

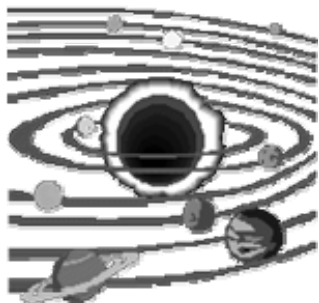
AKHLAQ SYLLABUS - CLASS 11

<u>Lesson</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Date Completed</u>
LESSON 1	- THE EXISTANCE OF ALLAH	[]
LESSON 2	- FAITH AND RELIGION	[]
LESSON 3	- NAFS	[]
LESSON 4	- JIHAD	[]
LESSON 5	- FAITH, SABR AND SHUKR	[]
LESSON 6	- HONESTY AND LYING	[]
LESSON 7	- HAQQ-UN-NAAS	[]
LESSON 8	- BACKBITING (GHEEBAT AND TOHMAT)	[]
LESSON 9	- RESPECT TO PARENTS	[]
LESSON 10	- SUICIDE	[]
LESSON 11	- EXTRAVAGANCE	[]
LESSON 12	- GREED	[]
LESSON 13	- MISERLINESS / TO BE STINGY	[]
LESSON 14	- USURPING OTHER PEOPLE'S PROPERTY	[]
LESSON 15	- BRIBERY AND USURY	[]
LESSON 16	- CHEATING AND EMBEZZLEMENT	[]
LESSON 17	- DRINKING AND GAMBLING	[]

LESSON 1:

THE EXISTENCE OF ALLAH

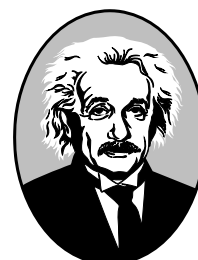
The basis of Islam lies in the uncompromising belief that Allah, the one true God, exists.



There is no scientific proof beyond doubt that Allah exists. However, the design and existence of our Universe and everything within it, leads us to appreciate that it is harder to disprove His existence than to prove it.

'When I see the glories of the cosmos I cannot help but believe that there is a Divine Hand behind it all.'

Albert Einstein



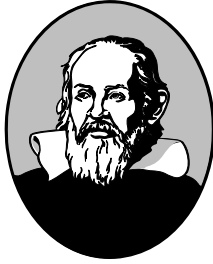
Albert Einstein

So, what do we know?

- There is a **pattern** of creation throughout the Universe; eg. gravitational forces of the planets and the Sun, gravitational forces of the moon and the Earth, etc
- There is **uniformity** in the laws of creation (Physics, Mathematics, etc.); eg. electrostatic forces (atoms are like little solar systems), forces of motion (electricity going through a wire is like water flowing in a pipe),
- The universe appears to be **fine-tuned** for our existence. All the constants in the heavens and earth have been subjected to make sure that life and humanity came to be. This is a fact given the current state of evidence. If certain physical properties were minutely different, even by about 1 in 10^{60} , we would not be here. This is like hitting a 1² inch target on the other side of the observable universe.
- It is unanimously agreed by the Christian and Muslim scientists of this world that these constants have been set with a purpose in mind, and with intelligence.



'This most beautiful system of the sun, planets, and comets, could only proceed from the counsel and dominion of an intelligent Being.... This Being governs all things . . . as Lord of all.' **Isaac Newton**

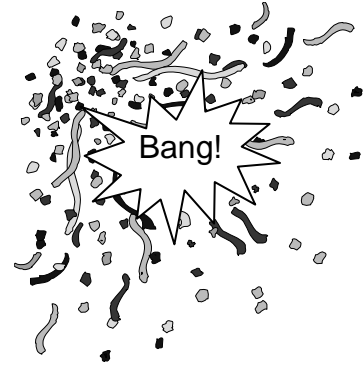


Charles Darwin

'Another source of conviction in the existence of God ... follows from the ... impossibility of conceiving this immense and wonderful universe... as the result of blind chance or necessity.' **Charles Darwin**

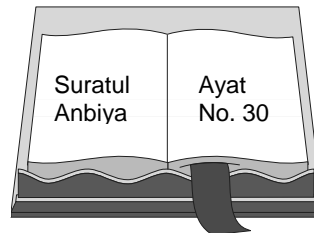
Scientists today accept the Big Bang theory of the creation of the Universe as being the most reliable, with the most evidence to back it up.

This theory states that the Universe's expansion began with an explosive event, called the **big bang**. It is believed that time also began at this instant.



However, the standard Big Bang theory does not explain what **caused** the big bang. Thus, scientists face a problem. Without Allah, the Big Bang is an impossibility.

'Do not the unbelievers see that the skies and the earth were one unit (joined together), then we split them apart...'
Qur'an (21:30)



In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth... and the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters... and God said, Let there be light: and there was light... and God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness.' **Genesis (1:1-4)**



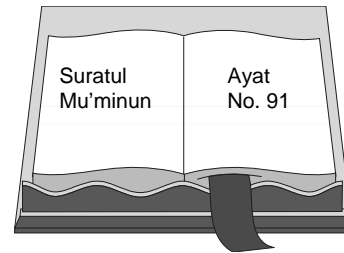
Science also accept Darwin's Theory of Evolution which states that life evolved by adapting to it's surroundings. Islam supports this to a great extent, but we differ when it comes to the creation of mankind.

The Qur'an says that Adam was worthy of worship when Allah gave him a **ruh**. This distinguishes mankind from any other creature, and we don't believe that man just evolved from apes.

Scientists go one step further, and logically deduce from the evidence that the Universe was **intelligently** set by one source, ie. one God. The "oneness" of this source is observed by:

- the uniformity in the workings of the laws of nature all through the universe,
- the common origin of everything in the universe, and
- the blueprint (or design) of life all across the species.

'There has never been any other god besides Allah. Otherwise, each god would have declared independence with their creations, and they would have competed with each other for dominance. Allah be glorified; far above their claims.' **Qur'an (23:91)**



Faced with such scientific evidence, justice demands that we acknowledge the Creator.

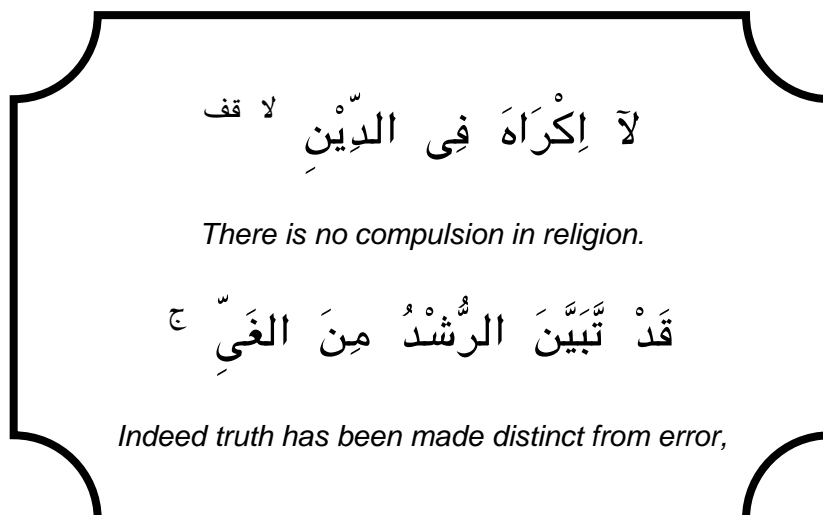
'For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities (his eternal power and divine nature) have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.' **Romans (23:91)**

LESSON 2:

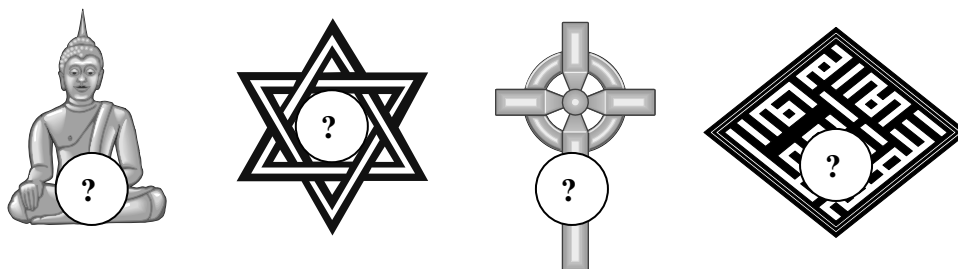
FAITH AND RELIGION :

Islam is a religion that has been revealed by Allah. It is not a man-made ideology or philosophy named after a person like Christianity.

Allah says in the Holy Qur'an (Ayat ul-Kursi: 2,256):



Here we are told that there is no force in religion, but the truth has been made clear from the falsehood. However, although Allah has given us the free will to choose what religion we want to follow, it doesn't mean he won't judge us on our choice.



