

## TAREEKH SYLLABUS - CLASS 11

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## LESSON 1: PROPHET MUSA (A) - PART 1

During the reign of Prophet Yusuf (A), he invited his father Prophet Ya'qub (A) and his family to come to live in Egypt. The family settled there and in time grew to a large number and they were called the Bani Israa'il.

After several centuries, a man called Fir'aun came to power in Egypt. He was alarmed to see that the Bani Israa'il had become so many that they might pose a threat to the future security of the state. From that time onwards he made life for the Bani Israa'il difficult. Matters became particularly bad for them when a royal astrologer informed Fir'aun that a boy from the Bani Israa'il would soon be born and at whose hands Fir'aun's kingdom would be destroyed. On hearing this, the cruel king ordered that every male child born to the Bani Israa'il should be killed.

However, Allah had decided that Prophet Musa (A) was to be born in such a dangerous environment and He arranged affairs to ensure the safety of His messenger. When Prophet Musa (A) was born, his mother hid him to protect him from the king's soldiers. There was a great danger that the child would be discovered at any moment. At this time, Allah inspired her to put her baby in a water proof box and cast him into the waters of the Nile. She did this, and then sent her daughter to follow the little "boat" and see where it went.

The box floated towards the palace of Fir'aun, where his men fished it out and brought the baby to him. He wanted to kill it immediately, suspecting that it might be a child of the Bani Israa'il, but his wife Aasiya, who was a pious woman, stopped him. They were childless, so she asked him to adopt the child.

Fir'aun agreed to his wife's request and then summoned some women to breastfeed the crying child. However, the baby refused milk from all the women who came to feed him. In the meantime the sister came forward and offered to introduce a woman who she was certain the child would accept. Fir'aun asked for the woman to be summoned, and the girl brought her mother to the palace. The child immediately went to its real mother and thus Allah reunited mother and child in the very palace of Fir'aun.

As the years passed, Prophet Musa (A) grew up strong and healthy. He had the knowledge, wisdom and manners that Allah grants all His Prophets. Prophet Musa (A) resolved to end the oppression of all people under Fir'aun and he began by trying to help his own people, the Bani Israa'il. They realised that Allah had answered their prayers and their saviour would one day free them from the tyranny of Fir'aun.

Once Prophet Musa (A) saw two men fighting. One was from Bani Israa'il, and shouted for help. Prophet Musa (A) came to his rescue and struck the other man a single blow and unwittingly killed him. Later, he learned that his action had been seen by one of Fir'aun's men and he wondered whether to leave the city. A warning from a friend that he was being hunted strengthened his resolve and he left the city secretly. Prophet Musa (A) walked for a long time without a fixed destination and finally reached Madyan. Here, he rested next to a well and saw that the shepherds had gathered to water their sheep. Two maidens were standing away from the crowd of men, waiting their turn.

Prophet Musa (A) went forward to help them draw the water. The maidens then departed, their work finished. However, one of them returned, informing Prophet Musa (A) that her father wished to thank him personally for his help, and wanted to compensate him for his trouble. He went with her to her house and discovered that her father was Prophet Shuaib (A).

Prophet Musa (A) narrated the account of his trouble in Egypt and Prophet Shuaib (A) assured him that he was safe in Madyan. He then offered him a job as a shepherd on the recommendation of his daughter, Safura. He said that he would allow Prophet Musa (A) to marry Safura as long as he worked for him for 8 years. If he wished to work for longer, it would be his decision.

Prophet Musa (A) thus married Safura and worked for her father for 10 years. At the end of this time, he left for Egypt with his wife and a few sheep that he had received as a gift. It was severe winter time and Prophet Musa (A) lost his way in the night. Suddenly he saw a fire in the distance. He asked his wife to remain where she was and headed for the fire, thinking to bring some of it back to give them relief from the bitter cold.

When he reached Mount Sinai he saw that the flames were coming from a green tree but there was no one present. While Prophet Musa (A) looked around in surprise, he suddenly heard a voice saying, "O Musa, I am your Lord! Take off your shoes for you have stepped on to the sacred valley of Tuwa." As Prophet Musa (A) obeyed, he heard the voice ask him to throw his staff onto the ground. At once it changed into a serpent, scaring him. He was then commanded to lift the snake without fear and as he did so, it changed back into a stick.

Next he was commanded to put his hand under his armpit. When he drew it out again, his hand glowed with a dazzling light, brilliant like the sun. The Divine voice said to him, "O Musa! These are the two great Signs of your Lord. Go back to Fir'aun and his people and invite them towards your Lord!"

Prophet Musa (A) requested that his brother, Prophet Haroon (A) accompany him in his mission because he spoke with a fluent voice. This request was granted and thus Prophet Musa (A) came back to Egypt.

## LESSON 2: PROPHET MUSA (A) - PART 2

When Prophet Musa (A) returned to Egypt from Madyan he first went to meet his mother, brother and sister. He informed his brother Prophet Haroon (A) that their mission had begun and they prepared themselves to go to the court of Fir'aun.

Prophet Musa (A) told Fir'aun that he was a Messenger of Allah and that he had brought clear proofs that he was speaking the truth. Fir'aun rejected this claim and then reminded Prophet Musa (A) of the favours that he bestowed on him in his infancy. He also accused him of having run away after committing a murder.

Prophet Musa (A) argued that he had only been raised away from his own tribe because his mother had been forced to abandon him in fear of his life. He also stated that he had not intentionally killed any man and then reminded Fir'aun of the message he had brought from Allah. Their conversation is recorded in the Holy Qur'an as follows:

*[He (Fir'aun) said, "If you will take a lord besides me, I will most certainly imprison you". He (Musa) said, "What! even if I bring to you something manifest". He said, "Bring it then if you are one of the truthful ones". So he cast down his staff and lo! it suddenly become an obvious serpent. And he drew forth his hand, and lo! it appeared white to the onlookers.*

*Shuara, 26 : 29 - 33]*

These miracles frightened Fir'aun and he turned to his ministers for advice. They assured him that Prophet Musa (A) and Prophet Haroon (A) were great magicians and that their own magicians could easily perform such tricks. Fir'aun called all the great magicians and tricksters in the land to his court. When they were told what had to be done, they were not worried. They threw pieces of rope on the ground and these cords began to wriggle like snakes. But when Prophet Musa (A) cast his staff down his serpent ate all the pieces of rope. The magicians immediately realised that they were witnessing a miracle.

They were experts in trickery but they knew that Prophet Musa (A) was not demonstrating a trick and immediately threw themselves in prostration saying, "We believe in the faith of Musa".

Their actions enraged Fir'aun who warned, "You have surrendered without my permission while he is only a greater magician than you. If you do not repent I will cut off your feet and hands and then crucify you". However, they were not afraid of the threats and were willing to die for their faith. In the end Fir'aun carried out his cruel threat.

Fir'aun realised that Prophet Musa (A) posed a threat to his authority and decided to kill him. However, from his own court one of his advisers warned him against this action, saying, "If you think that Musa has made a false claim it will not harm you but himself. But if he speaks the truth, his Lord's Wrath will befall you".

This advice did not please Fir'aun and he increased his oppression of the Bani Israa'il and tried to intimidate Prophet Musa (A) and his followers.

In the meantime, Allah commanded Prophet Musa (A) to warn Fir'aun that Divine punishment would descend on him and his people if they continued in their ways. Fir'aun was under the spell of his own power and did not heed this warning. Soon the country was hit by famine. Swarms of locusts ate away the crops. The river Nile flooded its banks causing great destruction. The people were afflicted with lice and tumours.

When these calamities befell the people they rushed to Prophet Musa (A) asking him to pray for their relief and promised to embrace his religion. But when they were cured and the situation improved, they returned to their idol worship.

Finally the grace period that Allah had granted Fir'aun and his people came to an end. The Holy Qur'an says:

*[We commanded Musa, "Journey by night with Our creatures, and strike a dry path for them through the sea. Do not fear being overtaken by Fir'aun nor have dread of any thing". Fir'aun followed them with his army, but the sea overpowered and engulfed them. Fir'aun had led his people astray and did not rightly guide them.*

*Ta Ha, 20 : 77 - 79]*

Prophet Musa (A) gathered the people of Bani Israa'il and departed with them for Palestine. Fir'aun learnt of their escape and followed them with a huge army. When the Bani Israa'il reached the Red Sea they saw Fir'aun approaching and were sure they were going to be killed. However, Prophet Musa (A) struck the waters of the sea with his staff and the waters parted, making a dry path. The people rushed through and crossed safely. When Fir'aun saw the path he entered the sea at the head of his army. But while he was in the middle of the sea the waters suddenly closed around him and his men.

In the final moments of his life Fir'aun recognised the Power and Greatness of Allah and he desperately offered his repentance saying. "I solemnly declare that there is no god but the Lord of Musa, and I am one of the believers". However, it was too little too late because once the Curse of Allah takes its course it is futile to ask for forgiveness.

Fir'aun and his people drowned under the deep sea and Allah caused their dead bodies to be thrown onto the shore. The preserved body of Fir'aun can be seen in the Cairo museum even today, a lasting lesson for mankind.

