. They could have committed sins **if they wanted to**. It was not that they were physically unable to do wrong, but they were AWARE of all the consequences of committing sins. Such consequences are the harm to yourself, the displeasure of Allah and His wrath. It was this knowledge that protected them from breaking Allah's rules.

If we were to have a picture of hell in front of our eyes all the time, then we would definitely think twice before every action we perform.

The day of Judgement is not a joke, do not treat it like one because the laugh will soon fall from your face....Think about it!

LESSON 8: INDECENT DRESSING

Indecent is defined as offending against recognised standards of decency (respectability).

Indecent dressing means to have a form of dress which is disrespectful, i.e. which reveals the shape of the body in such a way as to attract attention from others.

It doesn't matter whether the garment is loose, or tight, see-through or dark, or any other combination. If the garment reveals part of or all of the shape of the body, than, according to Islamic standards, it is classified as indecent.

If someone wears clothes which are revealing, it becomes necessary for those who are present to cast down their gaze, so they should not look directly at the person. (Surah 24 ayat 30-31)

"Say to the believing men that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty: that will make for greater purity for them: and God is well acquainted with all that they do.

And say to the believing women that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty; that they should not display their beauty and ornaments except what (must ordinarily) appear thereof; that they should draw their veils over themselves and not display their beauty except to their husbands..."

Islam helps to secure a females modesty by preserving her beauty with Hijab. This way when a person talks with or looks at a lady, **he sees her ideas and thoughts** rather than just her attractiveness.

A male should not wear tight or revealing clothing either, and should wear a beard so that he is easily distinguished from a female, so that they do not begin to dress like ladies and wear their clothes.

WHY SHOULD PEOPLE CARE ABOUT THE WAY THAT THEY DRESS?

People wear clothes for many reasons besides just covering themselves. Some reasons are as follows :

- a) covering themselves
- b) for comfort
- c) protection against cold, wind, rain etc..
- d) to look and feel good

All of these reasons and many more are acceptable, even to look good, as long as it is not intended to show off to others.

However some people wear clothes on purpose which are to attract the attention of others. This is wrong, since this is trying to show off to others.

"If a person wear dresses and prides himself over others by means thereof, a flame of hell overtakes him, and he will swing in it till the day of Judgement."

This means that he will be punished partly in this life (i.e. part of hell in this life). The punishment can be no friends, or no happiness, no satisfaction ...

When we wear clothes, other people see them. If we dress in ANYWAY such that other people can become aroused or affected, then those clothes are indecent.

WHAT IS WRONG WITH EXPOSING YOUR BODY, EVERYBODY DOES IT ?

Islam has the highest standard of morals existing in any society on the face of the earth.

Islam tries to make morals part of the individual, so that s/he will act correctly in any circumstance.

It comes down to this. By dressing in such a way that you expose your body, you are inviting people to look at you. By looking at you they can see something that can arouse their desire. This desire can influence their thoughts and make them think about these pleasures. If every one, or even a large proportion of society were to be influenced by these thoughts (influenced by desire) society would break up with people going out with each other, loose and casual relationships, marriages breaking and generally society becoming permissive.

Apart from that, women would be looked at as just objects of desire once again, rather than constructive members of society. A further reason, is that by exposing yourself, you are lowering your dignity. How can a person have so little self-respect so as to dress up just for other people to look at? It is like selling your self in a shop window.

If desire is stopped from being fuelled by exposure, then people will have more respect. There will be less chance of crimes of passion (rape, adultery ...etc.) being committed, and the streets in general will be a safer place to be.

No one is refusing us to wear good or fashionable clothes. Qur'an itself says in Surah 7 ayat 31/2

*"O children of Adam! wear your beautiful apparel at every time and place of prayer: eat and drink: but waste not by excess, for God loves not the wasters.
Say: Who has forbidden the beautiful (gifts) of God, which He has produced for his servants, and the things, clean and pure, (which He has provided) for sustenance?"*

LESSON 9: THE VALUE OF QUR'AN

When we are told about Qur'an and du'as, we think that this is just worship and prayers, something that we only perform on Thursday nights and on nights of amaal.

It is this narrow attitude which leads us to have less faith since we do not see the benefit connected with such habits.

When we recite Qur'an and du'a, it is not Allah that benefits. With Qur'an, we are told over and over to read it and to memorise its pages, but we just leave it on the top shelf, and polish it now and again.

Qur'an is a Miracle, it is powerful. It is the spoken word of Allah. Can you imagine, the God that we cannot see, hear or feel, the God who created the whole universe, who has unlimited power. The God that spoke to Prophet Musa (A) is now speaking to us. This God, has given to us a book which contains His actual words! Can you not imagine the power such a book?

2:185 » Ramadhan is the (month) in which was sent down the Qur'an, as a guide to mankind, also clear (Signs) for guidance and judgement (between right and wrong).

27:1 » Ta Sin. These are verses of the Qur'an--a Book that makes (things) clear;

This explains to us that it was during the blessed month of Ramadhan that Allah revealed the Qur'an to Prophet Muhammad (S), and that the purpose of the revelation was to provide signs to guide mankind between right and wrong. It is a book which makes things clear for us.

41:44 » Had We sent this as a Qur'an (in a language) other than Arabic, they would have said: "Why are not its verses explained in detail? What! (a Book) not in Arabic and (a Messenger) an Arab?" Say: "It is a guide and a healing to those who believe; and for those who believe not, there is a deafness in their ears, and it is blindness in their (eyes); they are (as it were) being called from a place far distant!"