A religion is a way of life, and to bring **faith** in the religion of Islam means we have decided to **submit** to the **will** of **Allah**.

To make such a decision requires the knowledge of Allah's wishes, and the belief in Him being the Kindest, Most Merciful, Most Just and Most Knowledgeable.

Once the choice has been made, to develop our faith we have to understand and believe in the Usool-e-din:

- That there is only one God, He is everywhere, He can see everything we do and, ultimately, we are only answerable to Him.
- That this God is just in every way, even though we cannot understand everything He does.
- That He has sent Prophets and Imams to teach us about Islam, and guide us.
- That we are here to worship Him, and eventually we will answer for all our actions and be punished or rewarded accordingly.

Faith is what our conscience (**nafs**) tells our intellect to accept, and is not directly verifiable. Faith is an in-born instinct. It exists at all times. We have to work at it in order to nurture it. Every instinct and desire has been created for some purpose. These instincts and desires should not be crushed but harnessed for our personal benefit and the general benefit of mankind.



Fighting our instinct (going against our nafs) is going **against** nature.

Faith is dependent on the way we react with our environment. The environment includes:

- what we eat,
- what we say,
- what we do,
- what we wear,
- the friends we keep,
- our family life, etc.

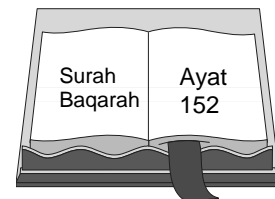


Most importantly, faith is based on **intent** as well as **actions**.

It is not enough to say we believe in the existence of Allah and that we have total faith in His justice if we do not follow up our intentions with our actions; eg. we say we have total faith in Allah, yet when we suffer from hardships we blame Allah instead of being patient.

Increasing our faith involves submitting ourselves entirely to the will of Allah. This means that every aspect of our life, every minute step we take, must be solely for the pleasure of Allah. We must have that uncompromising belief that whatever pleases Allah is the right thing for us.

'Then you (do) remember Me; I will remember you.'



Allah says if we take one step towards Him, He will take several steps towards us. This means that if we make an effort to do something for Allah's pleasure, our merciful Lord will, in turn, help us for sincerely wanting to obey his commands. This further increases our faith.

This divine help is called **tawfeeqe**.

'... every act in consequence of our faith, (further) strengthens (our) faith.' **Anna Letitia Barbauld, English poet.**

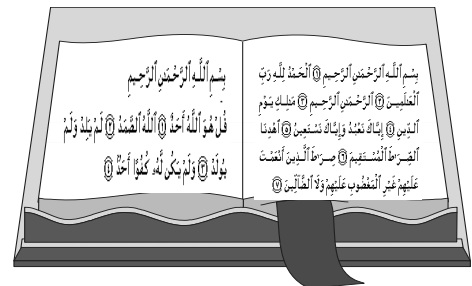
Analogy: Suppose a gardener agrees to assist you to mow your lawn. He turns up with his old hand lawnmower, and starts painstakingly cutting the grass. To ease his hard task, you offer him your automatic petrol lawnmower. So, although you assisted him in that task, his firm intention and will to help was already there.

Similarly, when we have a firm intention of doing a particular good deed, and we have undertaken all the preparations, Allah gives us help to make our task easier.

Now, imagine if that same gardener refused to come and help mow your lawn, you would not offer him the use of your automatic lawnmower. He had no intention of doing the job, so you withheld any help you might have given him.

Likewise, Allah withholds help from those people who choose to disobey his commands, and this is called **khildaan**.

'By it (the Qur'an) He leaves many straying, and many He leads into the right path. But He leaves not straying except those who transgress divine commandments.'



'In return for their foolish and wicked thoughts, which led them astray ... (God) ... punish(es) them ... so that they might learn that one is punished by the very things by which one sins.' **Wisdom (11,15-16)**

'Not everyone who (calls) Me 'Lord' ... shall enter the kingdom of heaven ... I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!' **Matt (7,21-22)**

Allah gives all of us a soul before we are born. This soul is not gifted to us, so it does not belong to us to do as we like. It is a responsibility (an **ammanat**). We must look after it for Allah, as we will have to **return** it back to Him one day.

When Malakul Mawt arrives to take this soul, entrusted in our care, back to Allah, He will expect it in the same pure, sinless state that He gave it to us in. It is up to us how we return it:

- Either, we will return it as it was given to us – no better, no worse.
- Or, we will return it in a worse condition than it was given to us in.
- Or we will return it in a better condition than it was given to us in.

Curtains of lust, greed, passion, selfishness and excessive love of wealth, wife, children, position and status hinder our intelligence.

'When the passions become masters, they are vices.' **Pensees**

The Holy Qur'an says that only the light of **taqwa** can remove this darkness. Taqwa is having an awareness, fear, love, and overall consciousness of Allah, and acting in accordance with that consciousness.

A person with Taqwa desires only to gain the pleasures of Allah and to stay away from that which displeases Allah. S/he is careful not to go beyond the bounds and limits set by Allah. Taqwa is basically a **protection**, from those things we do that harm our soul.

Remember: do not undervalue any goodness. Likewise, do not underestimate any evil and protect yourself from it.

The Qur'an mentions many benefits of taqwa. We will only discuss two of these:

- Clear-sightedness: with taqwa, we can understand why Allah has commanded us to do certain things and avoid others. The stronger our faith, the fewer the doubts.
- Guidance: when we have taqwa, we are obeying Allah at all times and He has said that if we come a little closer to Him, He will come a lot closer to us, and will at all times guide us towards the truth.

Islam makes it clear that **all** human acts are acts of worship **if** they are done for Allah and in accordance to His Divine Law. So, worship in Islam is not limited to religious rituals.

Islam explains that faith and action go hand-in-hand. Allah has given people freewill, and the measure of one's faith is one's deeds and actions. So, what better religion than Islam?

WORKSHEET 11.2: FAITH AND RELIGION

Describe briefly, in your own words, the meaning of the following quotes:

'Faith is building on what you know is here, so you can reach what you know is there.' **Cullen Hightower**

'Faith is not something to grasp, it is a state to grow into.' **Mahatma Gandhi**

LESSON 3: NAFS:

In Islam there is a lot of emphasis placed on moral behaviour.

Allah has created human beings in 3 parts:

- One part is like an empty car shell, used to hold something, called the **body**.
- The other part is like the engine, without which the car will not function, called the **conscience (nafs)**, and
- the third part is like the battery, without which the car will not run, this is the **soul (ruh)**.

Our body needs looking after; we have to feed it and keep it warm, otherwise we will become ill, and suffer.



The soul also needs looking after, otherwise it, too, will become ill. The only way to look after the soul is to constantly strengthen our faith; and this is where our nafs comes in.

The nafs is the most important part of our being

When we help someone, we feel happy; but it is the nafs, and not the body, that feels happy. Morality is food for the soul, and if we feed it regularly, it will remain healthy.

All the sets of **laws** sent down by Allah had their own codes of conduct. The arrival of Islam **perfected** all the rules. Man in one way or another has altered other religions; only Islam remains as **pure** as the night it was revealed. Thus, by allowing our nafs to follow the Akhlaq set down in Islam we are feeding our soul with the **best** possible food.



'I have been sent to complete the nobility of character.' **Prophet Muhammad (SAW)**

In this materialistic world the body is being looked after very well, while the nafs is totally neglected. This causes diseases of the nafs, which people do not realise. Such diseases cause **intensive, long-term** damage. To keep the nafs healthy, we have to be aware of our every action.

'The nafs is like a wild horse, and you are riding upon him, if you move your attention for one second, he will throw you off.'
Imam Ali (AS)

Three different states of nafs exist:

Nafs-e-Ammara:

This is the nafs in its **worst** form, where it leads towards evil. When our nafs reaches this state, we are lower than animals in the eyes of Allah. At this stage, we incessantly and unrepentantly commit sins without a care for anyone else.



Nafs-e-Lawwama:

This is the stage where we are not evil, but we still do wrong. It is at this stage that our nafs is referred to as the conscience; there is awareness in our actions because when we do something bad our nafs tells us that we should not have done it, and that we should repent.

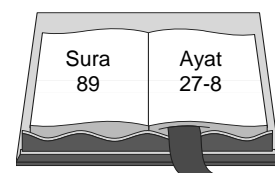


Nafs-e-Mutmainna:

This state is the **goal** of this life: total contentment with Allah. Not to commit any sins intentionally, and to take pleasure in performing good acts.

On the day of Ashura, Allah called to Imam Husain (AS):

'O (thou) soul in (complete) rest and satisfaction! Come to your Lord, well pleased (thyself) and well pleasing unto Him.'

