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

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01

Taqwaa:
Allah-Consciousness or Heedfulness of Allah

The Term *Taqwaa*

The conventional translation of the term *taqwaa* as fear of Allah does not render the positive content of this expression. The term *taqwaa* denotes, among other things, the awareness of Allah's all encompassing knowledge and the desire to mould one's existence, in the light of this awareness. Hence, the interpretation adopted by some translators 'guarding oneself against evil', 'carefulness of one's duty', or 'guarding oneself extraordinarily from what would harm him in the life of the world to come', etc. does not give more than one particular aspect of the concept of *taqwaa*, or heedfulness of Allah.

The Concept of *Taqwaa*

Taqwaa is one of the most important themes in the Glorious Qur'an and the *Sunnah* of the Prophet ﷺ. It is in fact the bedrock of religion. In numerous *ahaadeeth*, Allah's Messenger ﷺ advised believers to practise *taqwaa*. In reality, this one characteristic of *taqwaa* combines all of the good of this worldly life and the afterlife.

Lane's Definition of the Term *Taqwaa*

In his monumental work titled *Arabic-English Lexicon*, E. W. Lane defines the term *taqwaa* in the following manner, 'He preserved or guarded himself exceedingly, or extraordinarily, from sin'. It may often be rendered 'he was pious or careful of his religious duties'. (Lane, vol. 2, p. 3059, 2003 Reprint)

The word *taqwaa* is often followed by the Name of Allah, Most High: have *Taqwaa* of Allah. This means that one should protect oneself from Allah's displeasure and punishment. This can only be done by obeying Him. This is the minimum aspect of *taqwaa*. In order to have complete *taqwaa* or protection from Allah's anger, one must perform all the obligatory deeds that he is capable of, and keep away from all of the prohibited acts and matters that one has doubt about. *Taqwaa*, therefore, is to act in obedience to Allah; it is to avoid acts of disobedience of Allah.

In order to attain *taqwaa*, one should protect and carefully keep oneself away from committing *shirk* – associating partners with Allah in worship. One should refrain from the great as well as small sins. One must also avoid disliked works and matters that one doubts.



Satan is your Enemy, so Take him as your Enemy

The activities of Satan are all-pervasive. Man must, therefore, constantly be alert and on his guard. Whenever the human self relaxes its watchfulness, it is liable to be preyed upon by Satan's beguiling although every human is, to some extent and in principle, as it were, exposed to Satan's tempting or beguiling. People who have *taqwaa* do not really lapse into evil, but become quickly aware of Satan's machinations. Thus, the Glorious Qur'an advises, **'Should a prompting from Satan invade you, seek refuge in Allah; Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing. Those who are on their guard, when a seductive glamour from Satan touches them, they quickly remember [Allah] and thus begin to see things clearly [once again].'** (7: 200-201)

This means that Satan's activity essentially consists in confusing a person and temporarily clouding his inner thoughts. The Qur'an stresses that, although no human is in principle totally immune from the touch of Satan or devil, he has no sway over those who are on guard against an invasion of their moral integrity. Thus, Allah, Most High makes it very clear to Satan: **'Indeed, upon my servants, you will be able to exercise no influence, but only those errant ones who follow you.'** (15: 42) He also says, **'He has no authority over those who believe and put their faith in their Lord.'** (16: 99)

This shows that Satan's whisperings alone are not strong. It is only man's weakness and lack of moral courage and alertness that makes Satan seem so strong. Satan, in reality, is more cunning and artful than being strong. He is more deceitful and contriving. He is more treacherous and waylaying than giving battle. It, therefore, follows that Satan is not powerful. Man is weak. Satan's master trick is to cause something to look attractive and tempting with the dross of the world as if it were tinsel. This is why he will say, on the Day of Judgement, to those who will accuse him of leading them astray, **'Allah made you a true promise, whereas I made you a false promise. I had no power over you, but only I invited you to error and you accepted my invitation. Do not blame me, but only yourself.'** (14: 22) It is, therefore, Satan's power of each person will differ.