This verse explains why the Qur'an was revealed in Arabic. Notice that to those who believe Qur'an is not only a guide, but a healing. It heals the hearts, makes stronger the faith, and brings a person close to Allah. This heals the person from any sorrow or distress. While those who choose to ignore its message are described as narrow minded, blind to the truth.

We are told to read the Qur'an often, but we do not. This Qur'an is so unique, that only Allah could have created it. It is such a miracle of language, that Allah challenges anyone else to try and reproduce even a fraction of it.

10:37 » *This Qur'an is not such as can be produced by other than God; on the contrary it is a confirmation of (revelations) that went before it, and a fuller explanation of the Book--wherein there is no doubt--from the Lord of the Worlds.*

17:88 » *Say: "If the whole of mankind and Jinns were to gather together to produce the like of this Qur'an, they could not produce the like thereof, even if they backed up each other with help and support.*

Finally, look at the power of the Qur'an. If we have faith in Allah and in Qur'an. There is nothing we cannot achieve.

59:21 » *Had We sent down this Qur'an on a mountain verily, you would have seen it humble itself and cleave asunder for fear of God, such are the similitude's which We propound to men, that they may reflect.*

13:31 » *If there were a Qur'an with which mountains were moved, or the earth were cloven asunder, or the dead were made to speak, (this would be the one!) But, truly, the Command is with God in things!*

This shows that if we ask sincerely, and recite Qur'an with faith, then no prayer of ours will be unanswered. No matter how great the problem, the reading of Qur'an and faith in Allah will protect us and help us. It is this book that will shield us on the day of judgement.

We have also been told to recite portions of the Qur'an and memorise them. If we do this our own memory will improve. If you spend time to memorise Ayatul Kursi (Surah 2, ayat 255 to 258), and recite it often, Allah will protect us and will improve our memory to such an extent, that people will think that we are magicians.

Allah is the source of ALL knowledge. If we read His word, we will also benefit by learning from Him, and understanding more.

6:59 » *With Him are the keys of the Unseen, the treasures that none knows but He. He knows whatever there is on the earth and in the sea. Not a leaf does fall but with His knowledge: there is not a grain in the darkness (or depths) of the earth, nor anything fresh or dry (green or withered), but is (inscribed) in a Record Clear (to those who can read).*

The message to you at the end of this note is "Read Qur'an, do not play with it". Do not just respect it, but read it, understand it, and memorise it. This will help you more than you can ever imagine, in both this world, and the next. Consider, wisdom, power, knowledge, memory and a guard all at our fingertips, and we don't even bother to use it!

17:89 » *And We have explained to man, in this Qur'an, every kind of similitude: yet the greater part of men refuse (to receive it) except with ingratitude!*

LESSON 10 & 11: THE IMPORTANCE OF DU'A

Du'a is a prayer, a supplication. A frequently repeated notion is that Du'as are only for mullahs, or for the old people who now want thawaab or have nothing better to do. This is limited thinking, and is at the very least untrue.

Du'a is when you ask Allah for something. If we realise the Allah created us, and that we are His creatures, then we have a right to ask him for our needs. Allah wants to give us so many things, He wants to help us, and to make us benefit; but He also wants us to realise that He is there, so we must ask from Him.

You do not have to wait until you need something before you ask. You should make a habit of talking with Allah every single day. Thanking him for what you have, asking his protection against performance of wrong, asking for help to make the day successful and happy.

If you do this you will notice something. You will notice that you feel good inside, that things are going well at school or work. That everything is looking suddenly brighter. You will also find yourself thinking of Allah more, and thanking Him for the favours Has given you. The more you thank Him, the more He gives you.

17:110 » *Say: "Call upon God, or call upon Rahman: by whatever name you call upon Him, (it is well): for to Him belong the Most Beautiful Names."*

This shows that Allah wants us to call Him, to ask Him when we are in need. You should go to Allah first, since He created you, He should also help you when you require it. If you remember Allah, then He will also remember you.

2:152 » *Then you do remember Me; I will remember you.*

In Du'a e Kumail, we ask Allah, and we are told that Allah has promised to answer us.

For You have decreed Your worship for your creatures, You commanded them to pray to You and You have assured them that they would be answered.

Imam Ali-Zainul Abedeen (A) has given us a collection of du'as known as Sahifa e Kamila. This collection contains many du'as for all occasions which is one of the treasures left behind by the Ahlul bayt (A). He has also given us short du'as to be recited on each day of the week.

These du'as will help and guide you. There is a guarantee of success to anyone who makes a habit of reciting these regularly, every morning after fajr, or before going to school or work. They are reproduced below.

What language should we recite du'a in?

Reciting a du'a is relatively easy-it is the SINCERITY with which a du'a is recited which is the hardest thing to focus on-when you recite a du'a, your heart should speak at the same time. So do not do it ritually-do it with meaning. If you do not have time to recite a du'a in Arabic and English then recite a small portion of it, in Arabic and English, each day/ week.

So why are some du'as not answered?

Many people often wonder that if Allah tells us to seek Help from Him as much as possible and the Ma'soomeen have left many examples of how Merciful Allah (s.w.t.) is, then why are some du'as not granted?