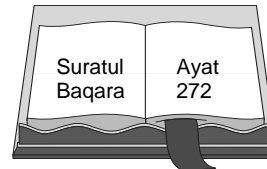


back

There are ways of protecting ourselves from the dark suggestions of the nafs:

- Reciting **Bismillah** every time before we do something. This way, we are asking Allah to protect us from **ourselves** as well as other dangers.
- Put some money towards **sadaqa** (for the poor). As a result, Allah will watch over us.

As Allah says in the Qur'an: *"..... and whatever good thing you spend in charity shall be for your own selves; and give not except seeking the pleasure of Allah..."*



- Developing our **willpower**. This is the ability to control our desires. We are always exposed to dangers like drugs, alcohol, and pornography. If we were to give in to these temptations, we would ruin our lives.

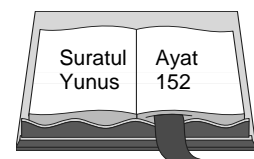
When the Holy Prophet (SAW) was asked if he had a voice inside him telling him to do evil, he replied, **'Yes I do! But I keep it locked up.'**

The nafs was not tied up with metal chains, but with the restraints of willpower. This shows that willpower is a very powerful **weapon** against evil. We are able to control our nafs through discipline, which in turn, further strengthens our willpower.

Everything in this Universe has been created in pairs; each has its opposite. There is black and white, strong and weak, good and bad, heaven and hell. These pairs also exist within us. For every good emotion that takes us towards Allah, there is an evil emotion that wants to take us away from Him.

Allah has given us the ability to judge between right and wrong. Furthermore, Allah has sent down a guide for every people, to show the way towards Him, so that on the Day of Judgment people cannot claim ignorance. All we have to do is choose which way we want to follow.

'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.'



This simple choice between good and evil is only made difficult because we forget easily. We always think of the present and leave the future to sort itself out.

When we do something Haraam, the pleasure is immediate. Eg. when we steal, we receive the goods immediately; when we obtain power, we can control others at once.

However, when we do something good, the rewards are not immediate; they come later. Eg. when we study for an exam, the rewards come after we have finished the exam and are shown the results; a planted seed takes many years to mature before we can taste the fruit.

Similarly, for every one of our actions there is an **immediate** reaction in our life during the hereafter. Anything we do is not wasted, even if the effects of it are not apparent to us directly.

Only someone who is ignorant and cares nothing for the next life will make the choice that benefits him/her immediately.

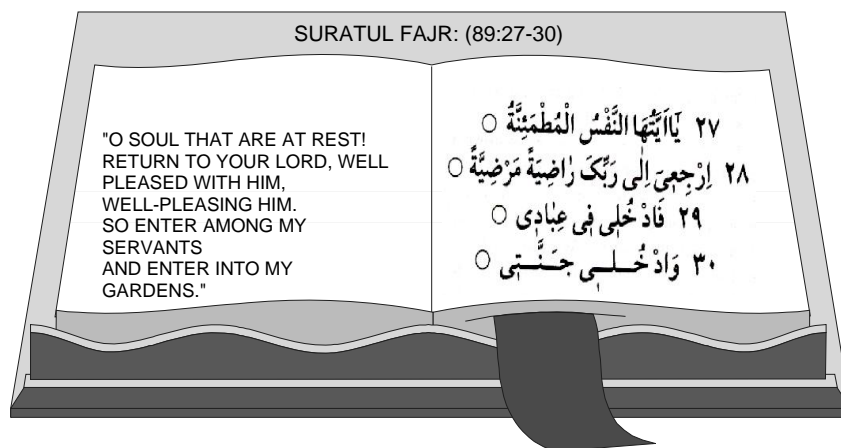
"Whoever dies, sees me, whether he be a believer or a hypocrite."
Imam Ali (AS)

If we are believers, we will be happy to see the Imam, but if we are hypocrites we will become sad when we see him.

When the Angel of Death (Malak-ul-Maut/Israel) arrives, he will tell us not to worry (especially if we have a record of good deeds). Then he will say:

'By Allah, I am kinder to you than your father. Now open your eyes and look.'

Then our spiritual eyes will open: and we will hear the following call:



At that time, if we have let our conscience (nafs) guide us throughout our life then this will be a direct call from Allah to our **peaceful** souls.

Such a soul is both confident in Allah's promise and is sure of the way it made its choices in this world. It was aware of both the excesses and afflictions of the world, but had faith in Allah's **mercy**.

Thus, a true believer leaves this world without any sorrow and without any care. And Allah gives him/her death when s/he desires death above all things, so that s/he may reach the Messenger of Allah.

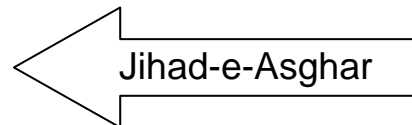
LESSON 4:

JIHAD

The word Jihad means **to struggle** or **to strive**. The most common mistake is to translate it to mean only fighting a physical war. This could not be further from the truth.

If you put effort into any action that gains Allah's pleasure, then that effort is counted as Jihad. Jihad can refer to a physical war if that war is a true fight against disbelievers.

After returning to Madina from a battle, the Holy Prophet (SAW) told his army that Jihad-e-Asghar (the lesser struggle) had been completed, and now Jihad-e-Akbar (the greater struggle) was awaiting them.

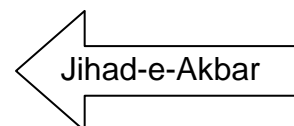


The people, exhausted from battle, looked around anxiously for this new, mightier enemy, but the Prophet (SAW) explained to them:

'... restraining the soul (or self) from its appetite, is the greatest holy war.'

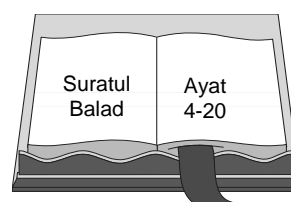
This means that controlling the nafs from its desires takes greater effort than any other holy war. It is the greatest jihad, and we know from our Furu-e-din that jihad is obligatory (Wajib).

Every Islamic action that requires some effort on our part (avoiding Haraam food, praying our Namaaz on time, keeping a beard, wearing Hijab) is jihad.



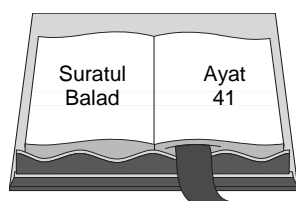
We have been created for a test and must work hard to achieve the results.

'Verily We have created Man into toil and struggle ... And shown him the two highways ... will he be of those who believe, and enjoin patience, (and) deeds of kindness and compassion ... Such are the Companions of the Right Hand ... But those who reject Our Signs, they are the (unhappy) companions of the Left Hand ... On them will be Fire ... (all around).'



Allah explains to us that a person has two choices: to live life the easy way, ie. (aimlessly) and lose out in the next life, or to take the steep slope in this life and benefit in the Hereafter.

Allah explains further about how to perform Jihad:

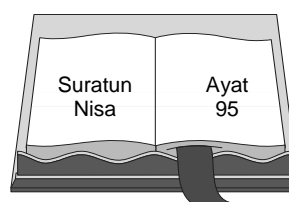


'Go forth, (whether equipped) lightly or heavily, and strive and struggle, with your goods and your persons, in the cause of Allah. That is best for you, if you (but) knew.'

So, whether we are rich or poor, able-bodied or disabled, strong or weak, we should each strive towards Allah the best way that we can, to earn His pleasure.

By struggling in the way of Allah we make ourselves better people, and will acquire a reward greater than that for ordinary people.

'Not equal are those believers who sit (at home) and receive no hurt, and those who strive and fight in the cause of God with their goods and their persons. God has granted (them) a grade higher ... by a special reward.'



**A person who dies in the state of Jihad
is a martyr and the status of a martyr is distinguished.**

The struggle to maintain a marriage is Jihad for a woman. Every moment of effort to preserve her marriage and make it blossom is Jihad, to bring up her children is Jihad, to wear Hijab is Jihad, and Allah will reward her accordingly. The following hadith of our Holy Prophet (SAW) summarises this beautifully,

'Heaven is under the mother's feet.'

Jihad-e-Akbar is regarded as the harder struggle because:

- Its' field of struggle is unlimited.
- It is timeless and boundless.
- Its essence is man against himself.
- The enemy is unseen and cannot be detected by the five senses.

Physical war against the disbelievers is not as long, extensive or difficult as struggling against the desires.

WORKSHEET 11.4: JIHAD:

Explain, in your own words, why Jihad-e-Akbar is considered the harder struggle.

LESSON 5 :

FAITH, SABR AND SHUKR :

Allah has mentioned patience more than 70 in the Qur'an and has commanded patience in more than 16 ways in His Book.

The Holy Prophet (SAW) has said that faith is divided into 2 halves:

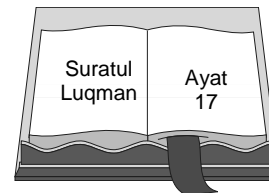
$\frac{1}{2}$ = Patience (Sabr), and

$\frac{1}{2}$ = Thanksgiving (shukr).