### LESSON 3: PROPHET MUSA (A) - PART 3

The people of Bani Israa'il had been rescued from Fir'aun by Prophet Musa (A) and now they followed him to their promised homeland in Palestine. When they had come some way from Egypt, they came to a place where the people worshipped idols. This reminded them of their days in Egypt and they asked Prophet Musa (A) if they could also have one idol for themselves.

How soon had the Bani Israa'il forgotten Allah and His favours! They had seen the tragic end of Fir'aun and yet had not learnt from it. Prophet Musa (A) addressed them harshly, reminding them about their covenant with Allah. The people were ashamed of their conduct and promised that they would not make the mistake again.

Prophet Musa (A) had promised the Bani Israa'il that once they left Egypt he would bring to them a Divine Book for their guidance. Now that Fir'aun was dead, Prophet Musa (A) prayed to Allah for that Book. Allah commanded him to come to Mount Sinai and pass thirty nights there. The Holy Qur'an says:

*[We made an appointment of thirty nights with Musa to which we added ten more, so the term set by the Lord was completed in forty nights. Musa said to Haroon, his brother, "Deputise for me among my people. Act rightly and do not follow the path of the mischief-makers".*

*A'raaf, 7 : 142]*

When Prophet Musa (A) returned to his people he had with him the Tawrat, with the Divine revelations inscribed on tablets of stone. However, a strange sight greeted him. In his absence, a man called Samiri had made a golden calf by collecting gold from the people of Bani Israa'il. Then he had sprinkled into its mouth some dust that he had collected from under the feet of the angel Jibraeel (A), who he had seen on the day that Fir'aun was drowned. After the addition of the dust, the calf used to make a sound and the people began to worship it.

The sight of his people worshipping a calf enraged Prophet Musa (A). He put the Tablets on the ground and furiously caught hold of his brother Prophet Haroon (A) and demanded, "Why did you let the people of Bani Israa'il go astray and why did you not prevent them from this ignoble act?" Prophet Haroon (A) explained that the people had ignored his guidance and he had not wanted to use force and cause division amongst them.

Gradually Prophet Musa's (A) anger subsided and he addressed the Bani Israa'il saying, "O people! Do you not know that Allah promised you that if you remained steadfast in your faith He would bestow upon you happiness and prosperity? Do you wish to incur Allah's displeasure?"

The people blamed Samiri for misguiding them and repented of their actions. Prophet Musa (A) urged them to devote themselves to the obedience of Allah and sincerely ask for His forgiveness. He then got the golden calf melted and threw every trace of it in the sea. Meanwhile, Samiri was seized with an illness that made him unable to bear the company of people. He passed the rest of his life living in the woods like a wild animal.

After a long journey, the Bani Israa'il finally came near the Holy Land of Baytul Muqaddas in Palestine. The Holy Qur'an says:

*[When Musa told his people, "Recall Allah's favours to you. He made Messengers and kings out of your own people and gave you what He had not given others. Enter the Sacred promised land. Do not return to disbelief lest you become losers". They said, "Musa, a strong race of people is living there. We shall never go there unless they leave the land first.*

*Ma'idah, 5 : 20 - 22]*

The many years spent under Fir'aun's oppression had robbed the people of Bani Israa'il of their self-respect and courage. They were frightened to approach Palestine and face the forces of the local people. Despite Prophet Musa's (A) attempts to persuade them, they refused to move into Palestine. Instead, they said to him, "You and your Lord should go there and not we. We will stay away while you fight with the rulers and the people of Palestine. After the land is cleared of people, we will walk onto it".

Prophet Musa (A) could not convince his people and gave it up, praying to Allah for a solution. As a result of their disobedience, Allah condemned the Bani Israa'il so that for forty years they remained in the wilderness, wandering without a homeland in the woods and deserts.

During these forty years a new generation of stronger and more courageous people replaced the older demoralised one. Prophet Musa (A) and Prophet Haroon (A) passed away, but Yusha' bin Nun, a successor of Prophet Musa (A), led the Bani Israa'il and finally conquered Palestine. However, the faith of most of them was weak and time and time again they disobeyed Allah's commands. As a result Allah has cursed them in the Holy Qur'an as follows:

*[... And they drew on themselves the Wrath from Allah, because they used to reject the signs of Allah and kill His Apostles unjustly; because they disobeyed and transgressed.*

*Baqarah, 2 : 61 (Part)]*

## LESSON 4: PROPHET ISA (A) - PART 1

Prophet Isa (A) was the son of Bibi Maryam (A), daughter of Imran. She was from the descendants of Prophet Dawood (A). Just before Bibi Maryam (A) was born, her mother prayed to Allah to grant her a child whom she would dedicate to the service of the Holy Mosque in Baytul Muqaddas. Her prayer was granted and although she had expected to have a son, she kept her promise and delivered Bibi Maryam (A) to the trustees of Baytul Muqaddas. They decided that Prophet Zakariya (A) would bring up the child. Her story and that of her blessed son Prophet Isa (A) has been recorded in the beautiful and inimitable style of the Holy Qur'an in Suratu Maryam.

When Bibi Maryam (A) came of age, Prophet Zakariya (A) built her a special chamber where she lived and worshipped. When he went to visit her he found that she always had food. Prophet Zakariya (A) asked her where the food came from and she said that it came from the Grace of Allah, Who always provides for the ones He loves.

One day while she was busy in her worship, Bibi Maryam (A) was startled to see a young man suddenly appear before her. She was scared but the man said, "Do not be frightened, I am the angel Jibraeel and have brought to you the glad news that Almighty Allah is soon going to bless you with a son. He will be great in this world and in the hereafter and will speak while still in his cradle." Maryam was dismayed and asked, "How can this be possible when no man has ever touched me?". Jibraeel (A) said, "Allah has Power over all things."

Soon after the angel had left, Bibi Maryam (A) felt the signs of pregnancy. She was puzzled at the unnatural occurrence and also worried about how she would explain the baby to the people. Within nine hours she felt the pain of labour and managed to go out and rest under an old date-palm tree where Prophet Isa (A) was born. Things had happened so quickly and in despair she cried, "Would that I had died and been forgotten before all this had happened!"

The Holy Qur'an says:

*[Then (a voice) called out to her from beneath her, "Do not grieve, your Lord has caused a stream (to flow) from beneath you. And shake towards you the trunk of the palm-tree, it will drop on you fresh ripe dates. Then eat and drink ..."*

*Maryam, 19 : 24 - 26]*

Thus consoled, she regained her confidence and returned to Baytul Muqaddas with her baby in her arms. The Jews who saw her were surprised and began to accuse her saying that she had acted in a shameful manner while her parents had not been immoral people. She did not reply, but merely pointed at her baby.

The Holy Qur'an says:

*[But she pointed unto him. They said, "How can we speak to one who is a child in the cradle?" He (Isa) said, "Verily I am a servant of Allah. He has given me a Book and made me a Prophet. And He has made me blessed wherever I am and He has enjoined on me prayer and poor-rate (Zakaat) for as long as I live. And (to be) dutiful to my mother and He has not made me insolent ..."*

*Maryam 19 : 29 - 31]*

The miracle of Prophet Isa (A) speaking to them from his cradle silenced the critics and left them astounded. The fame of the baby grew and many came from all over the country to see him and pay tribute to him.

The Jewish emperor, Herodotus, learnt about the birth of Prophet Isa (A) and was immediately concerned about the threat to his power. He thus plotted to kill Prophet Isa (A) to protect himself from any future trouble. However, Bibi Maryam (A) learnt of the danger to her son and she left with him for Egypt.

In Egypt, Prophet Isa (A) lived with his mother until he was 30 years old. Then he received the command of Allah to begin his mission and the Divine Book, Injeel, was revealed to him. Thus Prophet Isa (A) returned to Baytul Muqaddas to invite the Jews to the true religion of Allah .

As proof of his Divine appointment, Prophet Isa (A) possessed certain miracles. He could raise the dead to life, restore the eyesight of the blind and cure the lepers. These remarkable powers attracted the Jews to him and some became believers. The rest of them became his deadly enemies because their religious leaders encouraged them to oppose the Prophet who had brought a message that superseded that of Prophet Musa (A).

From amongst the few who has embraced the faith, Prophet Isa (A) selected twelve as his apostles. These men learnt directly from Prophet Isa (A) and he gave them authority to preach to the people according to the laws laid down in the Injeel.

Thus began the mission of one of the greatest Prophets of Allah . Day by day, his followers increased in number but his popularity made the Jews hate him even more. Despite their efforts to stop people from following the new faith, they were helpless against the Will of Allah .

## LESSON 5: PROPHET ISA (A) - PART 2

Prophet Isa (A) and his twelve disciples went from place to place, in towns and villages, inviting people to believe in One God and teaching them the Divine commandments contained in the Injeel.

The disciples were pious and virtuous men, but one day they asked Prophet Isa (A) to show them a Sign of Allah so that they could experience first hand a direct contact with Him. Prophet Isa (A) replied that if they truly had faith they should cultivate in themselves Taqwa, which means being mindful of the commands of Allah and being afraid of His Wrath. However, they insisted, saying that they wanted to reassure themselves and become totally convinced of the existence of Allah and of the truthfulness of Prophet Isa (A).