Thus the real problem lies within man himself, because he is a blend of good and evil. He is a blend of ignorance and knowledge. He is a blend of power and impotence. The key to man's defence, therefore, is *taqwaa*. *Taqwaa* literally means defence, and it is a kind of inner light. It is a spiritual spark which man must kindle within himself to distinguish between right and wrong; between truth and falsehood; between seeming real and real; between dross and tinsel, between immediate and lasting. Once a human kindles the spark of *taqwaa* within himself, he should be able to see Satan's footsteps for what they are, and not be deceived by them.

It is reported that Umar ibn al-Khattaab ﷺ once asked the learned companion Ubayy ibn Ka'b about the true meaning of *taqwaa*. Ubayy asked Umar, 'Have you ever taken a path between thorny bushes?' 'Yes, I have,' Umar replied. Ubayy asked again, 'How did you manage to get through it?' Umar replied, 'I gathered up my clothes and tried my best to avoid the thorns.' Ubayy said, 'This is precisely what *taqwaa* is.'



- Give the meaning of *taqwaa* in the words of E. W. Lane.
- What does it mean 'to have *taqwaa* of Allah'?
- What should we do in order to achieve *taqwaa*?
- What do people who have *taqwaa* do when tempted by Satan?
- What is the true nature of Satan?
- What did Ubayy ibn Ka'b compare *taqwaa* to?

Taqwaa in Action

Abu Hurayrah reported that Allah's Messenger ﷺ once came upon a stack of food, and he inserted his hand in it. When his fingers reached something moist, he turned to the food-merchant and asked, 'What is this, O Food-merchant?' The Food-merchant replied, 'It has been affected by the rain, Messenger of Allah.' Thereupon, Allah's Messenger ﷺ said, 'Then why did you not put it on top of the stack so that people can see it? He who defrauds us is not of us.' (Muslim)

A Word of Caution Regarding _Taqwaa_

Taqwaa signifies in Arabic a state of mind and heedfulness. A pious person thinks carefully before taking any action. He sees first whether his act is permitted by the *sharee'ah* or not. This reference to the *sharee'ah* at every step is a pointer to one's *taqwaa*. Thus, *taqwaa* is an outlook; it is an attitude and temperament.

Exercise

A. Fill in the blanks.

1. *Taqwaa* is the _____ of religion.
2. The key to man's defence against evil is _____.
3. No human is immune from the touch of _____.

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

1. Satan sways even people who are continually guarding their moral integrity. _____
2. The activities of Satan are not all-pervasive. _____
3. Man's weakness makes Satan seem so strong. _____

***Taqwaa* in a person**
is not visible physically;
it is rather a state of mind.

The Believers

02

Soorat al-Mu'minoon 23: 1-11

The Seven Attributes of a Believer

Most of the classical commentators agree that this *soorah* was revealed towards the end of the Makkan period. It consists of one hundred and eighteen verses. It is the twenty-third *soorah* of the Qur'an. From the first to the last verse, the discourse centres, as the title of the *soorah* suggests, on the issues of:

(1) True faith,
(2) The overwhelming evidence, which points to the existence of an Almighty Creator,
(3) Man's ultimate responsibility before His Creator.

The objective of this lesson is to study the first eleven verses of this *soorah*.

Translation of the Meaning

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

بِسْمِ ٱللَّهِ ٱلرَّحْمَٰنِ ٱلرَّحِيمِ

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ ٱلْمُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١﴾ ٱلَّذِينَ هُمْ فِى صَلَاتِهِمْ خَٰشِعُونَ ﴿٢﴾
وَٱلَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنِ ٱللَّغْوِ مُعْرِضُونَ ﴿٣﴾ وَٱلَّذِينَ هُمْ لِلزَّكَوٰةِ
فَٰعِلُونَ ﴿٤﴾ وَٱلَّذِينَ هُمْ لِفُرُوجِهِمْ حَٰفِظُونَ ﴿٥﴾ إِلَّا عَلَىٰٓ
أَزْوَٰجِهِمْ أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَٰنُهُمْ فَإِنَّهُمْ غَيْرُ مَلُومِينَ ﴿٦﴾
فَمَنِ ٱبْتَغَىٰ وَرَآءَ ذَٰلِكَ فَأُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ هُمُ ٱلْعَادُونَ ﴿٧﴾ وَٱلَّذِينَ هُمْ
لِأَمَٰنَٰتِهِمْ وَعَهْدِهِمْ رَٰعُونَ ﴿٨﴾ وَٱلَّذِينَ هُمْ عَلَىٰ صَلَوَٰتِهِمْ
يُحَافِظُونَ ﴿٩﴾ أُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ هُمُ ٱلْوَٰرِثُونَ ﴿١٠﴾ ٱلَّذِينَ يَرِثُونَ
ٱلْفِرْدَوْسَ هُمْ فِيهَا خَٰلِدُونَ ﴿١١﴾