Patience (Sabr):

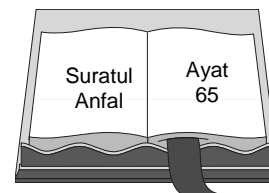
In Islam, patience is a quality that enables one to have forbearance in times of difficulty and hardship:

“O my son, establish prayer, enjoin good, forbid evil, And bear patiently that which befalls you. Truly, these are acts of steadfastness.”



Patience is a quality that is often thought to be a passive and inactive one. People even think that a patient person is a cowardly one. On the contrary, patience is an active and positive action, and requires bravery.

“O Prophet! Urge the believers to fight. If there be of you twenty patient men, they shall overcome two hundred, and if there be of you a hundred, they shall overcome one thousand of those who disbelieve, because they are a people who do not understand.”



The above verse describes the quality of patience as the quality of a brave soldier.

It is no wonder that Allah repeatedly says in the Holy Qur'an:

“Truly, Allah is with the patient ones.” (Suratul Anfal: Verse 46)

“Allah loves the patient ones.” (Surah Ale-Imran: Verse 146)

“...Indeed Allah is with those who have sabr.” (Suratul Baqarah: Verse 153)

We are told that if we have Sabr then Allah is with us, and we know that if Allah is with us then we have nothing to worry about.

The Holy Prophet (SAW) said that patience was required in 3 circumstances:

- **Sabr in times of hardship:** to endure difficult times without blaming Allah, and to carry on with one's responsibilities in spite of the difficulties.
- **Sabr in regards to obedience:** to persevere even though we may find certain acts of worship difficult, like fasting or waking up for prayers or giving khums.
- **Sabr in regards to disobedience:** to resist the temptation to sin.

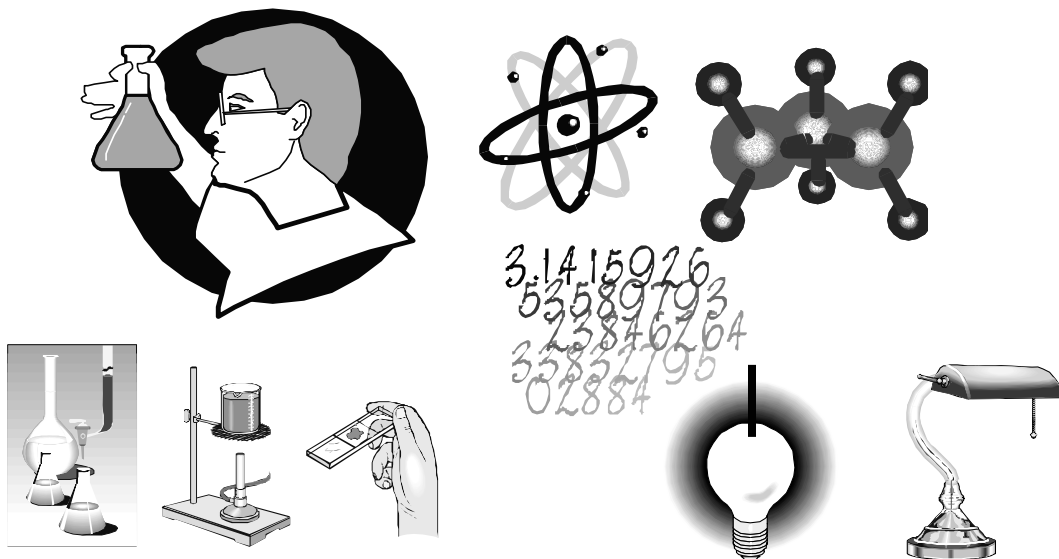
Examples of Sabr:

Eg 1: Kerbala:

The Ahlul Bayt showed by example that, through patience and perseverance, through years of hardship and struggle, we can achieve victory.

Eg 2: Thomas Edison:

Thomas Edison was an inventor. He was expelled from school because he was considered mentally retarded and unsuitable to receive an education. He spent many hours experimenting in the family garage.



His journals show that he went through 10,000 different experiments before perfecting his famous electric lamp. That means he failed 9999 times, but he did not allow his failures to discourage him. He used the same **success formula** that is in the Holy Qur'an, namely **patience** and **perseverance**.

Thanksgiving (Shukr):

This tells us that to have true faith in Islam, we must be patient **and** thankful. We must remember this the next time something unfortunate happens to us.

Once a group of people came to our 4th Imam, Imam Ali Zainul Abideen (AS), and said that they were his true followers.

Imam asked them what they did when they received something nice. They replied that they thanked Allah.



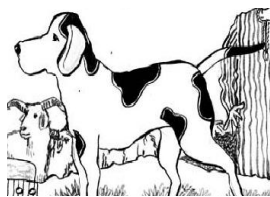
Imam asked them what they did when something nice was taken away from them. They said they got upset, but came to terms with the loss.



Imam asked what they did when they did not get anything. Puzzled, they replied that they did nothing.

Imam replied that these were not the actions of his believers, but those of a dog:

- When dogs are given something, they wag their tails in thanks.
- When something is taken away from them they bark a little to complain, then walk away.
- When they get nothing, they do nothing.



Imam explained that his true followers are those who Allah:

- when they get something,
- when something is taken away, and
- even when they get nothing.



thank

WORKSHEET 11.5: FAITH, SABR AND SHUKR:

Give 2 examples of Sabr and 2 examples of Shukr and explain the role of Faith in both.

LESSON 6: HONESTY AND LYING:

Honesty = truthfulness - in words and actions.

Lying = saying something that we know is wrong intentionally.

The perfect example of Honesty is Our Holy Prophet (SAW), who was known as the Truthful one (As-Sadiq) even by his enemies.

Once a man came to the Holy Prophet (SAW) and told him that he was committing many sins like drinking, gambling, stealing, etc. and now he had decided to become a Muslim but could only give up one of the sins at a time.

The Holy Prophet (SAW) told him to give up lying.

The man agreed, thinking he had gotten off lightly.

The next day, when the man went to do something wrong (stealing), he stopped and thought. If he got caught, he would not be able to deny it because he could not lie. And even if he did not get caught, how would he be able to face the Holy Prophet (SAW) and tell him all the wrong he had done. It would be so embarrassing.

So by giving up lying the man also gave up his other sins.

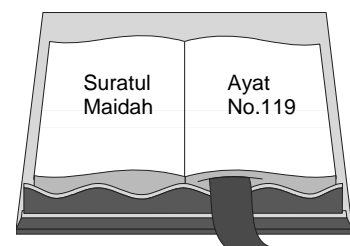
We all know that lying is a great sin; however, sadly, we do not realise how often we are doing it.

One lie usually leads to another, as we try to cover our tracks to keep our lies from being discovered. Therefore, it is better to tell the truth at the beginning; otherwise it will soon develop into a habit.

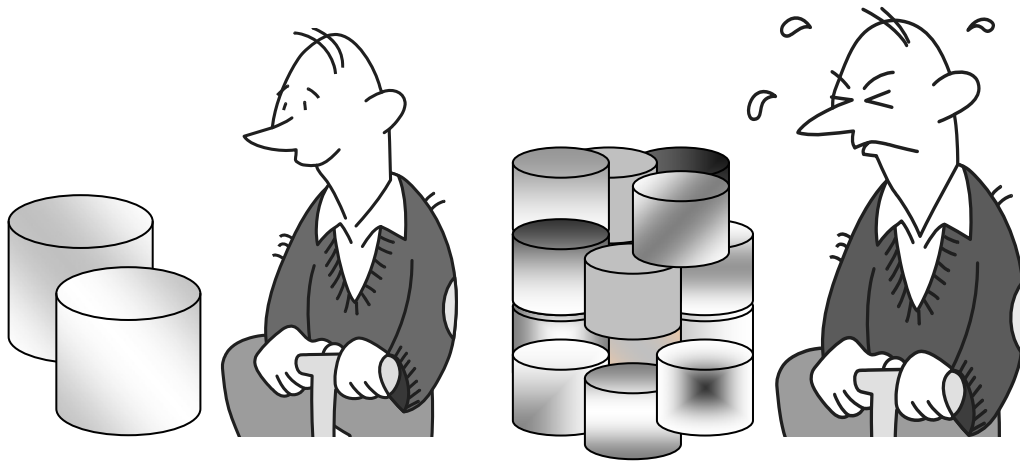
Allah knows everything, so although we may think we have gotten away with telling a lie without anyone knowing, we have to remember at all times that Allah knows, and we are ultimately answerable only to Him.

We have all heard about the English saying "Honesty is the best policy", but what does it actually mean? A policy is a long-term strategy. This phrase means that if we make honesty a part of our character it will not only make our life easy but will also include us among the people "liked" by Allah.