They said, "O Isa, does your Lord not possess enough power to send food for us from heaven?" At last Prophet Isa (A) turned to Allah to ask Him to grant their wish. The Holy Qur'an says:

*[When Isa prayed, "Lord, send us a table full of food from the heavens so that it will make a feast for us and for those who are yet to come in this world as an evidence from You. Give us sustenance, for You are the best Provider." Allah replied, "I am sending it to you but if anyone of you turns back to disbelief, I will make him suffer a torment that no one has ever suffered."*

*Ma'idah, 5 : 114,115]*

When the food came, it served to increase the faith of the disciples. Many people who witnessed this miracle embraced the religion immediately. However, the activities of Prophet Isa (A) caused a great stir amongst the Jews, who felt that their own religion was being threatened. They were enraged that his laws were different from those laid down in the Tawrat and that he did not consider Saturday as a holy day. They accused him of causing disruptions in their community with his magic. They refused to recognise him as a Messenger of Allah just like Prophet Musa (A), and they began to plot against him.

The Jews finally decided to kill Prophet Isa (A) and set about trying to find him. They caught and interrogated one of his disciples, whose name was Shamoon as-Safa (Simon Peter), but he gave them no information as to the whereabouts of Prophet Isa (A). Then they came across another disciple, Yahuda (Judas). This man betrayed Prophet Isa (A) after he was bribed with thirty pieces of silver.

The Jews had decided to arrest Prophet Isa (A) and crucify him by nailing his hands and feet onto a wooden cross. This was a very painful and slow way of execution and the victim usually suffered a great deal before he died. When Prophet Isa (A) heard that the Jews planned to arrest him he took shelter in a vacant house. Yahuda knew this and he led the Jews to the house.

Prophet Isa (A) was a great Sign of Allah. His birth had been in remarkable circumstances and his life was also destined to be extraordinary. At the time when his life was in danger, he was raised by Allah to the heavens.

Meanwhile, Yahuda entered the house but found it empty. Allah caused the features of this treacherous disciple to change so that he exactly resembled Prophet Isa (A). He came out of the house to report to the Jews, and was shocked when they seized him and dragged him away. Despite his protests, he was crucified. The Jews and even the Christians thus say that Prophet Isa (A) was killed on the cross but the Holy Qur'an says about the Jews:

*[That they said (boastfully), "Verily we killed the Messiah, Isa son of Mary, the Apostle of God."; but they killed him not, nor crucified him, but it was made to appear to them (that they had). And those who differ therein are full of doubts, with no (certain) knowledge. They only pursue a conjecture. They certainly did not kill him. Nay, Allah raised (lifted) him up to Himself; and Allah is Mighty, Wise. Nisa, 4 : 157,158]*

According to a prophecy of the Holy Prophet (S), when our 12th Holy Imam (A) will re-appear, Prophet Isa (A) will descend from the heavens and offer prayers behind him. The Christian Era (A.D.) dates from the birth of Prophet Isa (A). He was only 33 years old when he was raised to the heavens.

## **LESSON 6: EUROPE'S DEBT TO ISLAM**

During the Middle Ages the Muslims were the leaders of the intellectual world. They were the pioneers in the various fields of knowledge and learning. Later when Europe embarked on its quest for learning, all its knowledge was derived from Islamic sources.

### **The Muslims Contribution to Knowledge.**

The Muslims made a two fold contribution to knowledge. They preserved all learning of the ancient world in Arabic translation. They also made their own contributions. Islam produced the greatest scientists, the greatest physicians, the greatest philosophers, the greatest geographers and the greatest historians of the middle ages. Examples are, Jabir, Jahiz and Baytar in science; Omar Khayyam and Nasir-ud-Din Tusi in mathematics and astronomy.

In the Middle Ages, the Universities in the Muslim lands were the greatest centres of learning. These Universities, particularly those in Spain were attended by scholars in Europe.

### **Geography**

The study of Geography began with the Prophet (S) himself. The Holy Qur'an enjoined the believers to travel on the earth and see the signs of Allah. This gave rise to the study of geography. Indeed, in the course of his travels, many of the observations that the Prophet (S) made, had been of considerable geographical interest.

### **History**

The Holy Qur'an presented a new vision of history. It referred to history as a Sign of Allah, and wanted the faithful to learn from the history of the previous people. Right from the beginning, the Muslims developed a sense of history, and as they grew in power and made history, the discipline came to be developed by them as a science.

### **Philosophy**

Islam revolutionised human thought and as such there is much in the Holy Qur'an and Hadith, which is the source material for philosophy. The Prophet (S) always encouraged the believers to make full use of their intellect in understanding the things around them.

## **Science**

The Holy Qur'an says:

*[... Verily in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and in the differences of night and day are signs for men of understanding. (Ale Imran 3: 190)]*

That awakened a spirit of enquiry among the Muslims. Indeed, during the Middle Ages, the Muslims were the leaders of the world in the matter of science. Physics, Chemistry, Botany, Zoology, and various scientific inventions, such as the Mariner's compass, the telescope etc., all came from the Muslims.

## **Astronomy**

Under Islam, Allah was acknowledged as the sovereign of the earth, as well as of the entire universe. That created among the Muslims an interest in astronomy. The Prophet (S) is credited with the miracle of splitting up the moon in two parts. That created in the Muslims the urge to promote the study of astronomy.

## **Medicine**

Medicine began with the Prophet (S) himself. Islam enjoined cleanliness, and as such there is much in the Holy Qur'an which forms the basis of hygiene. The Prophet (S) said that to visit the sick was an act of piety. Medical care was thus promoted by the Muslims as a matter of religious obligation. The Prophet (S) himself had considerable medical knowledge; in fact certain medical teachings are attributed to him which have been collected and annotated in a book entitled al Tibb al Nabawi (The Medicine of the Prophet).

## **Mathematics**

Islam believed in the Day of Reckoning. Islam encouraged its believers to maintain proper accounts. Islam propounded the doctrine of Tauhid -unity of Allah in the midst of diversity. These factors were responsible for the promotion of mathematics among the Muslims.

## **ISLAM AND TRADE**

The Holy Qur'an talked about trade in favourable terms. The Prophet (S) himself was a trader. Indeed, as the Muslim empire grew, the scope for trade increased accordingly. Foreign conquests brought more wealth to the Muslims; a lot of which was invested in trade. As the empire expanded, new cities were set up which consequently became important centres of trade and commerce.

## **Commercial Activities of the State**

The Islamic states undertook commercial activities on a large scale. Caravan routes were improved; halting places were provided at convenient places along the caravan routes; there was free movement of goods within the empire from one region to another; and there were no inland levies. The Muslim cities had very well stocked markets and State regulation ensured stability in prices.

Muslim countries executed commercial treaties with non-Muslim states, which resulted in the Muslim traders dominating world trade.

An inland route led to Central Asia and China; known as the Silk Route. Another inland route led to Russia. A third route led to Constantinople and then to Eastern Europe. A route led to Afghanistan and then to India. Another route led from Egypt to Sudan. A route from Morocco led to Ghana and other countries of West Africa. From Spain a route led to France and the states of the Danube Valley.

## **Communications by Sea**

The Mediterranean Sea was surrounded by Muslim countries on three sides, namely Syria, Africa and Spain. The Muslims went as far as China, Korea and Japan. They established a colony at Canton in China. During the tenth century, an Arab colony sprang up near Bombay in India. The Muslim merchants had colonies on the east coast of Africa and they had commercial contacts with Madagascar and Zanzibar.

## **Imports/Exports**

In the Middle Ages, the Muslim countries were the leading industrial and manufacturing countries of the world. They made paper, textiles, silk, glassware, carpets, tapestries, handicrafts, leather goods etc. All such goods were exported to the various countries in the east and the west. The Muslim merchants brought silk from China and spices from India. They imported furs and timber from Europe, as well as slaves. These also came from Central Asia and Africa.

In Muslim society, merchants enjoyed a high social status; they had international contacts and commanded respect in foreign courts. They were also very popular throughout the world for their fair dealings.

## **Education**

During the Middle Ages, the Muslims were the most advanced people in the world. While in Europe even the Kings could not read or write, in the Muslim countries, the common man could read and write. Educational institutions and libraries were to be found all over the Muslim empire. This thirst for knowledge then spread to the non-Muslim countries, who also began to set up various educational institutions and libraries etc.

## **LESSON 7: THE BANI UMAYYAH - PART 1**

### **I. Introduction**

The Bani Umayyah had been sworn enemies of the Bani Hashim since the time when Hashim, the forefather of our Prophet (S), had succeeded in banishing his evil half-brother Umayyah from Makka.

The Bani Umayyah started tormenting the Prophet (S) immediately he began to spread Islam. Abu Sufyan was their leader. He led the wars of Badr and Uhud against the Muslims. During the battle of Uhud his wife Hind hired an assassin to kill Hamza, the uncle of the Prophet (S). After the murder, she located the body of Hamza, mutilated it, and chewed his liver. The children of this accursed couple were no less evil. After the death of the Prophet (S), Abu Sufyan tried to attain power by encouraging Imam Ali (A) to regain his right to Caliphate by spilling blood. Imam Ali (A), well aware of the hidden intent of Abu Sufyan, rejected his offer.