We have to remember that Allah (s.w.t.) is All-Knowing and knows far more about what is good for us than we could ever hope to ourselves. It is important not to be disappointed and lose faith or be angry. Allah (s.w.t.) wants to give us the most suitable of rewards. We may, unknowingly, ask for things that will not benefit us. If we are patient and faithful, Allah (s.w.t.) will open many more doors for us and reward is many more, much better, ways.

The following poem conveys these important points and emphasises how we should look to the teachings, manners, beliefs and practices of the Ahlul Bayt. They are our role models in all spheres of life, even with regard to how and why we should do du'as!

Worship, what is it? What does it mean?
Is it, that can purify and clean...?

Our weak bodies and our yearning souls
Something to make us hopeful for our goals?

A kind of attraction to nature and its Master
A feeling which makes the heart beat faster

Do not pray, recite and yell!
Only for the fear of hell!

For the greed of heaven, don't obey!
For these selfish reasons do not pray!

Yet not all can follow Ali's way
From the depths of their heart not all can say

"Only for my love do I worship God"
For some this reason of worship is odd

Why would a strong powerful man weep?
And pray all night without any sleep?

Why would he feel so weak before his Lord?
When he fights like a warrior with his sword?

Why does he cry and weep all night,
and beg God to show him light?

Ali worshipped in his own unique fashion
His worship was full of love and compassion

He cries all night and begs for God's love
Who else is powerful, greater...above?

He begs mercy for his sins
From the God of men and Jinns

He says, "Forgive the mistakes I have made!"
Oh bountiful One, I beg for aid!

Guide me, forgive me, have mercy on me
Oh you who controls land, air and sea

Accept my prayer and forgive my evil deed
Save a servant who is desperately in need

Lord! Free me from this worldly affair
Free me from sorrow, pain and despair

Oh my Lord! Calm the struggles of my heart
In your vast kingdom let me be a part

Lord, the reasons for your orders I don't know
Your plans are a secret to your friends and foe

Your kingdom is so great, your love so fast
Owner of the two worlds, forgive my past

You are my love, my only hope
Without your help, how could I cope?

Oh master, let my tongue talk of thee,
and of evil let my heart be free

You the friend of the sincere hearts
Teacher of names, knowledge and arts

You the ultimate goal of the believer
Do you hear the cries of a self deceiver?

You have promised to listen to our cries
To hear the poor, the hungry and the wise

Those who bear your name and power they feel
Your sacred name becomes a cure and a heal

Your name brings remedy and affection
You are the symbol of perfection

Peace unto any being who seeks you
The one who's intention and love is true.

ALEH MARVASTI
02-02-95

SUNDAY

With the name of Allah, besides whose mercy, I hope for nothing; I fear nothing except His justice and trust nothing but His word, and do not cling to anything but His rope.

To You do I beg for shelter, O Lord of forgiveness and acceptance, from tyranny and oppression, from the changes of time and succession of grief, and from a life ended without preparation.

And to You do I beg for guidance in which there can be reformation and improvement.

And to You alone do I pray for help in granting me success and satisfaction.

And I seek Your protection O Lord, from the suggestions of Shaytan, and with Your power I guard myself from the tyranny of kings.

Therefore accept whatever be of my prayers and fasts and let my morrow and thereafter be better than my present hour and day and make me respected amongst my kindred and community;

And guard me in my waking and my sleep; for You are Allah the best preserver, and You are the most Merciful.

O Lord, in this my day and on Sundays to follow I clear myself in Your presence of ascribing partners to You and of disloyalty and pray to You sincerely to obtain Your answer and am obedient to You hoping for Your reward.

Therefore, bless Muhammad, the best of Your servants, the preacher of Your truth; and honour me with Your dignity which cannot be diminished and watch me with Your eye which does not sleep; and finish my affair so as to make me independent of others and rely on You alone and terminate my life in forgiveness. Verily, You are the Forgiving, Merciful.

MONDAY

Praise be to Allah who called none to witness when He created the heavens and the earth, and took no assistant when He created the spirits.

Never had He any partner in His Godhead nor was He ever helped in His Oneness.

Tongues are unable to praise Him to the fullest extent, reason incapable of knowing His essence, the mighty humble themselves before His Majesty their faces bent downward on account of His dread and all the great submit to His Glory.

Therefore, to You belongs all praise in increasing succession and unbroken continuance.

And may His favour be on His messenger eternally and peace perpetually, forever.

O Lord, let the first part of this my day consist in amendment the middle of it in prosperity and the last of it in success.

And through You I seek refuge from a day which begins in fear, the middle of which causes distress and which ends in pain.

O Lord, verily I ask Your pardon for every vow I vowed every promise I promised and every covenant I made with You and then failed to discharge them.

And I pray to You concerning wrongs done to Your creatures; therefore whichever servant of Yours or hand-maid of Yours has suffered from me any wrong which I may have done to his person or reputation or property or kith or offspring; or any slander whereby I may have spoken ill of him; or anything I may have imposed on him on account of inclination or passion or force or jealousy or hypocrisy or prejudice; he being absent or present, alive or dead; and thereafter my hand become too short and my means too narrow to make amends to him or obtain his forgiveness; in that case, I bet You O You who are the Lord of requests (and they are obedient to Your will and ready to conform to Your wish), to confer favour on Muhammad and his family and reconcile him to me by whatever means You choose, and let me have mercy from You; verily pardon causes You no loss nor does bounty injure You O most merciful.