1. Successful indeed are the believers.
2. Those who humble themselves in their prayers.
3. And those who turn away from all that is senseless.
4. And those who are active in *az-Zakaat*.
5. And those who guard their chastity.
6. Except from their wives or what their right hand possesses – for then, they are free from blame.
7. But whoever seeks beyond that, they indeed are the transgressors.
8. Those who are faithfully true to their trusts and promises.
9. And those who strictly guard their prayers.
10. Those are indeed the heirs,
11. Who shall inherit *Al-Firdaws* (Paradise). They shall dwell therein forever.

Explanation:

The success is for the believers, whose qualities are described here (verses 2-9). Faith or true belief (*eemaan*) requires its owner to respond to the commandments and prohibitions of Allah with excellent obedience and full compliance.

The name believer (*Mu'min*) is among the most noble of all names and descriptions. Since Allah refers to us in the world with the most noble of all names and descriptions, we may hope that, from His gracious favour, He will treat us in the hereafter with the best kind of treatment. The Arabic word *falaah* means success and prosperity. To say that someone has acquired *falaah* amounts to saying that he has achieved his objective. He has achieved prosperity and well-being.

The opening verses of this *soorah* (2-9) set forth the qualities of the true believers. These qualities serve as proof that it is the act of believing that leads the believers to success.

The First Attribute: 'Those Who Humble Themselves in prayers.' (Verse 2)

Those who are *khaashi'oon* during their *salaah*: The true meaning of *khushoo'* is to lower oneself before someone. It means to be submissive and show humility. The state called *Khushoo'* is related both to the heart and the outward conditions of one's body. *Khushoo'* in *salaah* is realised when the person's heart is attuned to the prayer. The feeling in the heart is then reflected on the body. The person remains still and calm. His gaze is lowered. Even his voice displays the feeling of his heart. They feel the reverence of the prayer, as they stand to address Allah. Their hearts are thus filled with awe. It is, in turn, reflected in their features and movements. Their spirits feel Allah's Majesty as they realize that they stand in His presence. Thus, all their preoccupations and distractions vanish. In His sublime presence, they are heedless of all their surroundings.

Allah's forgiveness and pleasure are closely related to the prayers. Allah's Messenger ﷺ once said, 'If a person performs two units of prayer without the distraction of any worldly thought, all his previous sins will be forgiven.' (al-Bukhaaree and Muslim)

Allah, Great and Glorious is He, also said, 'Do not approach the prayer when you are intoxicated until you know what you are saying.' (*an-Nisaa* 4: 43) The root of the matter resides in the wording 'until you know what you are saying'. Many are those who pray without really having drunk wine; yet do not know what they are saying in their prayers!

How can one better focus one's mind on prayer? Concentration relates to the whole of life. A man, who is normally distracted by worldly matters, cannot suddenly switch off all the noises within him and achieve full concentration.

Khushoo' in prayer can only be attained by someone who has emptied his heart totally, who pays no attention to anything else besides it and who prefers it above all. Allah's Messenger ﷺ is reported to have said, 'The coolness of my eyes lies in *salaah*.' *Khushoo'* is essentially a condition of the heart, but the *Sharee'ah*, or the Divine Law, does prescribe certain things which are required to be observed in prayers. They help create the state of mind that is helpful in gaining *khushoo'*; for instance, one of these rules is that during prayer one should move one's head neither to the left nor to the right. Nor should one look upward. It is also forbidden to move about or bend in different directions while one is offering the prayer. Likewise, it is not permitted to fold one's clothes over and over again, or brush or rub them, or play with them. Similarly, to yawn or belch loudly while in prayer is not consistent with the good manners of offering the prayers. The Prophet ﷺ said, 'Yawning is caused by the devil, so when one of you yawns he must repress it as much as he can.' (al-Bukhaaree and Muslim)

There are several bad habits that should be completely avoided during the performance of the prayer, namely:

Grunting with deliberate intent; fidgeting deliberately; sneezing with deliberate intent; raising one's head and gazing up towards the sky; inspecting one's clothes in search of tiny, foreign objects; heaving a deep sigh, turning and glancing around, picking one's teeth; licking one's lips; swallowing food amounting to a grain or couple of grains; belching undigested food; deliberate coughing; dusting the spot where the forehead will be placed in the act of prostration; fiddling with one's clothes or with one's cell phone.