It was left to those who had stolen the rights of Imam Ali (A), namely Abu Bakr and Umar, to prepare the ground for the Bani Umayyah to come to power. Umar appointed Yazid, son of Abu Sufyan, as governor of Palestine and later, of Syria. When Yazid died, his younger brother, Mu'awiya became the ruler of Syria. Umar further strengthened the power base of the Bani Umayyah by arranging for Uthman to succeed him as Caliph. Uthman made sure that all the key posts in the Muslim empire were in the hands of his Bani Umayyah clan. Since then, the Bani Umayyah became the ultimate power throughout the Muslim lands and began to torture and harass the family and Shia of Imam Ali (A)

### **II. The Bani Umayyah Kings**

#### **1. Mu'awiya son of Abu Sufyan**

When Imam Ali (A) was asked by all the Muslims to become Caliph in 35 A.H., one of the first things he did was to ask Mu'awiya to forego his governorship of Syria and give an account of his actions. Mu'awiya, however, wanted the Caliphate himself, and claimed that he was an independent authority and not under the Muslim state.

This led to the battle of Siffin, which came to an unsatisfactory conclusion in 37 A.H. Some of the factors leading to the success of Mu'awiya in Syria were the following:

- i) The excuse of revenge for the murder of Uthman.
- ii) The battle of Jamal led by Ayesha.
- iii) The uncompromising nature of Imam Ali's (A) faith.
- iv) The murder of Imam Ali (A) by Abdur Rahman ibne Muljam.
- v) The cunning and treacherous nature of Muawiya himself.

After the death of Imam Ali (A), Mu'awiya turned his attention to Imam Hasan (A). Just as his father had done, Imam Hasan (A) wrote to Mu'awiya telling him that the crimes he was committing against innocent Muslims were unacceptable. Imam Hasan (A) asked the Kufans to assist him in battle against Mu'awiya.

However, the Kufans were either bribed or threatened by Mu'awiya, and being very fickle people, they deserted Imam Hasan (A). At the gathering ground of Nukhayla, only 4,000 men turned out to fight and Imam Hasan (A) was forced to return to Kufa disappointed. To save the lives of the few sincere Muslims, Imam Hasan (A) had to sign a treaty with Mu'awiya.

Mu'awiya arranged the murder of Imam Hasan (A). He promised Ju'da binte Ash'ath, a wife of Imam Hasan (A), 100,000 dirhams and the hand of his son Yazid in marriage if she poisoned her husband. The cursed woman carried out the evil task and Imam Hasan (A) breathed his last on 7th Safar 50 A.H.

Muawiya, may Allah's Curse be on him always, finally died in Rajab of 60 A.H.

## **LESSON 8: THE BANI UMAYYAH - PART 2**

### **The Bani Umayyah Kings - Cont'd**

#### **2. Yazid son of Muawiya**

In 60 A.H. this devil declared himself ruler of all Muslims. Yazid was a man of extremely evil habits. He was a drunkard, gambler, womaniser and murderer. He only ruled for 3 years. In the first year he killed Imam Husain (A) and his companions in Karbala and made their women and children prisoners. During the second year he ordered his soldiers to enter Madina and do what they liked. As a result, 1,000 people were killed, including 700 close Companions of the Prophet (S). In addition 1,000 women were assaulted and forced to surrender their dignity to Yazid's men. In the third year, Yazid mounted an attack on the Ka'ba, aiming to destroy it with giant catapults.

Not content with committing crimes in Kerbala, Makka and Madina, Yazid appointed Ubaidullah ibne Ziyad as governor of Kufa with specific orders to hunt out and kill the Shia of Imam Ali (A). Ubaidullah carried out the orders of his master by imprisoning, exiling, hanging or amputating the limbs of the Shia. Yazid's rule ended with his death in 64 A.H. Before his death, he appointed his son Mu'awiya as his heir.

#### **3. Mu'awiya the Second, son of Yazid.**

Mu'awiya the Second was aware of the rights of the family of the Prophet (S) and of the terrible crimes committed by his own father and grandfather. He therefore told Imam Zainul Abideen (A) that he was transferring authority to him. His decision disgusted his mother so much that she told Muawiya, "I wish that I had discharged you as a miscarriage and never given birth to you." To this he replied, "I too, wish that that had been the case so that I would not be associated with Yazid, Muawiya and Abu Sufyan." Because of his refusal to continue in the way of his forefathers, Mu'awiya was soon poisoned and died only 4 months after coming to the throne.

#### **4. Marwan bin Hakam**

In 64 A.H. the line of kings of the Umayyad dynasty moved from the descendants of Abu Sufyan to those of Marwan. He ruled for only 9 months and during this time he was occupied in war against the group of Abu Sufyan on one hand and Abdullah ibne Zubayr on the other. As a result, he did not get much opportunity to persecute the Shia.

However, he continued the policy of cursing Imam Ali (A) from the pulpits. He also gave shelter to the killers of Imam Husain (A) who were being hunted now that Yazid was dead.

#### **5. Abdul Malik bin Marwan**

Abdul Malik succeeded his father in 65 A.H. and ruled for 21 years. He became the ruler of Syria while Abdullah ibne Zubayr took over Arabia. Between the two of them they managed to kill the two groups of people who had risen to take revenge for the murder of Imam Husain (A). The "Penitents" led by Shia like Sulayman bin Sard Khuzai'i were killed by Abdul Malik while the group led by Mukhtar was killed by ibne

Zubayr. Abdul Malik finally managed to kill ibne Zubayr and take control of the whole Muslim Empire. One of the worst crimes he committed was to turn a blind eye to the activities of his governor, Hajjaj bin Yusuf. Hajjaj was the worst tyrant in the whole history of the Bani Umayyah. He was responsible for the deaths of 120,000 innocent people. He tortured and killed such notable companions of Imam Ali (A) like Qambar, Kumail bin Ziyad and Sa'id bin Jubayr. During this time it was safer for the Muslims to call themselves the enemies of Islam rather than the Shia of Imam Ali (A). Abdul Malik was so grateful for the services of Hajjaj that he gave him full control of Iraq and Arabia to do as he liked. When Hajjaj died, his prison contained 50,000 men and 30,000 women.

## **6. Walid bin Abdul Malik.**

In 86 A.H. Walid succeeded his father Abdul Malik. Walid was a cruel tyrant who continued to favour Hajjaj and give him free rein. He dismissed the popular governor in Madina, Umar bin Abdul Aziz and put Khalid bin Abdullah in his place. Khalid was an unbeliever whose mother was a Christian. This man built a church for his mother behind the Ka'ba. He allowed Christians to keep Muslim slaves.

## **7. Sulayman bin Abdul Malik**

Walid died in 96 A.H. after ruling for 10 years and was succeeded by his brother Sulayman. Sulayman was a glutton and fond of women. Sulayman was an intensely jealous man and killed the great Arab conqueror, Musa bin Nasir who had brought Spain and Portugal under Muslim control. Sulayman killed him because Musa had sent all the spoils of war to Walid and had not kept it till Sulayman came to the throne. He also killed Waqtiba bin Muslim who had conquered territories from Fars to China for the Muslim Empire. His reason for killing Waqtiba was that the man had encouraged Walid to remove Sulayman from the office of crown prince. Sulayman used to shower blessings on Mu'awiya, saying that he had never come across anyone more bold than him in matters of cruelty, crime and oppression. He called Mu'awiya the True Spirit of the Bani Umayyah. Sulayman died in 99 A.H. after ruling for 2 years and a few months and was succeeded by Umar bin Abdul Aziz.

## LESSON 9: THE BANI UMAYYAH - PART 3

### The Bani Umayyah Kings - Cont'd

#### 8. Umar bin Abdul Aziz

After the death of Sulayman bin Abdul Malik in 99 A.H., the reins of power were taken up by Umar bin Abdul Aziz. He was the one king in this dynasty whose actions were worthwhile.

One of the greatest deeds of Umar bin Abdul Aziz was that he stopped the abusing of Imam Ali (A) from the pulpits at the time of Friday prayers. Because of the influence of his childhood teachers, he had grown up with love and respect for the Ahlul Bayt (A). Instead of the customary curses, he ordered that the following verse be recited:

*Verily, Allah commands to maintain justice, kindness and proper relations with relatives; and He forbids indecency, sin and rebellion. He gives you advice so that perhaps you will take heed.*

*Nahl, 16:90*

This verse is recited by all the Muslims in their Friday addresses upto today. The other noteworthy action of Umar bin Abdul Aziz was that he returned the garden of Fadak to a descendant of Bibi Fatima (A), who at the time was Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (A). This garden had been usurped by Abu Bakr after the death of the Prophet (S).

The favour with which Umar bin Abdul Aziz regarded the Ahlul Bayt (A) and the Shia made him unpopular amongst the Bani Umayyah themselves and led to his poisoning on 25th of Rajab 101 A.H. His grave in Dayr Sam'aan is still visited today.