O Lord, grant me on every Monday, two gifts from You, good luck to obey You at the beginning of the day and the blessing of Your pardon at the end of it.

O You who are the only object of worship and except whom none can forgive sins.

TUESDAY

Praise be to Allah - and praise is His due, as He deserves it - abundant praise!

I hurry to Him for refuge from the mischief of Shaytan who adds sin to my sin; and I guard myself through Him from every wicked tyrant, oppressive king and overpowering enemy.

O Lord, let me be of Your force; for verily Your forces - they are victorious and let me be of Your band for verily Your band - they are happy; and make me one of Your friends,

for surely - Your friends have no fear, nor shall they be sorry.

O Lord, reform my faith for me, for verily it is a safeguard for my affairs and make easy for me my hereafter for certainly it will be my place of rest and to it will I retire from the company of the wicked.

And let my life be an enhancement of every good to me, and my death a comfort to me from every evil.

O Lord, bless Muhammad, the last of the Prophets, the one who concluded the number of sent ones, and his family, the pure, the holy and his chosen companions; and in this third day of the week, grant me three things; leave me no sin un-forgiven,

no sorrow un-removed and no enemy un-vanquished by You.

With the name of Allah, the best of names; with the name of Allah, the Lord of the earth and the heaven, I drive away every evil, the first of which is His displeasure; and desire to achieve every good, the foremost of which is His approval. Therefore let my existence end in Your pardon, O lord of benevolence!

WEDNESDAY

Praise be to Allah who ordained night to be a cover and sleep to be a mode of rest; and made the day to be the time of dispersion.

All praise to You for raising me from my sleep, for if You had wished, You could have made it everlasting; a praise perpetual, unceasing and which the whole of creation would be unable to count.

Praise be to You, O lord, for, You did create, and did so with symmetry. and You did measure and dispose, and cause to die, and to live, and make sick and restore to health, and give safety and does afflict, and You are exalted above the Throne and are in full possession of Sovereignty.

I pray to You like him whose cause is weak and whose resource is cut off, and whose death is fast approaching and whose worldly hope has shrunk and whose need for Your mercy has become pressing, and whose regret for his default has grown intense, and whose guilt and error has been too frequent and whose repentance to You is sincere.

Therefore, bless Muhammad the last of the Prophets and the members of his house, the pure, the holy, and let me have the intercession of Muhammad, may Your favour be on him and his family and do not deprive me of his company; verily, You are most merciful!

O Lord, in the fourth day of the week grant me four things: employ my strength in Your service; let my delight consist in Your worship, make me love Your reward; and cause me to abstain from that which would make me deserving of punishment from You. Verily, You are kind to whoever Your wish.

THURSDAY

All praise be to Allah who removed the dark night with his power and brought the bright day with His mercy; and clothed me with His light and gave me His blessing.

Therefore, O Lord since You have kept me alive for this day, be pleased to spare me for other days similar to it; and bless Muhammad and his family and do not afflict me in other nights and days for my having done things forbidden and for my having committed guilt; and confer on me its benefit and the benefit of what is in it and the benefit of what follows; and turn away the mischief of what is in it, and the mischief of what comes after it.

O Lord, verily I seek adherence to You through the guarantee of Islam; and rely on You through the honour of the Qur'an; and seek intercession with You through Muhammad, the chosen. May God bless him and his family, therefore O Lord recognise my guarantee, whereby I hope for this satisfaction of my need, O most merciful.

O Lord, in the fifth day of the week, grant me five things, which none has power to vouchsafe except with Your generosity, and which none can afford without Your bounty: a soundness whereby I may gain strength to serve You, and a devotion whereby I may deserve Your magnificent reward: and an immediate prosperity by means of fair earnings: and guard me on occasions of danger with Your protection and place me under Your defence against future sorrows and anxieties.

O Lord, bless Muhammad and his family and let my adherence to him be effectual intercession at the day of Judgement, verily You are the most Merciful.

FRIDAY

Praise be to Allah, who existed before creation and the giving of life, and who shall continue to exist after all things have perished.

The knower, who does not forgets the one who remembers Him, Who does not diminish the one who gives Him thanks who does not disappoint the one who prays to Him: and does not frustrate the hope of the one who places hope in Him.

O Lord, I call You to witness - and You are sufficient as a witness: and I call Your angels and the inhabitants of Your heavens and bearers of Your throne and Your prophets and Your messengers whom You did entrust with Your mission and the various creatures that You have created; to witness that You and You alone are Allah, there being no god but You; You are alone there being no associate with You no peer and there is no untruth in Your word, nor change.

And that verily Muhammad - may Your blessing be on him and his family - is Your servant and Your messenger; he delivered to Your servants the message with which You did entrust him and exerted himself in the Your cause, as it deserved; and he gave happy tidings of a reward which was certain and threatened with punishment which was true.

O Lord keep me firm in Your religion as long as You keep me alive; and let not my heart deviate after You has guided me, and let me have mercy from You; verily, You and You alone are the Giver.

Bless Muhammad and his family and make us of the number of his followers and his adherents and raise me (on the last day) among his band and give me the grace to be regular in my performance of the Friday prayer and to win such of Your bounty as You will assign to the deserving observers of Fridays, on the day of recompense. Verily, You and You alone are the Mighty, the Wise.