Allah says in the Qur'an.. ***This is the Day that shall benefit the truthful ones their truth; for them shall be gardens beneath which rivers flow to abide therein forever;....***



Our 6th Imam (AS) 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 to repent for their sins.



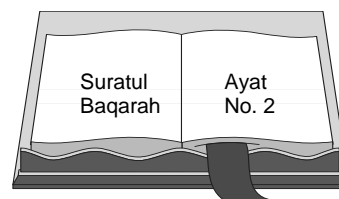
To lie is Haraam because we are **deceiving others**. How many times do we lie in a day? We lie:

- to avoid people or responsibilities,
- to get out of trouble,
- to make ourselves look better, or
- just to get attention.

All the above reasons are bad. If we have done something which gets us into trouble, then we should face it, and not lie our way out of it because that is being very irresponsible.

The Qur'an also tells us not to lie and not to cover up the truth,

"And cover not Truth with falsehood, nor conceal the Truth when you know (what it is)."



Prophet Muhammad (SAW) 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 we get into the habit of lying, then we will lie very often without realising. We will lie to our family, our friends and everybody we meet. Then one day we will be caught out because we will have trapped ourselves in a corner, and there will be no escape.

Also if we make it a habit of lying, we may start doing other things that are even worse – and cover it up by lying! One evil leads to another.

There should never be any reason to avoid the truth. If we are honest in your dealings with people, if we have nothing to hide, then we should be able to speak the truth without fear.

"A person who is not honest cannot have a perfect and strong faith". Prophet Muhammad (SAW).

"I recommend two things to you: one of them is truthfulness and the other is honesty, for these two are the key to sustenance." Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (AS).

Lying is the doorway to any number of evils. But we may distinguish between lying in the sense of teaching a falsehood about reality (E.g. propagating atheism or a false doctrine) and lying in the sense of deliberately misleading and deceiving another about a matter of which he has certain knowledge.

The first type of lie may in fact be based on honest conviction; the second type of lie is deliberate deception. Untruth in the former sense may be classed as ignorance. Even so, often there is only a short distance between ignorance about truth and lying purposely.

What do other religions say about lying:

"Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord." **Judaism and Christianity: Proverbs 12.22.**

"Do not assert with your mouth what your heart denies." **Taoism: Tract of the Quiet Way.**

"I tell you, on the day of judgment men will render account for every careless word they utter; for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned." **Christianity: Matthew 12.34-37.**

"There is no evil that cannot be done by the liar, who has transgressed the one law of truthfulness and who is indifferent to the world beyond." **Buddhism: Dhammapada 176.**

"All things are determined by speech; speech is their root, and from speech they proceed. Therefore he who is dishonest with respect to speech is dishonest in everything." **Hinduism: Laws of Manu 4.256.**

"A liar lies to himself as well as to the gods." **Buddhism: Sutra 27.**

When a person maintains honesty and truthfulness, they become characteristics of all his actions and he is righteous.

Scholars have identified **six aspects of truthfulness** that a Muslim must maintain:

- **Refraining** from telling any lies.
- **Sincerity of intention** - which means not to say something verbally and have something different in mind.
- **Truthful resolve** – which means if we intend to do something good, we should strengthen our resolve to do it, especially when the chance presents itself.
- **Acting** on what one has resolved.
- **Sincerity of action**.
- **Sincerity of attitude** – which means that if we say that we rely on Allah, we actually mean it and it is endorsed by our actions.

A person who combines **all** the six aspects of truthfulness is a true believer. Moreover, he is bound to be good, because truthfulness encourages every aspect of righteousness.

When a person maintains truthfulness, he earns the title of “truthful” not merely among his fellow human beings but also with Allah. This is a verdict passed on him and publicized among angels and other creatures of Allah.

Conversely, falsehood leads to evil, since a liar thinks that he can cover up any evil action he commits with a lie. If, he is successful once, he is encouraged to do it again.

In actual fact, every human being is on a journey that lasts throughout his life. He is either moving towards heaven or towards hell. Every deed he does is a step in his journey. He chooses his directions. When he dies, he reaches the position towards which he has moved progressively. He is not admitted into Heaven or thrown in Hell all of a sudden.

It is important to realise that Islam abhors lying in all situations. It should be noted however that there are cases when telling a lie is acceptable. However in normal situations, telling a lie is forbidden, whether it is said in earnest or in jest.

LESSON 7:

HAQQ-UN-NAAS:

Haqq = right (ie. a person's right to have or own something)

Naas = person or human beings.

Thus, **haqq-un-naas** means the rights of people. Every person has certain rights which are vital, and should not be taken away.

Allah can forgive us for the sins that we commit against Him (eg. qadha namaaz), provided we repent for them sincerely; but how can He forgive us for the sins that we commit against others. That would be going against His justice. We cannot be forgiven for breaking the rights of others, **unless** the person whom we have wronged forgives us, whether he is a Muslim or a non-Muslim, a sinner or a believer.

A person has a right over you even when he is not there. Imagine you were at a gathering, talking with others. Even if I am not at that gathering, I still have a right that my name should not be insulted, nor my reputation tainted.

This means that if you do **gheebat** or **tohmat** in which my name is mentioned then you have committed a sin against me.



This sin against me cannot be forgiven unless I have forgiven it. This is the reason why we should avoid committing actions that breach the rights of others. Islam is a religion that not only benefits a person directly, but also helps the community in general. Where else can we find laws that command us to guard other peoples' reputation in public and private. Each of us has a responsibility to the other: to maintain justice and respect the rights of the other.

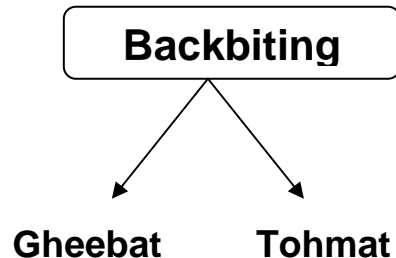
Islam advises that we should seek forgiveness from the person whom we have wronged before one of the parties dies. If one person dies before forgiving the other, there is no direct way of obtaining forgiveness, and that sin will carry forward until the day of Judgement. Consider the danger of this sin!

These social crimes break the community as they cause enmity and hatred. Let us remember this the next time we are about to commit a sin against another human being.

LESSON 8:

BACKBITING (GHEEBAT & TOHMAT)

Backbiting = talking about a person in his/her absence in such a way as to displease him/her.



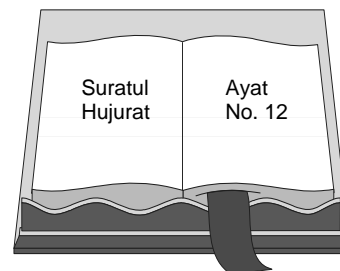
Gheebat = when you say something bad about a person and it's true.

Tohmat = when you say something bad about a person and it's a lie.

Both are considered major sins and are strictly forbidden.

A famous quote from the Qur'an says,

"....And do not spy nor let some of you backbite others. Does one of you like to eat the dead flesh of his brother ?" (49:12)



This shows us that backbiting is as bad as eating the flesh of our dead brother. If someone you know has done something bad, they have killed their own reputation. By telling others what they have done, you are enjoying and gaining at their loss. It is as if you are eating and feasting on the reputation they have already destroyed.

Backbiting is haraam because it spoils peoples' names and characters. When you speak badly of someone, you make others think badly of them.

Also, the people who are being talked about are not there to defend themselves. If you hear wicked things about others, you should give the others a chance to defend themselves by explaining, before you believe what you hear.

It is the duty of a good Muslim to stop others from speaking ill of a person, and if that is not possible he should go away from the people who are talking ill.

Story 1:

In the early days of the first few Imams, there were two men. Let us call the first one Haroon and the second one Khalid. One day Khalid started telling everybody bad things about Haroon. He was spreading lies all around.

After a few days Haroon heard about this. The first thing he did was to go home and put all his money and gold and silver in a big bag and then took the bag to Khalid's house.

When Khalid saw Haroon coming he became scared because he thought that Haroon had come to beat him up. Khalid came out of his house and fell on his knees and begged to Haroon, "O Haroon, I am really sorry, I did not mean to tell tales about you, O please do not beat me!!"

Haroon said, "I have not come to beat you, I have come to give you this money, and this wealth." Khalid had the shock of his life.

Haroon continued, "Khalid, I have come to thank you, here have this wealth of mine." Khalid stood up and asked, "Why are you giving me wealth when I have insulted you and spoilt your name among the people?"

Haroon replied. "The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w.) has said that if one person TALKS BEHIND THE BACK of another, the thawaab of the first person gets transferred to the second." he continued, "So now that you have spoken bad of me behind my back, I am thanking you for giving me all your thawaab. This money is too little for the amount of thawaab that you have given me."

Story 2:

Once there was a man who did tohmat of our Sixth Imam.