#### 9. Yazid bin Abdul Malik.

Yazid was the next king and he did his best to overturn all the good actions of his predecessor. Under his rule, the old harsh ways of terrorisation and unfair taxation were revived. Yazid also seized Fadak back.

Like his maternal grandfather, Yazid the First, this Yazid was also fond of easy living, drinking and women. His rule came to an end after 4 years.

#### 10. Hisham bin Abdul Malik

Hisham came to power at a time when the crimes of Bani Umayyah were finally causing widespread resentment. Hisham did not take heed of these feelings, and instead of attempting to reform the evils of his forefathers, he added to the misery of the people. His policies towards the Shia were especially harsh.

He ordered that they should be got rid off, their blood be shed and their rights be taken away.

During the time of Hisham a revolution was led by Zayd son of Imam Ali Zainul Abideen Tareekh

(A). 15,000 Shia supported him but they deserted him when the fighting started. At the end Zayd was left with only 300 men and after a brave fight, he was killed. The body of Zayd was treated very badly by Hisham who refused to allow it to be buried and hung it at Kufa.

#### **11. Walid bin Yazid bin Abdul Malik.**

Hisham died after ruling for 19 years and was succeeded by Walid. Walid was a shameless and foolish man, and he was fond of a pleasurable life, wasting it on wine, adultery and hunting. He was the first ruler to introduce professional singers into his court.

He is famous for having publicly shot arrows at the Qur'an. By this time, the days of the Bani Umayyah were numbered and the voice of outrage against these useless rulers rang everywhere.

To add to this, the Bani Abbas began a campaign to topple the Bani Umayyah. After Walid's death, three more rulers came to power briefly, but they ruled for only a short time before the sun set on this cruel dynasty forever. These rulers were:

#### **12. Yazid bin Walid (6 months).**

#### **13. Ibrahim bin Walid (4 months).**

#### **14. Marwan bin Muhammad bin Marwan (5 years 10 months).**

## **LESSON 10: THE BANI ABBAS - PART 1**

### **I. Introduction**

At the time of the reign of Marwan bin Muhammad, revolts began to take place all over the Muslim Empire. The simultaneous rising of various sections proved too difficult to overcome and Marwan was forced to abandon his throne and flee for his life. He ran from city to city, but everywhere the people turned away from him. Wherever he went, he was relentlessly pursued by the army of the Bani Abbas, who finally killed him in Egypt in 132 A.H. With the death of Marwan the reign of the Bani Umayyah finally came to an end and a bloody chapter of history was closed.

The first people to begin the struggle against the Bani Umayyah were the Shia and the descendants of Imam Ali (A), who were also the first to sacrifice their lives and property in their efforts to overthrow the cruel regime.

The Bani Abbas were descendants of Abbas, the uncle of the Prophet (S). They were quick to capitalise on the general feeling that the Caliphate should be restored to the members of the family of the Prophet (S), the Ahlul Bayt (A). Their slogan was "Ar-Riza min Aale Muhammad". Their slogan meant that they were fighting to restore the rights of the Ahlul Bayt (A) and thus they gained widespread support. Their leader, Saffah, sent his commanders to all the strongholds of the Bani Umayyah to hunt and destroy them. In the process, much blood was spilt. Having subdued most of the followers of the Bani Umayyah, they took over the reins of power and Saffah became the first ruler of the Bani Abbas in 132 A.H.

### **II The Bani Abbas Kings.**

#### **1. Abul Abbas Saffah.**

Saffah spent the four years of his rule in destroying the last traces of the Bani Umayyah. He captured their friends from far and near and subjected them to torture and persecution. He was determined not to rest until he ensured that any threat from the former ruling family was eliminated. In his paranoia he began to kill even those people whose loyalty he was unsure about. Thus all over the empire people were killed on flimsy excuses. The people now began to realise that these new rulers were no less blood-thirsty than their predecessors.

Abul Abbas was given the title "Saffah" because of having shed excessive blood. He once invited 80 members of the Bani Umayyah family for a meal, saying that he wished to talk about peace. On their arrival, he ordered them to be killed, and carpets were then spread on their half-dead bodies. Saffah then began to have his meal while the people lay dying under the carpets. He declared that he had never enjoyed such a delicious meal.

There is no doubt that the Bani Umayyah deserved to be killed, but this behaviour of Saffah was not justified. It indicated the presence of a criminal and deranged mind no less evil than the Bani Umayyah.

Although the Shia and the descendants of Imam Ali (A) had suffered the most under the

rule of the Bani Umayyah, they did not think in terms of revenge and turned away from this sort of behaviour. In an ironic twist of circumstances, some Shia spoke up in defence of the Bani Umayyah in order to save them from the painful death that the Bani Abbas would inflict upon them.

Saffah did not kill or harm any Shia during his rule. This was not due to any love he had for them, because the Bani Abbas proved to be worse enemies of the Shia in later years than Bani Umayyah had ever been. The reasons he did not touch the Shia were:

1. His attention was concentrated on his real enemies, the Bani Umayyah, and he was determined to annihilate all of them.
2. The Shia had recently fought jointly with the Bani Abbas to topple the Bani Umayyah and had been instrumental in securing his throne.
3. The capital of Saffah was Kufa, where the residents were the followers of Imam Ali (A) and he did not yet possess the strength to fight them.

In any case, during the bloody days of the transition of power from the Bani Umayyah to the Bani Abbas, Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (A) and Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (A) were left in relative peace. They took advantage of this opportunity to set up schools to propagate the teachings of Islam according to the Ahlul Bayt (A). As a result we have a wealth of material today on matters of religious law, philosophy, morals and commentary of the Qur'an etc., from that period.

Saffah died in 136 A.H. and was succeeded by his brother Mansoor.

## **LESSON 11: THE BANI ABBAS - PART 2**

### **The Bani Abbas Kings - Cont'd**

#### **2. Mansoor Dawanaqi**

Although Saffah was the first ruler of the Bani Abbas, it is Mansoor who is considered to have laid the foundations of the Abbaside Dynasty. He was the first person to create trouble between the Bani Abbas and the descendants of Imam Ali (A).

The descendants of Imam Hasan (A) were dealt with terribly. Mansoor gathered many of them and imprisoned them in chains. He never asked about them again and they perished of starvation. During the reign of Mansoor, Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (A) advised the Shia to remain silent and obey, because of the deceitful nature of the king. This time was used by the Imam (A) to spread the teachings of Islam to a large number of students.

Mansoor was not satisfied with the silence of the Imam (A) and once remarked, "Although I have killed more than a thousand descendants of the daughter of Muhammad, I have not yet killed their leader and chief". He finally succeeded in his evil intentions and got the Imam (A) poisoned in 148 A.H.

Mansoor killed an untold number of Shia and enjoyed cruelty, inventing different ways to kill people. He struck whips on the eyes of people so they went blind, pulled down houses on the heads of the owners and placed them in walls and buried them alive. He finally died in 158 A.H. after having ruled for 22 years.

#### **3. Mahdi.**

After the death of Mansoor, his son Mahdi came to power. He was no less brutal than his father. During his rule the descendants of Imam Ali (A) became almost non-existent, such was the persecution against them.

By now the people realised that they had replaced the Bani Umayyah with people who were no better and possibly worse in their love for bloodshed. Mahdi died in 169 A.H. and was succeeded by his brother Haadi.

#### **4. Haadi**

Haadi only ruled for 15 months, and was a cruel and ill-mannered man. He appointed Abdul Aziz as his governor in Madina. The governor accused the descendants of Imam Ali (A) of drinking wine and he whipped them publicly and displayed them in the market place to humiliate them.

Although Haadi's life was short, he performed enough notorious acts to have his name recorded in the register of the inhuman criminals of the Muslim nation.

## 5. Haroon ar-Rashid

Haadi was succeeded by his brother Haroon ar-Rashid, who ruled from 170 A.H. to 193 A.H. Haroon became the most famous of the Bani Abbas kings, and anecdotes from his life have been recorded in the stories of the "Arabian Nights". He acquired his reputation due to the great advancement of learning, art and culture during his time.

Haroon administered the affairs of the state well and built mosques, schools, hospitals, houses, bridges, roads and canals throughout the empire. Much of the famous architecture of this period was due to the skills of the Bermecids, who served Haroon for 17 years. In the end, their own merits caused their downfall at the hands of the jealous Haroon.

In spite of his contribution towards improving the general standard of life of the Muslims, the policy of Haroon towards the descendants of Imam Ali (A) showed his great hatred for them. His outward appearance was one of a considerate king, while behind the scenes he set about destroying all traces of the descendants of Imam Ali (A).

The Bani Abbas had recently begun to claim that they were nearer relatives of the Prophet (S), because their link was through a male, while the Ahlul Bayt (A) were related through a female.

Once Haroon asked a descendant of Imam Hasan (A), "Which of us is more closely related to the Prophet (S)?" The man said, "If the Prophet (S) asked for your daughter's hand in marriage would you accept the proposal?" Haroon replied, "By Allah! I would." Then he asked, "And if he asked for my daughter in marriage, is it permissible for me to accept the proposal?" Haroon admitted that such a marriage would be unlawful.

The man then said, "This answers your question, because while I am a descendant of the Prophet (S), you are not." Haroon was very angry at having been thus defeated and left the gathering in a rage.