SATURDAY

Bismillah which is the creed of those who seek protection and the motto of those who want refuge.

I hurry to the exalted Lord for shelter from oppression of tyrants, from the devices of the envious and from the treachery of the wicked and praise Him above the praise of all those who praise.

O Lord, You are the One without associate and the King without being made a king.

Your command is unopposed and Your sovereignty undisputed.

I beg You to favour Muhammad Your servant and Your apostle, and to inspire me with such gratitude for Your favours as would enable me to deserve the utmost extend of Your approval; and with Your loving kindness help me to serve You and worship You regularly and deserve Your reward.

And favour me by restraining me from acts of disobedience to You as long as You keep me alive; and give me the grace to do that which would benefit me as long as You spare me; and enlighten my mind with Your book, and remove from me the burden of sin because of my reading it: and favour me by keeping my faith and my life safe, and let not those that love me be frightened from me; and continue Your goodness to me during the rest of my life as You have done during the past, O most Merciful.

LESSON 12: LIES VS HONESTY

To lie means to say something that you know is wrong on purpose.

We all know that lying is a great sin. The unfortunate point is that we do not realise how often we are doing it.

Our Sixth Imam (A) said that it is more difficult to repent for many small sins than for one big sin. Remember the story of the two men who came to Imam (A) to repent for their sins.

Prophet Muhammad (S) has said:

"Leave falsehood and make speaking the truth a habit."

"If a person has a habit of speaking lies, he is a hypocrite until he rids himself of the habit."

"A person who is not honest cannot have a perfect and strong faith".

To lie is haraam since you are deceiving others. There are many reasons why people lie, some of them are,

- a. as an excuse to get yourself out of trouble,
- b. to cheat somebody out of something you want,
- c. to get someone else into trouble.

As you can see, all the above reasons are sinister. If you have done something which will to trouble, then you should face it, and not lie your way out of it because that is being very irresponsible.

Qur'an also tells us not to lie,

2:42 » And cover not Truth with falsehood, nor conceal the Truth when you know (what it is).

Prophet Muhammad (S) has also said:

"Beware of association with the liar for he is like a mirage which draws the far one nearer to you and the nearer far from you."

If someone entrusts something to you, you should be truthful and return it back to him when it is asked for. It does not matter what the value of the item is, it does not even matter if the person is your enemy.

Imam Ja'far as Sadiq (A) says:

"Whenever a person entrusts anything to you do not commit breach of trust, although that person may be (the worst person on earth like) the murderer of Imam Hussein (A).

"If the murderer of Imam Ali (A) entrusts his sword to me and I accept the trust I shall not misappropriate it and shall return it to him as and when he asks for it".

What does this show. If you accept something into your trust, you must preserve your honour by holding true to your word. If you do not like the person, or feel something wrong will result, then do not accept the trust, but once you have given your word, you are bound by it.

And on another occasion he says to one of his companions:

"I recommend two things to you: one of them is truthfulness and the other is honesty, for these two are the key to sustenance."

If you make the habit of lying, then you will lie very often without realising. You will lie to your family, your friends and everybody you meet. Then one day you will be caught out because you will have trapped yourself in a corner, and there will be no escape.

Also if you make a habit of lying you will start doing other things which are even worse. One evil leads you to another.

LESSON 13: MASTURBATION

Masturbation is the artificial stimulation of the genital organs.

Before we discuss this topic further, it should be clearly stated that masturbation is a **HARAAM** act to do.

In the west, at school, we are taught that it is natural, and that there is nothing wrong with it. On the contrary, we are taught that it is of benefit.

Why? Why is there such a difference in opinion between Islam, and the west? This is because the western world looks at everything in terms of the **PHYSICAL BODY** only.

Islam on the other hand knows that a man is made of **BOTH** MIND and BODY. That mind is called the soul, the self, the nafs, and the spirit.

When a person masturbates, his desire creates images in the mind to make him/her reach a peak of excitement. For boys, this culminates in ejaculation of semen, after which desire soon vanishes. For girls, there is no definite end, and the surge of emotion can arise a number of times. This stage known as an orgasm. These images are made by the imagination, they are fantasised.

This has one major consequence. The person is visualising something that is unreal. They have total control over what actions are performed in their mind. This may start off with curious thoughts of sexual intimacy, but if masturbation continues, the imagination will fabricate more and more until the person has to resort to thinking of unnatural, perverse thoughts to fulfil the level of sexual lust.

One of the results is when the person reaches a stage where they can engage in a lawful sexual relationship (e.g. marriage), then their lust will not be satisfied within this relationship, and may seek fulfilment elsewhere, either prostitution, homosexuality etc.

There is no argument that one can masturbate a little, since the action is addictive. Once a person is into the habit of masturbation, they will find it very difficult, if not impossible to break.

In a certain documentary people were asked about masturbation. They replied that initially they would fantasise normal acts between a man and a woman. **However, after a while, that was not enough to arouse them.** They would start fantasising things which were indecent and perverse, until they started thinking of homosexuality and other crimes which are unnatural.

This is what masturbation results in. It causes you to imagine unreal situations, and unnatural actions. It is **ADDICTIVE**, since once you start, you will find it very difficult to stop.