Imam did not know about it until a few days later when one of his 'friends' came to him and said, "Oh Imam, I have heard terrible news. This person has been going around and saying this about you."

Imam became angry at his 'friend'. He said, "Think of the person who did tohmat towards me as if he shot an arrow at my body. I did not hear him so it is as if the arrow missed me; But by telling me this news, you have picked up the arrow from the ground and have hit me with it."

In Islam, we should always give the benefit of the doubt to others. Even if someone does do something bad, you should hide it, and not tell others.

Reasons to hide others faults:

- A person may repent & Allah forgive, but people still remember.
- How would we feel if Allah made others aware of the wrongs that we perform?
- If Allah can hide our faults, then you should hide the faults of others.

Gheebat and Tohmat are often a result of jealousy or a need for attention. If a person is respected, has done good, has helped others, there will always be people who are angry and bitter that such a person is respected by all. The result is to try and slander and destroy this reputation by sowing seed of venom in their character, by telling the world lies or exposing sins to turn that respect into outrage and shame. Such people are cursed by Allah, and are referred to as the evil whispers of mankind in Suratun Naas

Consequences of Backbiting:

In this world: loss of reputation, etc. It has become second nature for our tongues to wag continuously with tales of other peoples' lives, regardless of the devastating effect this has on our souls, our family lives, and ofcourse our society as a whole.

In the hereafter: On the day of Judgement, the person who was backbitten about will claim retribution from the one who spoke ill of him. Allah will compensate the victim by handing over the good deeds (the currency of the Hereafter) of the culprit to him. If the latter has no good deeds to his credit, the sins of the victim will be transferred to him.

A tremendous loss indeed! How often do we engage in gheebat, yet regard ourselves as free from this crime?

To comment about a person being 'fat' or 'skinny' or being a 'slowcoach'; etc. is also gheebat. Negative comments about a persons' dressing habits, eating habits, manner of walking or speaking. Physically imitating the action of a person - often done merely to amuse others, too is gheebat.

Thus in a mere facial expression, one is passing over his hard-earned precious good deeds to the next person. Can we really afford to do this?

The Harms of Gheebat:

- duas are not answered,
- good deeds are not accepted, and sins are increased
- causes ill feeling, hatred and animosity between people.
- people soon become wary of a person who constantly backbites, since they fear he will also talk ill of themselves to others. Thus people lose trust and confidence in such a person.



LESSON 9 :

RESPECT TO PARENTS:

Allah has mentioned kindness to parents at 7 places in the Qur'an.

Why have parents been mentioned so many times? It is because **parents play a very important role** in the upbringing of the children.

Why do our parents look after us so selflessly? It is because we are their children, and they love us. They want us to grow up being healthy and well adjusted. Since they work so hard to make us better people, shouldn't we also love, respect and obey them in return?

Our parents give us love and attention; they teach us the difference between what is right and what is wrong, provide food, clothing and shelter. Even if there is only enough food for one person, they willingly give it to their child.

This is one of the reasons why Islam has said the way to heaven is through the pleasure of your parents.

"Heaven lies under the feet of your mother." Holy Prophet (SAW)

A man came to the Prophet and said,

'O Messenger of God! Who among the people is the most worthy of my good companionship?
The Prophet said: "Your **mother**"

The man said, 'Then who?'
The Prophet said: "Then your **mother**"

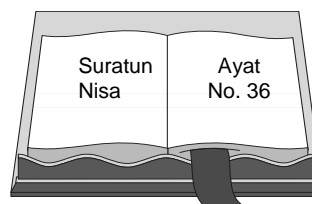
The man further asked, 'Then who?'
The Prophet said: "Then your **mother**"

The man asked again, 'Then who?'
The Prophet said: "Then your **father**"



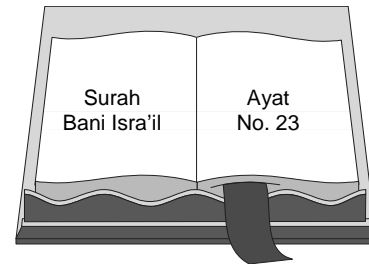
Allah says in the Qur'an,

"Worship Allah and do not join any partners with Him; and do good to your parents."



He also tells us,

"Your lord has commanded that you worship none but Him, and that you be kind to your parents. Whether one of them or both of them become old in your life, do not say a word of contempt (not even "UF") to them or repel them, but address them in terms of honour. And out of kindness, lower to them the wing of humility and say: "My Lord! Bestow upon them your mercy even as they cherished me in childhood."



Imam Jafar-as-Sadiq (AS) said that if a milder word were to exist in the language, Allah would have used it instead.

"Things taught to children become engraved on their minds like engravings on stone." **Imam Ali (AS).**

A prayer for parents from the Holy Qur'an (Bani Israil,24):

"Rabbir Ham Huma Kama Rabbayaani Saghira".

"My Lord, look have mercy on them (our parents), as they looked after me when I was little."

The behaviour of young children is predominantly influenced by their parents. Islam places great emphasis on moral conduct and behaviour.

Children are not born knowing everything right or wrong in social norms. They need clear guidelines about good and bad behaviour, and the Islamic and un-Islamic way of life. The greatest effect is of the parent's attitude and example rather than the words in a book.



Parents help children make appropriate decisions and be responsible for their decisions. Younger children can only make decisions about the present (i.e. what clothes to wear that day), but grown-ups can make decisions that may affect their future, under parental guidance (i.e. selection of career, school and hobbies).

Children left to grow on their own will come to regret a lack of direction in their childhood.

Children are very susceptible to any and every influence. As they grow, their organs of reception start working and accept new ideas and influences.

It is our parents who mould our development from birth so that we learn to accept the right ideas and reject the wrong influences. The influence of parents is high during early age (0-8 years).

A man once went to the Prophet (SAW) and asked him if there was any act worthy of Allah's mercy. The Prophet (SAW) asked him whether his parents were still alive, to which he replied yes. The Prophet (SAW) replied that the best deed worthy of Allah's grace was to be kind to parents since this was preferred over all acts.



Indeed, the first thing that Allah caused to be written on "Lauhe Mahfuz" (the stone tablet created before time) was that "I am Allah, and there is no god except Me. I am pleased with the man with whom his parents are pleased, and displeased with him whose parents are not pleased."

Duties to Parents

There are many ways to respect your parents, some of them are:

- Never raise your voice at them.
- Do not speak when they are speaking.
- Never correct them in front of others.
- Do not displease them or make them angry.
- Never insult or argue with them.

Nothing a son normally does for his parents may be considered adequate repayment for the love and kindness they showed him when he was young (indeed, parents' love, care and kindness overflow throughout our lives).

Bill of Rights for Parents:

- Parents have a right to receive love, respect and affection from their children as mentioned in the Qur'an.
- Parents have a right to educate and discipline their children as mentioned in the Qur'an and shown by the example of Prophet Muhammad.
- Parents have a right to know more about their children, and monitor other influences affecting them.
- Parents have a right to say no to unusual demands of children.

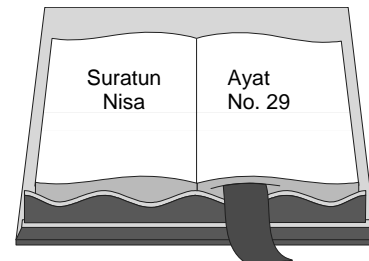
LESSON 10 :

SUICIDE :

Suicide is defined as a conscious and deliberate taking of one's own life.

It is Haraam to commit suicide.

"O you who believe! Eat not up your property among yourselves in vanities: but let there be amongst you traffic and trade by mutual good-will: NOR KILL (OR DESTROY) YOURSELVES: for verily God has been to you Most Merciful." (4:29)



Before we discuss why suicide is Haraam, we should look closer as to the causes and reasons of suicide.

People could commit suicide for the following reasons (among others)

- Frustration
- Insanity
- Lack of attention (feels neglected and unwanted)
- Desperation (inability to cope with problems)

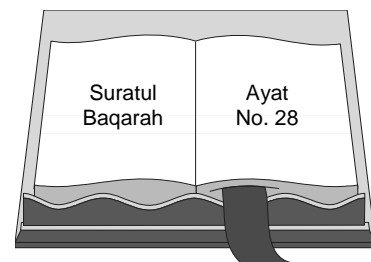
All the reasons above are causes, but what is the result? Every person performs an action to obtain some sort of result. The result of suicide is escape, to escape from the problems of this life.

When a person commits suicide, he is taking his life. He may think that he will leave the problems of this world behind, but is he so confident of his good deeds, that he thinks he is ready to face the day of Judgement? He may have even more problems in the next life if his record of good deeds weighs lightly.

Suicide can take many forms, it can be drinking poison, slitting wrists or even taking substances, which you know, are lethal and will eventually kill you (drugs).