Haroon also caused the imprisonment of Imam Musa al-Kazim (A). He transferred him from one prison to another and finally poisoned him through Sindi bin Shahak in Baghdad.

Haroon's rule finally ended after 23 years and he died in Toos after ordering that allegiance be given to his son Amin.

## **LESSON 12: THE BANI ABBAS - PART 3**

### **The Bani Abbas Kings - Cont'd**

#### **6. Amin**

Amin ruled for 4 years during which he was too busy leading a life of pleasure to cause much trouble to the descendants of Imam Ali (A). However, he could not resist the ambitious plans of his younger brother Ma'mun. A war broke out between the two brothers and Amin was killed.

#### **7. Ma'mun.**

During the rule of Ma'mun, the Shia faith became firmly rooted in most of the Islamic cities and many of his own ministers were Shia. Ma'mun realised that the former persecution of the Shia had not wiped them out but had instead resulted in the increased determination of the Shia to preserve their faith.

Ma'mun recognised that the Shia were a powerful force and in order to keep them quiet, he deceitfully declared himself to be a Shia. Ma'mun knew that Imam Ali ar-Riza (A) was held in the greatest esteem by the Shia, so he ordered the Imam (A) to come to Baghdad and forced him to accept the position of heir to the throne.

Although the descendants of Imam Ali (A) were safe from persecution during the time of Ma'mun, it was not due to any love that he had for them. Ma'mun had learnt from the mistakes of his father and wanted to ensure that his rule was not endangered by a Shia uprising. Ma'mun was no less evil than his father, because he ultimately managed to kill Imam Ali ar-Riza (A).

Ma'mun died in 210 A.H., and after him the oath of allegiance was taken for Mu'tasim Billah.

#### **8. Mu'tasim Billah**

Mu'tasim ruled for 8 years. He imprisoned Imam Muhammad at-Taqi (A) but then released him and allowed him to go to Madina. However, a few years later he had him recalled to Baghdad where he got the Imam's (A) wife Ummul Fazl, daughter of Ma'mun, to poison him.

#### **9. Wathiq.**

After the death of Mu'tasim, Wathiq came to power and he ruled for 5 years. It has been said that Wathiq honoured the descendants of Imam Ali (A), behaved kindly towards them and gave them wealth. Wathiq died in 232 A.H.

#### **10. Mutawakkil.**

After the death of Wathiq the oath of allegiance was given to his brother Mutawakkil who ruled for 14 years. Mutawakkil was a cruel man who became notorious for his free

living, immodesty and intoxication. He threw parties of pleasure, drink and vain talk.

During the rule of Mutawakkil the state of the Islamic Empire began to deteriorate, as corruption and evil behaviour became widespread.

Mutawakkil did not content himself with torturing those who were alive but also showed disrespect to the dead. He demolished the tomb of Imam Husain (A) and the extension around it, and restrained people from performing Ziyarat. Whoever attempted to do so was either imprisoned or killed.

Mutawakkil was finally killed by his own son Muntasir who could not stand and watch the evil acts of his father. The main reason he killed Mutawakkil was because the man used to abuse Bibi Fatima (A).

The power of the Abbaside Dynasty began to decline after Mutawakkil, who was the last king of any influence. Other factions then rose in the world of Islam, amongst them the Buwayyad, the Hamadani and the Fatimid Dynasties.

As a consequence of this development, the Shia were able to breathe in peace. During these later periods many great Shia scholars were able to contribute to our present day knowledge of Islam.

In all there were 37 kings of Bani Abbas, and their reign lasted till 656 A.H. The kings who ruled after Mutawakkil upto the time of Ghaybat (Concealment) of our 12th Imam (A) are:

**11. Muntasir. Till 247 A.H. (9 months).**

**12. Mustain. Till 252 A.H. (5 years).**

**13. Mu'taz. Till 255 A.H. (3 years).**

Mu'taz caused the death of our 10th Imam (A.S).

**14. Mu'tadi. Till 256 A.H. (1 year).**

**15. Mu'tamad. Till 279 A.H. (21 years).**

Mu'tamad caused the death of our 11th Imam (A).

**16. Mu'tazid. Till 289 A.H. (10 years).**

## **LESSON 13: THE FIRST CRUSADE**

### **Introduction**

The Crusades represent a chapter in the history of confrontation between the East and the West. The East came to be dominated by Islam, and Christianity got a foothold in the West. The conflict between the East and the West thus took over a religious colour. During the seventh, eighth, ninth and tenth centuries the Muslims dominated the world political stage, and the Christians had to lie low. During this period the Caliphate was a strong centralised state, and the Christians were beaten by the Muslims on all fronts. However, a remarkable change in the balance of power occurred between the Christians and the Muslims in the eleventh century. Around 1000 CE the barbarian Vikings and the Magyars who had been raiding and ravaging Europe were converted to Christianity, and that brought in an era of peace and progress for the West. New towns and markets sprang up, and trade and commerce came to flourish.

### **The Muslim World During The Eleventh Century.**

While the eleventh century marked the rise to power of the Christians, it marked the reverse for the Muslim world. By this time the Abbasid caliphate lost its hold and power and their empire stood fragmented.

In Spain the Ummayyad caliphate collapsed in 1031; and then followed half a century of chaos and anarchy which provided opportunity to the Christian powers of the north to gather strength. Up until the tenth century, the Mediterranean Sea was practically a Muslim lake. By the eleventh century however, the Muslims had lost their naval supremacy in the Mediterranean.

### **Origins of the First Crusade.**

The successes of the Christians in Spain and the Mediterranean encouraged them to open a third front against the Muslims in the East.

The Byzantines who were still seeking revenge for the loss of a greater part of their empire to the Muslims since the rise of Islam, appealed to the Pope for help. At this time there was a lot of conflict between the Church and the State, which had brought misery to a lot of people. As a result, the Pope felt that it was the opportune time to launch the crusading movement against the Muslims in order to divert from the civil conflict between the Pope and the princes in feudal Europe. Therefore in 1095, Pope Urban II proclaimed a crusade and called the Christian world to arms in a bid for power against the Muslims.

It was declared that he who participated in the crusade would get the blessings of the Church, and the full remission of all his sins. The cry rose from every pulpit in the Christian world that the Land should be rescued from the Muslims. The cry was taken up in all parts of Europe, and about one hundred and fifty thousand men, responded to the call.

### **The First Crusade : 1095 - 1099**

With each warrior wearing the cross as a badge, the crusaders marched to Asia Minor. Their first confrontation was with the Seljuk Sultan Qilij, who was defeated. He lost his capital Nicaea, and after annexing this city, the crusaders advanced to Armenia. The Norman Crusaders took the whole of Armenia, where they set up a Christian principality in Edessa. By 1098, Antioch in Northern Syria, had also fallen to the crusaders, and shortly after that, they marched south along the coast and captured the coastal town of Tripoli.

From Tripoli, the crusaders advanced towards Jerusalem. They reached Jerusalem in 1099 and laid siege to the city. The city fell after a month and then the entire Muslim population of over 10000 was killed. Jerusalem was created an independent principality.

### **Consequences of the First Crusade**

The first crusade ended in considerable success for the Christians. The Muslims were not united enough to have put up a strong front against them. There was betrayal among the Muslims as the followers of Hasan Sabah, known as the "Assassins", openly helped the Crusaders.

As a result of the first crusade, the Christians were able to set up five strongholds in the heart of the Muslim world.

## **LESSON 14: THE SECOND CRUSADE : 1144 - 1155**

### **Political Situation After The First Crusade**

After the first crusade, a state of stalemate continued for some fifty years. The Christians had set up five principalities and occupied an area across the Mediterranean coast about fifty miles wide. The rest of the country remained under Muslim control. The Christian powers however, were now beginning to fight among themselves and were unable to forge a united front. As a result, they were not able to extend their conquests. Furthermore, there was no strong power among the Muslims, which could expel the Christians from their principalities

### **Imad-ud-Din Zangi**

Towards the middle of the twelfth century, a strong ruler Imad-ud-Din Zangi rose in Mosul. He took up the fight among the Muslims and spearheaded the movement of Jihad against the Christians. In 1144, he invaded Armenia, and after a brief siege, he recovered Edessa. This was an important victory for the Muslims, and this spread a lot of anxiousness and dismay among the Christians. Imad-ud-Din did not survive for very long after this victory; he was assassinated in 1146 CE.

### **Nur-ud-Din Zangi.**

Imad-ud-Din was succeeded by his son Nur-ud Din, who was even more determined to fight for the Muslim cause. After his father's death, Edessa was reconquered by the Christians. As a result, Nur-ud Din led his forces into Armenia and managed to get back Edessa again.

The news of the fall of Edessa was received in Europe with great concern, and Pope Eugene III, proclaimed another crusade. The second crusade was led by Louis VII of France, and Conrad III of Germany. However, a greater part of the forces of Conrad was defeated in Asia Minor, and the forces of Louis was largely destroyed while crossing the Admus river. In a confrontation with the forces of Nur-ud Din Zangi near Antioch, the crusaders suffered a defeat, and as a result, part of the principality of Antioch was occupied by Nur-ud Din Zangi.