Sexual desire is one emotion which is different from the rest. With the desires of hunger or thirst, you will reach a limit when you are full that you cannot eat or drink any more. With sexual desire, there is no limit, you will want more and more. The more you have,

the more you will want until you burn yourself up. That is why sexual desire is so dangerous, and needs to be **CONTROLLED**.

Another harm caused by masturbation is that it is an escape from reality. Sex is a natural part of a human being, but it is something that should be private and personal. When a person masturbates, he is living with his imagination, where he has total control. As a result, when he is ready to marry, and is with his wife, he will be at a loss. He will be so used to his imagination, that when the time comes to be with a real person, he will not know how to react.

The western world says that masturbation is necessary to relieve sexual tension, but this is nonsense! If a person is tense, then the body will relieve that tension naturally. When the person sleeps, he might have a wet dream; this releases the tension in the body if necessary. It is important to realise, that a person **MUST** perform Ghusl of Janaabat after semen is released.

The way to avoid masturbation is not to watch or read those things which arouse your desire. You should not sleep without clothes on, nor should you remain naked at any time, even by yourself, because Shaytan is always there to put suggestions in your mind.

Only a person with weak will power will masturbate. When you masturbate, you allow your mind to be taken over by your desire.

Why do people start to masturbate?

The sexual awareness at adolescence is a natural process, and is part of reaching maturity. Curiosity will cause a person to wonder why certain changes are happening in their body, why on occasions thoughts enter their mind.

Without someone to explain or talk to, the adolescent will want to experiment, will wonder why certain actions will arouse him/her, and will wonder why certain actions provide physical pleasure, and will continue with those actions, unless there is a reason not to do so. Some people may stumble across masturbation quite innocently, while bathing or taking a shower.

The important point to understand is this. Islam does not say that sexual activity is evil. It merely confines it within lawful boundaries. What is damaging is self-stimulation since that can cause the lust to imagine and fantasise.

What Islam is guiding you towards, is the natural fulfilment of sexual desire when you are married, not the animalistic satisfaction of lust with yourself, or other partners which has no other purpose.

You should **NEVER** let your **MIND** be a **SLAVE** to anything, not food, not music, not alcohol, not drugs, and not desire.

LESSON 14: EARNING A HALAL LIVELIHOOD

We are always used to understanding **Halal & Haraam** in terms of objects, i.e. to eat this is Haraam, this meat is Halal and so on... However, we never think about our actions.

Actions, like objects, can also be classified as to whether they are Haraam or Halal.

If I see £5 note on the ground, on my way to school, I can **EITHER** pick it up and put it into my pocket, **OR** hand it in to the police.

If I travel on the underground all the time, I can easily find a way to skip paying my fare, should I do this or not?

These are all things which can happen to us anytime, and we should find a way to choose the right action.

Our **LIVELIHOOD** is the way in which we live and earn in our day-to-day lives.

For adults, it is the way they earn their money, the way in which they help their friends, how they act to other people, how they pay taxes, how they run the business, whether they pay Khums etc..

For youngsters, still at school, it is the way they treat their friends, the way they do their homework, what excuses they make if they do not do something, etc..

Islam emphasises the importance of making sure that these actions are not against Shari'a i.e. making sure all these actions are HALAL.

The attitude of very many people is that it doesn't matter how you do something, for example, it doesn't matter if I usurp someone else's property, as long as I give some of it to charity. It doesn't matter whether I pay Khums or not, as long as I pray. This attitude is not an Islamic one and it is something that the youth of the community should realise and teach others by example.

Why should we earn a halal livelihood? What is wrong in cheating others?

If we were to cheat someone, we would be gaining at their loss.

If we were doing a job together, and we were paid 10. If instead of splitting it half/half, I was to keep 6 and give you 4 and you didn't notice, I would be gaining ,1 at your expense.

In the same way, Allah has given us a short term on this world. He has put us in a position where we have the choice of cheating or being fair.

If we can stay on the path of Islam, the path of justice, we will benefit **BOTH in this life and the next**. However if we cheat and follow Shaitan, we may become rich, but we will never be happy in this world, and definitely not in the next life.

The Holy Prophet (S) has said

"Whoever lives on halal earnings for 40 days, Allah shall enlighten his heart, and cause springs of wisdom to come from his heart, following to his tongue."

This does not mean that we should earn a halal life for 40 days, and then forget it and start cheating!! It shows us the reward that Allah gives us for obeying Him, and resisting temptation.

Imam Ali (A) said to his people:

"Who is a believer?"

Then he gave a detailed answer, part of which said:

"The believer is one with whom people's life, wealth, and dignity are safe.

His livelihood is earned in an honourable way."

We must always remember, Allah is giving us the chance to prove ourselves to Him. We can gain his pleasure by fighting our nafs and being just in this world, or we can displease Him by following our nafs. Remember the example of Hur, when he saw before him two paths, one was death in an honourable way with Imam Husain (A), and one was riches and wealth without principles. He made the right choice and set us the example. Do we have the courage to follow this?

The choice is ours.....

LESSON 15: TAKABBUR.

Takabbur means to have pride, to think that you are above, or superior to a someone else. This is a very dangerous attribute to have, and leads only to downfall.

If you are good at something, or achieve good results in something, don't start thinking too much of yourself.

When you accomplish something good, your nafs starts to tell you that you are great, and that you are better than the rest. It makes you think that there is no one else like you, and that you have reached the top.

When this happens, you start to believe that you are the greatest, and then you will not try harder to become better.