Allah has given us life as a gift. The body is on "loan" to us, and will be returned to Allah after we have used it. The soul however cannot be killed or destroyed (except by Allah's Will).

"How can you reject the faith in God? Seeing that you were without life, and He gave you life; then will He cause you to die, and will again bring you to life; and again to Him will you return." (2:28)



WHY IS SUICIDE HARAAM?

Suicide is Haraam in principle because the person who commits it

1. Loses his faith in God
2. Defeats the purpose of his existence
3. Destroys that which he has not right to destroy

These are explained below:

1. One of the Gunahe Kabira is to lose hope in receiving any mercy from Allah. When a person commits suicide due to frustration or desperation, he feels he can no longer cope with the pressures of life, then he is losing hope in Allah's mercy.

Allah tells us in Qur'an in Surah 2 ayat 155

*"Be sure We shall **TEST YOU** with something of fear and hunger, some loss in goods or lives or the fruits (of your toil), but give **glad tidings to those who patiently persevere.**"*

Allah is explaining to us our faith will be tested with hardship in this life. Give glad tidings to those who patiently persevere means to give good news to those who try hard and are patient. Those on the other hand who are impatient and give up (i.e. commit suicide) lose faith in Allah's mercy, because He has **PROMISED** us that after hardship He will give us relief.

He has also promised us that He will not give us so much hardship that we cannot bear it; it is only a test, like an examination. (Surah 2, ayat 286)

"On no soul does God place a burden greater than it can bear. It gets every good that it earns, and it suffers every ill that it earns."

2. The purpose of this life is to be tested. It does not mean that we cannot enjoy this world, but it does mean that this world should be only part of our final aim. Think of an examination, it is hard work but if you study well and revise hard, than you will enjoy sitting the paper, and look forward to the results.

To commit suicide is like walking out of the exam half way. When you end your life, your book of deeds becomes shut. If you try your best in the exam, even if it is very difficult, **THE MORE YOU ANSWER, THE MORE MARKS YOU WILL GAIN.** However if you were to stop writing half way, any marks which you could have gained are now lost. Similarly any blessing or change of circumstance due to Allah's mercy is lost once you commit suicide, you've walked out of the biggest exam of your life. The results will not be too good on the day of Judgement either!!

3. Allah has given us the greatest gift "**L I F E !**"

To return it to HIM is to show ungratefulness and is like a son answering back to his father.

Allah says in Qur'an, Surah 17 ayat 33

"Nor take life - which God has made sacred - except for just cause."

The body and life have been given to us with the grace of Allah. By killing oneself, we are rejecting Allah's blessing and refusing it.

Here we are, unable to thank Allah for life, and instead we destroy what we should be thankful for.

LESSON 11:

EXTRAVAGANCE:

Extravagance means to use too much of something when it is not necessary. It means WASTAGE.

The Arabic word for this is pronounced as *ASRAAF*.

Allah explains to us in the Holy Qur'an, Surah 5, ayat 90:

"O you who believe! Make not unlawful the good things which God has made lawful for you, But commit not excess for God does not love those given to excess."

In Islam, we place great importance on stopping wastage. Most children will remember that when they leave food on their plates, then they are told not to commit Asraaf. However, Asraaf does not apply only to food, although that is an important area.

When non-Muslims see a Muslim finish every morsel of food on his plate, they think that this person is greedy, or that he is stingy. This just shows a lack of understanding on the other person's part.

Islam teaches us to have respect for all things that Allah has blessed us with, and what is more worthy of respect than the sustenance (food) that HE has provided?

This means that we should respect food, by not abusing it. We should not play with food, even for fun. We should never abuse it in any way, and should NEVER throw it away unless it is spoilt. If we throw food away without reason, then we are throwing away a gift from Allah. This shows how ungrateful we are.

If I was to give you a present, and you were to throw it away in front of me, this would obviously be due to lack of respect for me and my present. Similarly with food.

If we are hungry, no one is saying that we should not eat. However we should put only as much on our plate as we think we will be able to finish. If we are still hungry after finishing, we can put some more. But how many times have you seen people who are hungry, put a heap of food on their plates, eat half of it, and throw the rest away!!

How many people are there in the world who do not have enough to eat, and don't even know where their next meal will come from. What right have we to take food for granted so as to be able to throw it away, as if it were rubbish.

This extravagance is very often seen in day to day life. Even buying food to eat outside, when you know there is food waiting at home is a form of Asraaf.

Islam explains to us that to waste is not allowed. Allah has given us whatever wealth we possess. No one is telling us not to spend it. No one is telling us not to buy expensive things, cars, clothes, food.

No one is refusing us to buy good things, food or clothes.

The Holy Qur'an itself says in Surah 7 ayat 31.

"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 does not love the wasters."

It is not wrong to buy valuable things if WE ARE GOING TO USE THEM. However, to spend money unnecessarily on something of no use, this is not allowed.

Why are there people who spend extravagantly on purpose, what are their reasons ?

Reasons for Asraaf include,

- 1) for the sake of showing off to others.
- 2) buying something just because your neighbour has it, (keeping up with the Jones)
- 3) having no value for wealth, buying for the sake of buying.

All these reasons are abominable and show the person has lack of responsibility with his/her wealth. When, on the day of Judgement, Allah will ask "How did you spend the wealth with which I provided you ?", the people who have committed Asraaf will have no excuse, and will earn the displeasure of Allah.

If we think of Allah whenever we spend the money He has given us, and think whether He would approve of our purchase, than we will never commit Asraaf.

LESSON 12:

GREED

The Arabic word for greed is Hirs.

To be greedy means to always want more and more without ever stopping. There are many areas in which people have greed, from food, clothes, power to money.

Greed, on most occasions, is bad because it means that you are not satisfied with what you have.

There is however **ONE** occasion where being greedy is good; this is when you are greedy for knowledge.

The Holy Prophet (S) has said

"Two greedy persons are never satisfied; those greedy for acquiring knowledge and those greedy for accumulating wealth."

One of the reasons to avoid greed is that it lowers the respect people have for you.

Example

If a person is being greedy with food, and is eating with both hands and swallowing as much as possible, then people will look at him and wonder if he has ever seen food before!! They will think that he is still a baby and will have no respect for him.

You should always try to be satisfied with what Allah has given you. If you want more, then work for it, and Inshallah it will come. When you have a certain amount of something, ask yourself whether you **NEED** more, or are you being greedy. One of the best ways to stop greed, is to share what you have with others who need it.

LESSON 13:

MISERLINESS / TO BE STINGY

The Arabic word for miserliness is *Bukhl*.

A simple meaning for miserliness is to be stingy.

This means giving very little of what you have to someone who needs it.

Example: Imagine you were eating, and you had plenty of food. If a poor man came to the door and asked for something to eat, and you gave him a FEW GRAINS OF RICE, or a FEW CRUMBS OF BREAD, then that is being miserly.

Allah tells us in the Holy Qur'an:

"Make not your hand (tied like a miser's) to your neck, Nor stretch it forth to its utmost reach, so that you become blameworthy and destitute (have nothing left)."

This means that you should always be generous, but not so generous that you have nothing left!

If your mother asks you to help her for five minutes, and you set your stop-watch so that you help her for **exactly** five minutes and then go away, then that is being stingy.

There should **never** be any miserliness in the home. If your brother/sister wants to use something of yours, you should give it freely, and not count how much of it was used or how long it was used for.

The opposite of being stingy is being charitable. We have already talked about generosity, to be generous is to be charitable.

Allah explains to us about charity in the Holy Qur'an, Surah 2 ayat 261:

"The parable of those who spend their property in the way of Allah is as the parable of a grain growing seven ears with a hundred grain in every ear; and Allah multiplies for whom He pleases; and Allah is Ample-giving, Knowing."

LESSON 14:

USURPING OTHER PEOPLES' PROPERTY

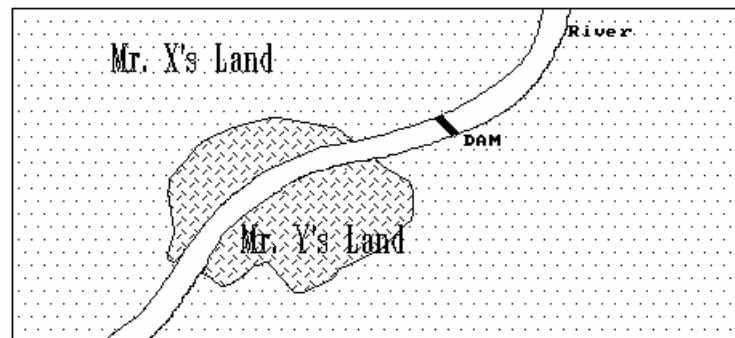
Usurpation means to take something (seize) which is not yours, by force. The force can be physical, but is more often threats of another nature (blackmail etc.)