- What issue does *Soorat al-Mu'minoon* deal with?
- Explain what *khushoo'* in *salaah* means.
- How does the Divine Law help us in attaining *khushoo'* in prayer?

The Second Attribute: 'And Those who Turn away From all That is Senseless.' (Verse 3)

The Arabic word '*laghw*' signifies idle talk. It is speech which is futile, irrelevant and bears no relation to any purpose. It brings no benefit to the one who utters it. It may well bring misfortune instead. Hence all things, be they words or actions of the body, which have no benefit whatsoever or which lead to no useful results, fall under the meanings of '*laghw*'.

The believers avoid and hold themselves back from what is vain and frivolous. The essence of the verse is that the believers do not concern themselves with things that are pointless, irrelevant and fruitless. They rather pay no attention to them at all. They hold themselves back from approaching places where people are engaged in frivolous things, let alone directly take part in them. If they come face to face with nonsense, they simply turn away from it. If they are confronted with it, they remain aloof and withdrawn.

A Believer is Bestowed with Good Taste; his Temperament is Chaste

A true believer is always mindful of his duties. He looks at his being placed in the world as though he were in an examination hall, where he is taking a test. While seated in the hall, he fully concentrates on the examination. He knows that the time given to him to complete the test is very short. He, therefore, utilizes each and every second so that he might give the best possible performance. A believer spends all his time in pursuits which produce useful results. Even in choosing his leisure activities, he selects those that are beneficial to him. He regards his time a precious and priceless commodity.

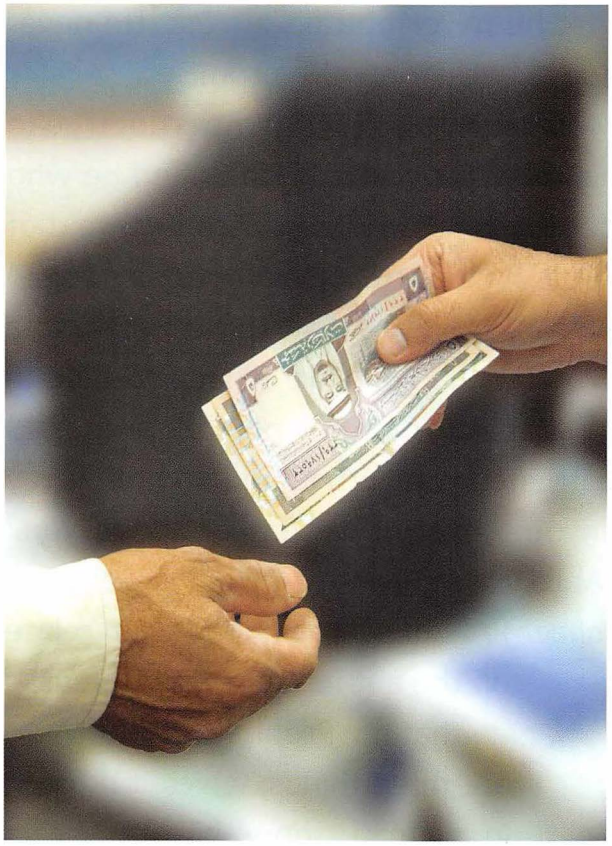
Moreover, he is blessed with good taste. His temperament is chaste. He is bestowed with fine sensibility. He is not attracted to things that are vulgar or obscene. He engages in useful talk, certainly not in silly gossip. He enjoys humour, wit and refined jokes; but he refrains from vulgarity. He keeps away from dirty jokes and clownishness. This *aayah* is truly profound in meaning and has far-reaching implications. If one ponders over the meaning of this verse, and applies it correctly, it could lead him to a great deal of good.