### **The Siege Of Damscus**

The object of the second crusade was the recapture of Edessa. With the destruction of a greater part of the crusaders army in Asia Minor and their subsequent defeat near Antioch, the crusaders altered their plan, and instead of proceeding to Edessa, they went to Jerusalem instead. After getting reinforcement from Jerusalem, the crusaders decided to invade Damascus as a diversion.

The crusaders laid siege to the city of Damascus. The siege lasted for some time, until the inhabitants of Damascus managed to send a message to Nur-ud-Din Zangi for help. Immediately Nur-ud-Din and his forces advanced towards Damascus. However, upon hearing of this advance, the crusaders quarrelled among themselves, lifted the siege and withdrew from Damascus. Damascus was now back under the control of the Muslims.

### **Consequences of the Second Crusade**

With the occupation of Damascus by Nur-ud-Din Zangi, the balance of power changed in favour of the Muslims. The Christians had hoped that with the occupation of Damascus, they would have a strong base from where they could extend their conquests further inland. They had failed in securing this strategy. On the other hand, with the occupation of Damascus by Nur-ud-Din Zangi, a strong Muslim state came to be established next door to the Christian strongholds. The Christian states were disunited and quarrelled among themselves.

The establishment of a strong Muslim state under Nur-ud-Din Zangi did not merely block their way to extend, but it also posed a threat to their very existence.

Hostilities ceased in 1155 and the second crusade was over. The Christians had failed to achieve the object for which the second crusade had been organised. The second crusade ended as a setback for the crusaders. They failed to recapture Edessa; they lost part of Antioch.

After the second crusade the Latin states were weaker and more disunited than they were before the crusades.

## **LESSON 15: THE THIRD CRUSADE: 1187 - 1192**

### **Rise of Salah-ud-Din**

After the second crusade, the situation was calm for a generation. In the seventies of the twelfth century, Salah-ud Din Ayyubi rose to power in Egypt. In 1171, he put an end to the Fatimid rule in Egypt and by 1174, he had captured Damascus.

### **Fall of Jerusalem**

During this time, the principality of Jerusalem faced a lot of trouble. Taking advantage of the chaos in Jerusalem, Salah-ud Din led his forces against the Christians in 1187. He and his forces marched against Jerusalem, where a battle took place at Hittin, overlooking the sea of Galilee. Here the Christian army of 20,000 was destroyed and the city re-conquered by the Muslims.

The fall of Jerusalem was a serious blow to the Christians, and the Pope consequently raised the call for another crusade. Richard of England, Barbarossa of Germany and Philip of France led the crusaders. Barbarossa who came by land, was drowned crossing a river. The crusaders under Richard and Philip came by sea. The crusade began with a siege of the port of Accra by crusaders. Accra fell to the crusaders; and thereafter they advanced to Jaffa and Ascalon, which also fell to them. From there, the crusaders under Richard advanced to Jerusalem.

In the battle outside Jerusalem, the crusaders suffered a heavy defeat. As a result, Salah-ud-Din recaptured Jaffa and Ascalon. The crusaders now fell back on Accra, where Richard fell sick and was forced to ask for terms. Peace was eventually concluded in November 1192; the peace was for a period of three years, three months and three days. According to the terms of the treaty the Muslims retained Jerusalem, but the Christians were allowed free access to the city for pilgrimage.

### **Consequences of the Third Crusade**

The third crusade ended in failure for the Christians. The crusade was organised with a view to recovering Jerusalem from the occupation of the Muslims. However, the crusaders could not dislodge the Muslims from Jerusalem. The crusade also cost the crusaders a heavy loss of life. In spite of the hostilities there was a good deal of exchange of courtesies on the two sides. In this crusade, Salah-ud-Din emerged as the hero and the champion of Islam.

### **The Last Five Crusades**

After the third crusade, there were a further five crusades that took place between 1194 and 1218; all of which ended in complete failure for the Christians. In the beginning the Christians had succeeded in setting up five principalities. Thereafter their advance was held up and the scales gradually tilted in favour of the Muslims leading to the ultimate expulsion of the Christians from the Muslim lands towards the close of the thirteenth century.

## **LESSON 16: PRINCIPAL DYNASTIES IN ISLAMIC HISTORY**

Many dynasties ruled in various parts of the Muslim world. What is interesting is that, like a human person, dynasties too have a span of life. They rise to importance, grow in strength, dominate the political stage for some time, suffer from decline and then disappear from history.

### **The Mongol II - Khans: 1258 CE - 1353 CE**

After the fall of the Abbaside caliphate in 1258 CE, Halaku became the ruler of Iraq and Iran, and founded the rule of Mongol II Khan dynasty. He invaded Syria in 1269 CE, but was later defeated. Halaku died soon after and was succeeded by his son Abaqa. Abaqa invaded Syria in 1280 CE, but the Mongols were defeated by the Mamluks at the battle of Hims. Abaqa was succeeded by Takudar who became a Muslim; and shortly after, was overthrown. Ghazan who came to power in 1295 CE was also a Muslim, and thereafter all the Khan rulers were Muslim. In 1299 CE, Ghazan defeated the Mamluks and occupied Syria. The Mamluks however, recovered Syria in 1303 CE. The last of the Mongol rulers, Abu Said, was involved in haram scandals and was poisoned to death in 1335 CE. After him, there was anarchy. The Mongol II-Khan rule was finally extinguished in 1353 CE.

The Golden Horde Khanate: 1256 CE - 1554 CE. Russia/Eastern Europe.

The Chughtayids: 1252 CE - 1462 CE.

The Safavids: 1501 CE - 1736 CE. Persia.

The Mamluks: 1254 CE - 1517 CE. Egypt.

The Ottoman Turks: 1360 CE - 1890 CE. Turkey.

The Ottoman Turks dynasty was founded by Othman in the later part of the thirteenth century. The expanded a great deal and indeed, became a very powerful dynasty. They annexed, occupied and lost a considerable number of towns, cities countries. For centuries, they dominated the scene.

By 1817 however, the Turks were forced to withdraw from Serbia and recognise its independence. Greece revolted, and by the Treaty of Adrianople, Turkey had to recognise the independence of Greece. Furthermore with France occupying Tunis in 1881 CE and Great Britain occupying Egypt in 1882 CE, by the close of the nineteenth century, Turkey had become a ghost of its former self and victim to disintegration.

The Hafsids: 1228 CE - 1277 CE. Tunisia.

The Nasrids: 1272 CE - 1492 CE. Spain.

The Khediv 1801 CE - 1892 CE. Egypt.

The Delhi Sultanate 1286 CE - 1526 CE. India

The Afghans 1747 CE - 1879 CE. Afghanistan

All these dynasties fought and ruled throughout various parts of the Muslim world. They were respected and feared, supported and opposed, but eventually, each was doomed to disintegration and decline.

## **LESSON 17: ISLAM AND THE SWORD**

When the Muslims embarked on their spectacular career of conquests, they had to contend against the mighty empires of the Persians and the Byzantines. The sword lay with these empires and not the Arabs, the dwellers of the desert. If the Muslims won the day against the non-Muslims, such victory was as a result of the strength of their faith; not the sword. The people of these countries accepted Islam, of their own free will. The people of these conquered countries were given the option of either accepting Islam or paying a nominal tax and continue with their old religion.

When Syria was conquered by the Muslims, the Christians had the choice to migrate to other Christian territories. They however, chose to remain in Syria. This shows there was no compulsion on them to accept Islam. Similarly after the conquests of Egypt, the Muslims allowed the non-Muslims complete liberty in the profession of their religion. Indeed, the conversions to Islam in the conquered territories of Syria, Egypt and Persia was spread over more than a century. If Islam had spread through the sword, the conversions to Islam should have followed immediately after the conquests.

### **Islam In Spain**

The Muslims ruled over Spain for some several hundred years. If the sword had been used to spread Islam, all the people of Spain would have been converted Muslims; this was not the case. Furthermore, the Muslims were eventually expelled from Spain. Therefore, if they would have used the sword for the spread of Islam, then they would have remained the masters of Spain.

### **Islam In Russia**

The Muslims were the dominant power in Russia for over two hundred years. If they had used the sword to convert the people to Islam, there would be no non-Muslim in Russia today. The very fact that the Muslims lost Russia, shows that no attempt was made to spread Islam through the sword.

### **Islam In Eastern Europe**

The Ottoman Turks were the masters for the eastern part of Europe for more than a century. If the Muslims had employed the sword for the conversion of the people to Islam, there would be no Christians in Eastern Europe today.

### **Islam In The Lands Under The Occupation Of The Non Muslims**

During the course of history, the Muslims had to withdraw from many lands. If Islam had been spread through the sword, the people of such lands, if they would have accepted Islam under any compulsion, would have reverted to their original religions after the withdrawal of the Muslims from such lands. This however, did not happen, which shows that Islam with such converts was a matter of conviction and not a matter of compulsion or force.

### **Conversion Of The Mongols To Islam**

When the Mongols dismantled the Abbaside Caliphate and occupied the Muslim lands, they held the swords over the heads of the Muslims. Although Christianity tried its best to convert the Mongols, they failed and the Mongols accepted Islam. Their original aim had been to destroy Islam; so their conversion to it instead, showed that they accepted it not out of any compulsion, but because they were convinced Islam was a superior faith.