Usurpation is haraam because it is an unfair gain at the expense of the victim (person whose things are being usurped) who is powerless to help himself.

The person doing the usurping is using the worldly power and wealth given by Allah, to acquire the property/rights of someone who is not as well off.

Imagine there were two farmers Mr.X and Mr.Y.

Mr.X's farm is very big, and he wants to buy Mr.Y's farm to make his own farm even bigger.



However, Mr.Y refuses to sell his farm. Mr.X then builds a dam across the river and blocks it off from Mr.Y's land. This means that Mr.Y runs out of water to feed his cattle, to water his crops, etc...

Mr.Y goes bankrupt and has to sell his farm to Mr.X, who then opens up the dam.

THIS IS AN EXAMPLE OF USURPING OTHER PEOPLES PROPERTY, because Mr.Y is forced to sell the land, even though he doesn't want to.

One of the worst things to usurp is another person's right. In many countries, you will find that the central authority do not give the population the basic, human rights which Islam commands for all people.

STEALING

To steal is **HARAAM**. It means to take what does not belong to you with the niyyat (intention) of not returning it.

There are people who say that it is alright to steal as long as it from a non-Muslim. Does this make sense to you? Of course not !!

You are not allowed to steal from anybody, whether he is a Muslim or not.

Stealing does not just mean going and taking something. Very often it can occur in a more subtle way. If I buy a train ticket to get from A to B, and I use that same ticket to go to place C, even though I know that I am not allowed, then that is also stealing. This is known as fare cheating, and many people do it saying that it is not really stealing, but it is.

What about if you use someone else's travel card or ticket to go somewhere, after they have finished using it? Is that stealing. Think about your answer.

When an object is stolen, that object becomes **Ghasbi** (stolen property).

If for example a man who is fasting steals a shirt and wears it. Then, later on he offers his prayers, and in the evening he breaks his fast. Since the shirt was **Ghasbi**, both the Salaat and the fast will not be accepted.

WHY IS STEALING HARAAM ?

Stealing is forbidden because you are benefiting from other people while they lose out. **You are gaining at someone else's loss.** If someone is working to earn or get something, and you take it away from them, then it is unfair, and it is called stealing. That is why stealing is haraam.

LESSON 15:

BRIBERY AND USURY:

To bribe someone means to influence their decision by offering them payment of money or some other worldly gain.

This is a **MAJOR** sin and is condemned by Islam.

Imam Ali (A) has said that:

*"God has **cursed** one who **TAKES** a bribe, one who **GIVES** a bribe and one who **CAUSES** a bribe to be taken."*

The reason that Allah has forbidden bribery for us is that it is very UNFAIR.

Suppose that there is a person who is stealing money from a company. Now, if a second person sees the thief taking the money, this person can go and tell the Police.

If the thief says to the person, "If you don't tell anyone, I will give you some of the loot!!"

This means that the second person has changed his mind from calling the police to helping the thief get away. (i.e. he has been influenced.)

This is bribery. It is haraam because the person is letting money or other riches make up his mind, not his heart or conscience.

If something is right, you should do it, it doesn't matter what others say or think. If something is wrong, you should not do it, no matter how much people will pay you for it. Never let anything influence your decision from the truth.

A person who accepts a bribe is cursed by Allah, because he is selling his heart (conscience) for this world, this means in the next life, he will be among the losers.

What other examples of bribery can you think of?

USURY

Usury means to charge too much interest.

We all know that to charge interest is HARAAM anyway.

Interest means that if you lend money, you charge a bit extra when the person comes to pay you back.

Example: If you lent 10 to me, and when I come to pay you back, you ask for 11, then this is interest at 10%. This is haraam.

Usury means to charge too much interest.

Example: If you lent 10, and when I come to pay you back, you ask for ,16, then that is usury, because the interest rate is now 60%.

Allah tells us in Qur'an, Surah 2, ayat 275,

*"Those who devour **usury**..... they say "Trade is like usury", whereas Allah has made trade lawful and has forbidden usury."*

Surah 2 ayat 278,279

"Oh you who believe! Fear Allah and give up your demand for usury, if you are indeed believers."

"If you do not, take notice of WAR from Allah and his Apostle."

Why is Usury haraam?

One of the reasons why usury is haraam is because you are taking advantage of people who are not as well off as yourself.

Whatever you have, money, or good clothes or some other wealth, you should thank Allah, because He is the one who gave them to you. Does He charge you interest on what He gives you?

Since that money is given to you, you have no right to lend it to somebody **and** ask back for more than you gave, because that is being greedy.

LESSON 16:

CHEATING AND EMBEZZLEMENT:

To cheat means to gain something by *trickery*.
Cheating is **HARAAM**.

There are many different ways of cheating, a few examples are:

- a) To hide the defect of a thing one sells to another person.
- b) To copy someone during an exam.
- c) To borrow money off a person and then never pay it back.
- d) To collect money for a charity, and then spend it on yourself.

In English there is a saying,
"The end justifies the means"

This means that no matter what you do, it doesn't matter as long as the end result is good.

In Islam this is **NOT** the case. If you have to cheat to do something good, it is better not to do the good deed.

Example:

I want to donate some money to the mosque. Now, if I go around telling people that I am in hardship, and that I need money, and I donate the money which I am given to the mosque, will I get thawaab?

The answer is NO. Instead of getting thawaab, I will get gunah (sins) for cheating the people.

One thing about cheating is that no matter how many people you cheat, or how well you can cheat, you can **NEVER** cheat yourself or Allah. If you are cheating someone, your conscience (the positive aspect of the nafs) will realise immediately.

Some people say that it is OK to cheat people, as long as they are not Muslims.

This is NONSENSE!. All people have rights, and to cheat them out of their rights is forbidden, it does not matter who they are or what they believe in.

THE REASON WHY CHEATING IS **HARAAM** IS BECAUSE :

- 1) YOU ARE GAINING SOMETHING AT SOMEONE ELSE'S EXPENSE.
- 2) YOU ARE GAINING SOMETHING WITHOUT WORKING FOR IT.

Islam is very strict on justice. If you are to get something good, it must be through your own deeds, and not through someone else's.

EMBEZZLEMENT

This means to cheat someone by committing some type of fraud, or to divert money by deceit for one's own use.

This is a very common thing among large organisations, especially in the world today where very few people are guided with moral values. Even in such cases where the person committing the crime is aware of his actions, and his conscience is warning him of the act, he will silence himself, stub out his conscience by saying that it is allowed during business, because business is played by a different set of rules !

Embezzlement is haraam for many reasons, amongst which the unfair gain at someone else's loss is of primary importance.

We must always remember, no matter what action we do, Allah is a witness, watching over us. We should not commit any unlawful act for a variety of reasons, some include Taqwa (to be ashamed of gaining Allah's displeasure), and fear of the day of Judgement (Allah is not cruel, HE will, if HE wishes, forgive those sins committed accidentally, or repented for, but due to His justice, how can we expect forgiveness for those sins we do on purpose against others ?).

LESSON 17:

DRINKING AND GAMBLING:

Another word for liquor is alcohol. When we say alcohol, we mean all beers, spirits, wines and ciders.

We all know that to drink alcohol is HARAAM. Do we know why alcohol has been forbidden?

The answer is yes, and it is because alcohol is bad for us. We all know that Allah is the Most Gracious and The Most Merciful, so He would not forbid anything for us unless it was harmful.

The way in which alcohol is harmful is that it takes you away from your real self. The alcohol reduces the concentration of the mind, and so you are not able to have complete control over your NAFS. As a result you are more likely to commit a sin than you would have been otherwise. This lack of concentration also affects your mind, and your judgement. You can get very angry, you can do things which you can regret later on. All this is caused by the fact that your mind does not have total control over your body.

Alcohol damages the body by destroying the liver and slows down the reactions. This can cause accidents in many things, such as driving. Alcohol is also bad for society in general. The importance of this will be discussed in later classes.

Remember, Allah only forbids us those things which are bad for us and cause us harm, be it on the mind, the body or the soul.

:

GAMBLING

To gamble is HARAAM. This sin is as bad as drinking and Allah has put them next to each other, when He tells us in Qur'an, surah 5 ayat 93

"O you who believe! Verily intoxicants and GAMES OF CHANCE, stones and arrows are only a abomination of Shaytan's handiwork, so stay away from it that you may be successful."

Surah 2 ayat 219:

They ask thee about wine and gambling. Say "In them is great sin, and some profit, for men; But the sin is greater than the profit."

Gambling is Haraam because a person can lose everything he owns without thinking, and put not only himself, but those who depend on him in hardship. Also it is ADDICTIVE (you can not stop once you have started).

Never let yourself become addicted to anything, because then that thing can have control over you. Islam only want your mind to have control of the body, and nothing else. If a person gambles, he keeps on gambling and forgets everything else, including his Creator, so his life will be in ruins.