Takabbur enters our hearts very secretly, it tries to hide from us, and takes our thoughts over quietly, that is why Prophet Muhammad (S) has told us:

"Pride enters the heart like a black ant crawling over a black rock at night."

The first thing that you should do when you achieve something good is to thank Allah. Just by saying 'Alhamdulillah', you will stop your nafs from praising yourself. Remember, it was through Allah's help that you achieved it, so thank Allah instead of forgetting, and thinking that you did it all by yourself. By thanking Allah, we are including Him in all aspect of our lives, and sharing our joy and happiness with Him, and recognising that it is through His bounty that we have achieved success.

In the du'a after Asr prayers we say to Allah

"Allaahumma maa binaa min ni'matin faminka"
"My Lord , whatever talents I have got, it is only from You."

When Allah created Prophet Adam, he told all the creatures to bow down before Adam. Iblis refused, saying that **I am BETTER than him**. This was the first takabbur, the first pride, and it was because of this that Iblis is called Shaytan, one who is removed from Allah's Pleasure.

We all achieve something good in our lives. It doesn't mean that we should not be happy. We should be happy, we should feel glad, we should laugh and enjoy, but we should also remember that it was Allah who helped us, and so we should thank Him. What Islam does not like is that we think "Oh, I am fantastic, there is no one else in the world like me. What a brilliant person I am." If we think like this, then Allah will also remove us from His pleasure, and then we will fall, just like Shaytan.

Allah has created us all equal, how can one person say that he is better than another?

VANITY

Vanity means to have false ideas about how great you are, about your appearance, or about yourself.

When a person becomes vain, they spend a large amount of time making sure they look good, not a hair is out of place, and clothes are new and beautiful. All this is to make others think *"That person really looks the business!"*

Vanity is harmful, since it leads to pride, and it stops you from becoming better. If you spend plenty of time over your own appearance without any reason, then it is bad akhlaq, and this will make you think very highly of yourself. You start spending so much time on your dress and image (outside), that you forget about spending time to improve your character (inside), you forget about Allah, the One who gave you all your qualities.

The Prophet (S) said

"There will come a time when people will have unclean inner selves, but BEAUTIFUL APPEARANCES; they will have greed for the worldly affairs (things) and they will not wish for that which is with Allah. Their religion will be for show. Then they would pray like a drowning one, and Allah will not answer their prayer."

There is nothing wrong with looking and dressing well, but there should be limits to the amount of attention you pay to yourself. If you start using mousse, cream and gel just for an ordinary occasion such as going to school or with friends, and if this takes up time, then you should try and avoid it. If you have an appointment, an interview, or some other occasion, which requires you to be presented in a special way, then it is perfectly acceptable to spend more than your usual amount of time on dressing.

The most important thing to note is that you should not dress up to impress others, to show off or to act as something, which you are not. This will only make you think that you are great and then you will be fooling yourself as well as others. Be happy with what you are, and everyone else will also be happy with you.

LESSON 16: PERMISSIVENESS

This means to be too liberal, too free or too loose.

It is a moral judgement and is difficult to define, but can be explained as follows:

When people say that the western world is bad, what they actually mean is that the moral attitude is bad. The west itself technologically is very developed, but unfortunately there has been no parallel development within, in the morals.

Whenever you walk down the main road you will see people walking with scanty clothing, you will see books and magazines in windows, which reveal scenes, which are sexually attractive.

This is also true in the case of television, where programmes often tend to provoke reaction and desires in their audience.

When society becomes such that almost every aspect of it tends to cater for human desires, (not needs), especially sexual, than that society is said to be permissive.

In Islam, a human being is provided with a quality by Allah known as "Hayah". This means modesty, bashfulness, and nobility all in one word. It is this quality which is constantly under attack in the western world.

The reason why it is so easy to fall into the trap of becoming permissive is because there is a physical pleasure, which attracts a person more and more, and it is very difficult to avoid or deny.

When a person reaches the stage of responsibility and maturity (baligh), he has changed his spiritual appearance as well as his physical one. His desires are loose now, he is attracted by things which did not bother him when he was a child. That is why Islam has made its rules wajib for those people who are mature, because they will require ways of cleansing themselves from the filth which enters their minds from outside.

If one takes no heed and ignores these rules, he will slowly become more like the thoughts that enter his mind until he will give himself totally up to his desires which will just waste his life away.

Examples of being permissive is dressing such that enough of your body is revealed to cause others to look at you, dressing with tight clothes so that the contours of your body can be seen, telling jokes which are crude, watching programmes which arouse your own sexual desires.

Going out on dates to discos, or with girl/boyfriends, keeping loose relationships are all common examples of a permissive society.

The desires for companionship are not evil or wrong, but they have to be CONTROLLED within the border of Islam. It is like a fire, if you use it properly, it is a great help to cook food and keep warm, but if abused, it grows and spreads until it becomes out of control and consumes everything.

The real test of a person is to let the self control the desires, and not the desires controlling the self.

Permissiveness is one extreme of society, to be too loose, to be too free with your desires, the other extreme is celibacy, which means to never get married and to stop your desires all together. Both these are extremes, and Islam says that extremes are wrong. Islam takes the middle path of chastity, where you are allowed to fulfil your desires, but only within the boundaries of marriage.