### **Islam In Indonesia And Malaya**

No Muslim power ever led any Muslim force to these lands in South east Asia. Islam was carried to these lands by Muslim traders and preachers.

## LESSON 18: ISLAM'S ROLE IN HISTORY

The Holy Qur'an is not a book in of history, but many historical events are referred to in it, and we have been required to learn from history. In the opening chapter of the Holy Qur'an, we are required to pray to Allah to show us the right way - not the way of those on whom His wrath has fallen. There are references to the old nations who deviated and were punished by Allah. We have also been told that the Holy Prophet (S) of Islam is the seal of the prophets and that there would be no more prophets after him. Thus with Islam, mankind has come of age, and that thereafter there would be no need of any further guidance. Indeed, history begins with Islam. All accounts previous to the advent of Islam are mere legends. Islam has made history.

According to Islam the people are required to establish Allah's rule on earth and to act on behalf of Allah in accordance with His commands. As such according to the Islamic point of view, all that happens in history is a manifestation of the Will of God.

Apart from the punishment that is to be awarded in the Hereafter, Allah punishes the people for their sins in this world as well. Allah may punish people through natural calamities such as floods, fires, famines, epidemics, earthquakes etc. He may also choose one set of people to punish another set of people. Allah gives ample opportunity to the people to reform themselves and follow the straight way, but when they persist in following the wrong way, they cannot escape the wrath of Allah.

Many instances in Islamic History show that a higher power is at work to make history. For instance, no one could imagine that the Arabs, the dwellers of the desert, would overthrow the mighty empires of the Persian and the Byzantines. When Baghdad fell, and the Abbaside Caliph was trampled to death under the hoofs of the Mongol horses, no one could ever dream that these people, so hostile to Islam would be converted to Islam. When the Umayyads were the masters of Spain, who could foretell that after eight hundred years of rule, the Muslims were to be expelled from Spain. Who could imagine that the Turks would establish one of the largest empires in history.

Indeed there are many events in history which cannot be predicted. Therefore, it is obvious that there is some mysterious power which shapes the course of history; this power is Allah.

The western historian seeks to interpret the events of history according to the law of cause and effect; whereas a Muslim historian is to interpret history according to the will of Allah. Therefore, while secular history is man oriented; Islamic history is God oriented.

## LESSON 19: THE WISDOM OF LUQMAN

Luqman is not generally believed to be a Prophet, but he was a man who had been specially endowed with wisdom by Allah . He was the nephew of Prophet Ayyub (A) and lived at the time of Prophet Dawood (A). He was an extremely pious man and used to mostly remain silent while he pondered about the nature of life. Sometimes he would come to Prophet Dawood (A) to discuss problems.

One of Luqman's wives and some of his sons were disbelievers and so he preached to them about faith in Allah till they embraced Islam. His words of wisdom were worthy of being quoted in the Holy Qur'an, which says:

*[And indeed We gave to Luqman wisdom, saying, "Be grateful to Allah; for whoever is grateful, verily he is only grateful for his own self; and whoever is ungrateful, (it is to the discredit of his own self) then verily Allah is Self-Sufficient, the Most Praised." And when Luqman said to his son while he counselled him, "O my son! Do not associate anything (in authority) with Allah, for verily associating (anything) with Allah is the greatest sin."*

*And We enjoined man concerning his parents; his mother bears him in weakness upon weakness and his weaning takes two years. Be grateful to Me and unto your parents, (and remember that) unto me is the ultimate return.*

*"O my son! verily if it is even the very weight of the grain of a mustard seed (closed) in (even) a rock, or (be it high) in the heavens or (buried deep) in the earth, Allah will bring it to light; Allah is All-Subtle (Lateef), All-Aware. O my son! Establish prayer and enjoin the good and forbid the evil, and be patient against what befalls you; verily this is the task of steadfastness. And do not turn your face to people (in scorn) and do not walk proudly in the earth; verily Allah does not like any self-conceited boaster. And be moderate (modest) and lower your voice; verily the most unpleasant of voices is the braying of the donkeys."*

*Luqman, 31 : 12 - 14, 16 - 19*

Luqman lived for 1,000 years from the time of Prophet Dawood (A) to that of Prophet Yunus (A). His life and words are a great lesson in Akhlaq (morals) for mankind.

## LESSON 20: THE STORY OF BIBI FIZZA

Bibi Fizza had come from Abyssinia to Arabia as a slave. She was freed by the Holy Prophet (S) and afterwards served Bibi Fatimah (A) as her maid-servant. Bibi Fatimah (A) divided her house work equally between herself and Bibi Fizza and they would take turns to do the chores. She remained faithful to the household of Ahlul Bayt (A) and even accompanied them to Kerbala and the prison of Sham. She also had the honour of taking part in the "Three Days Fast". Once, when Imam Hasan (A) and Imam Husain (A) fell sick, the Holy Prophet (S) suggested that Imam Ali (A) make a vow (Nazr) to fast for three days when the children recovered. When they were better, Imam Ali (A), Bibi Fatimah (A), Imam Hasan (A), Imam Husain (A) and Bibi Fizza all fasted to fulfil the vow.

However, on each of the three days, when they sat to break their fast, a hungry person called at their door. The first said he was poor, the second said he was an orphan and the third said he was a freed captive. Each time, the big-hearted members of the house, including Bibi Fizza, gave away their food and broke their fast with water. In praise of this selfless action Allah revealed the 76th Chapter of the Holy Qur'an. The incident is described as follows:

*[They who fulfil their vows, and fear the day, the woe of which stretches far and wide. And they give away food, out of love for Him, to the poor and the orphan and the captive, (saying), "We feed you only for the sake of Allah, we do not want anything from you, not even thanks. Verily we fear from our Lord a stern day of distress." So Allah will guard them from the evil of that day and give them freshness and pleasure.*

*Dahr (Insaan), 76 : 7 - 11]*

Abdullah Mubarak has related a very interesting dialogue between himself and Bibi Fizza. He states, "I saw a woman passing through the desert who had fallen behind the caravan and asked her, "Who are you and where are you from?" She replied:

*[And say, "Salaam" for they shall soon know!*

*Zukhruf, 43 : 89]*

I learned that she expected me to greet her and say "Assalaamu Alaykum" first, before any question. I did as she reminded, and then enquired why she was in the desert. She answered:

*[And whomsoever Allah guides, there can be none to lead astray!*

*Zumar, 39 : 37]*

On hearing her reply, I asked her, "Are you from mankind or from the jinn?" She replied:

*[O Children of Adam! be adorned at every time of prostration.*

*A'raaf, 7: 31]*

I understood that she was human and then asked her, "Where are you coming from?" She replied:

*[Those who are called to from a place far off.*

*Ha Mim 41:44]*

I asked her, "Where are you intending to go?" She said:

*[And (purely) for Allah, is incumbent upon mankind, the Pilgrimage of the House.*

*Ale Imran, 3 : 97]*

I asked her how many days she had been travelling. She told me:

*[And indeed We (Allah) created the heavens and the earth and what is between*

*them two, in six days.*

*Qaaf, 50: 38]*

I asked her, "Do you feel hungry?" She replied:

*[We (Allah) did not make them such bodies that ate no food.*

*Anbiya, 21 : 8]*

I gave her food and asked her to hurry up to catch the caravan but she replied:

*[Allah does not task any soul beyond its ability.*

*Baqarah, 2: 286]*

I suggested that she sit on the camel behind me, but she said:

*[Had there been gods therein besides Allah, there would have been disorder in both (the heavens and the earth).*

*Anbiya, 21: 22]*

I realised that, because we were not husband and wife, it was Haraam for both of us to ride the camel. So I got off and mounted her on it. As she sat on the camel, she said:

*[Glory to Him Who subjected this to us.*

*Zukhruf 43: 13]*

When we reached the caravan, I asked her, "Do you know anyone among them?" She called out in reply:

*[O Dawood, Verily, We have appointed you a vicegerent in the earth.*

*Saad, 38: 26]*

*[And Muhammad is not but a Messenger."*

*Aale Imran, 3 : 144]*

*[O Yahya! Hold the book with firmness!"*

*Maryam, 19 : 12]*

*[O Musa! Verily I am Allah, the All-Mighty.*

*Naml, 27: 9]*

I began to call out these four names at which four youths came out of the caravan and ran towards Bibi Fizza. I asked her who they were and she replied:

*[Wealth and children are the adornment of the world.*

*Kahf, 18: 46]*

I realised that they were her sons. The woman turned to the youth and said:

*[O my Father, employ him, verily the best of those who you can employ is the strong man and the trusted one.*

*Qasas, 28 : 26]*

She thus made them understand that I had helped her. Then she told them:

*[And verily God increases manifold to whosoever He wills.*

*Baqarah, 2: 261]*

The sons understood their mother's hint and paid me well. I asked them who this noble lady was, and they replied, "She is our mother, Fizza, the maid-servant of Lady Fatima (A). She has conversed in nothing but the Holy Qur'an for the last 20 years."