Islam explains to us the concept of chastity, which lies between these two extremes, and allows us to CONTROL our desire, rather than STOPPING them.

Why does a society become permissive? If you were given a locked box, and told that you should not look inside it for many years, you would always be curious of what is within. If that box were placed somewhere where it was easy to see, then day-by-day your curiosity would develop. If you were then given the key, and still told not to open it, you would feel a terrible urge to just unlock it when no one was looking, and take a peek inside.

Why? In the western society, from a very young age, we are exposed to behaviour and scenes, which only display the glamorous and provocative aspect of sex. Yet, at that age, we are told that this is not something for children. Then as we grow up, we become baligh, and have the ability to "unlock the box" in the example above. Since we do not know what is in the box, or we think the box contains untold pleasure, we are tempted to open it and experiment. This is the cause of permissiveness.

The mistake that is made is that sex is not discussed in its moral framework. Sex is not dirty or wrong, but at the same time it is not to be displayed and performed as a show. Since western society displays sex as exciting and daring, without responsibility and love then youngster who are coming to grips with this new emotion are bound to experiment. This may seem enjoyable in the short term, but very quickly they will find themselves slaves of sexual desire, and not masters. This concept will be discussed in detail in a later note.

LESSON 17: CHASTITY

To be chaste means "Abstaining from immoral or unlawful, from sexual intercourse, to be pure, virgin, decent of speech, restrained, pure in taste or style, simple." - The Concise Oxford Dictionary.

This is the opposite of permissiveness, which has been discussed earlier.

Islam puts great emphasis on chastity and it is this aspect, among others, which is under attack in the western world.

Why should we be chaste?

We should be chaste in our every action by not doing immoral or unlawful acts, by not using foul words. We should regard these things as wrong and avoid them.

Islam also tells us that until nikah (marriage) is recited, all relationships which can lead to intimacy between two people are disallowed.

A person's chastity is a gift given by Allah. It is a sign of purity and noble character. It is a very prized and personal possession. When a person marries, he/she enters a new stage of life. The bond of marriage is cemented by the couple sharing something that is personal and intimate to them. This helps to secure the marriage from breaking during future ups and downs and helps to make it endure.

If people do not guard their chastity, and treat sexual relationships as casual, then they are losing the higher purpose which Allah has made, the sharing of something very intimate which binds the two people.

If it is treated as easygoing and as enjoyment with any partner, then the sensitive side of the relationship will be closed off.

Allah has made the human being from several elements; one is the physical element with the five senses of touch, taste, sight, smell and sound. Then He added a whole new level to human beings, he gave them thought and understanding.

If we treat our most private parts without modesty, and go and abuse them carelessly, we will gain a physical pleasure, but we will lose all the "love and contentment" which our mind can give us.

Thus if we just be permissive and have sexual relations whenever the urge arises, we will be lowering our dignity from the intellect to the animal/physical element of our life, and will be missing out in the real sense of living.

What is wrong with being unchaste?

It is a well known fact that once a physical sense is stimulated by an object, it will require more of that object the next time, to reach the same level of stimulation i.e. If I drink alcohol, I will lose physical control over my body. The next time it will take even more alcohol to make me reach the same level of drunkenness, the next time even more... and so on.

Similarly, if I concentrate in sexual activities just for pleasure, the next time I will do more and more until I am addicted and cannot stop.

Thus if we are chaste in our every action (especially sexual), and treat them as something "sacred" not to be squandered, then we will attain a level of discipline that will make us strong, determined and able to achieve anything which we put our mind to.

Why is it difficult to be chaste?

The western society has lost all concept of spiritual life. They have closed the eye inside them and have concentrated totally on physical pleasures. Sex is something, which is made into an open pastime, an enjoyment. This attracts our desires and makes us want to join in. Almost all pleasures are orientated about this idea, parties, videos, books, magazines, discos, film, TV, and cinemas. Then we ask what is wrong with having girl/boyfriends. If they can do it, why can't we?

Would you ask a person who 'shoots drugs', "if you can do it why can't I?"

No you would not, because you can see that he is damaging his mind and body by doing so.

It is only because we cannot see the long-term effects of being unchaste that we ask the above questions. Our elders who have watched and seen these effects warn us, but we call them old fashioned. If we knew what they did, there is a guarantee that we would never even think of following our desires and having sexual relations other than those allowed by Islam.

How can we be chaste?

Being chaste does not mean keeping locked up away from the west and not even listening to what they tell you.

It means listening to everything they ask you and following that which is right and not doing that which is wrong. Only by listening to them can you decide what is right and wrong.

It also means not letting your desires carry you away to commit something which you know might give you physical pleasure, but on the higher level, will make you lose out.

We can be chaste by avoiding telling dirty stories or rude jokes, by not watching films/TV which display other peoples private parts and so cause arousal, by not allowing our relationships with people of the opposite sex to get too close, and by generally asking ourselves in our heart, "Am I doing this because my desires are telling me, or because my intelligence is telling me."

If it is because of desires, then don't do it. If it is because of intelligence, then do it and you will enjoy yourself much more, physically and spiritually.

The path to enjoying life truly is very difficult, and is balanced on both physical and spiritual pleasures. It is like climbing a mountain, only when you reach the summit, can you look around you and see how fresh everything is. And when you look down below, you see everything from a different point of view. You see the maze of life from above; the paths which confused you while you were in the maze are now suddenly clear and easy to see.