Allah's Messenger ﷺ once said, 'Part of the goodness of a person's Islam is his leaving alone that which is of no concern to him.' (at-Tirmidhee, and it is *saheeh*)

The things which are of no concern to a believer are the forbidden acts, things he has doubts about, and over-occupation in permitted matters of which he is not in need!

A Common Problem Today

A common problem among Muslims today is their unending pursuits and study of matters with very little benefit to them, if at all, while at the same time disregarding the most important matters that are of great significance and of great benefit. How much time do studying and Muslims today spend learning the Noble Qur'an? Compare this amount of time to the time they spend watching television, gossiping, debating trivial matters and reading various books for detailed information on different subjects with little benefit.



The Third Attribute: 'And those who are Active in *az-Zakaat*.' (Verse 4)

Most scholars say that the meaning here is the *Zakaat* that is paid on wealth. This *aayah* was, however, revealed in Makkah and the *Zakaat* was prescribed in Madeenah in the year 2 A H. The obvious meaning is that the basic principle of *Zakaat* was revealed in Makkah, while the *Zakaat* based on *nisaab* (the minimum levels of various wealth which obligate a believer to give *Zakaat*) was prescribed in Madeenah.

It is, however, significant to realize that the primary meaning of the word *Zakaat* is purification and growth. Hence it may embrace a wide range of acts including purification of one's character, and purification of virtually everything. Allah knows best!

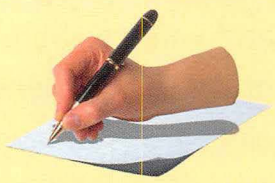
The Fourth Attribute: 'And those who Guard their Chastity.' (Verses 5-7)

This means that those who guard their chastity do not give way to their desires with any but their spouses or wives, or those whom they rightfully possess. The phrase 'or their right hand possessions' denotes captive women who were taken during battles. Those who seek to go beyond this limit are truly transgressors.

The physical relation between a man and woman is deliberately intended and instituted by Allah. It is a privileged gift. It enables a husband and wife to share in Allah's creative plan. As Allah intends, children are the precious fruits of lawful relations. That is why it is sinful to engage in unlawful sexual relations which constitute a grave sin, an enormity and impurity. It is a serious and lashing injustice to the children who may be born out of wedlock.

It is, therefore, sinful to place oneself in circumstances that one may fall into the trap of shameful acts. An occasion of sin may be a person, place, thing or a combination of all the three. One sins gravely by committing unlawful acts with oneself or with others. One sins by voluntarily entertaining unlawful thoughts or desires. One sins by reading obscene literature. One sins by looking at vulgar illustrations. One commits sins by attending immodest shows, movies or plays. One sins by holding obscene conversation, and so on.

Some ask whether such a practice as dating is sinful. Some teens seem confused. Yet there should be no doubt or confusion at all. Such a practice has no place in Islam. Passions are aroused on account of some sight. Do you know what passions are? Passions are powerful movements towards things. Literally countless are the examples of evils that have had their origin in glances! One's dress, language, and general behaviour are to be guided by religion, and not blind passions.



- Why is it forbidden to have sexual relations outside marriage?
- Allah has forbidden unlawful sexual relations as well as the path that leads to them. What constitutes this path?

The Fifth and Sixth Attributes: '...True to their Trusts and Promises.' (Verse 8)

The word *amaanaat* or trusts (sing. *amaanah*) covers all kinds of trusts, which either Allah, society or an individual places in someone else's charge. As for the word *'ahd* or pledge, it embraces all pledges and promises between man and Allah, man and man, man and society, and between one nation and another. One of the distinguishing qualities of a believer is that he never betrays a trust. He never goes back on his promises. Allah's Messenger ﷺ said, 'He who is not true to his trust has no [true] faith and he who does not keep his promises is devoid of [true] religion.' (Ahmad, and it is *saheeh*)

According to Abu Hurayrah ﷺ, the Prophet ﷺ said, 'Give what you hold in trust back to the person who has entrusted you with it, and do not betray anyone, even if he has betrayed you.' (Abu Daawood and at-Tirmidhee, and it is *saheeh*) Al-Bukhaaree and Muslim relate on the authority of Abu Hurayrah ﷺ that the Prophet ﷺ said, 'There are three things, which if present in a man show him to be a hypocrite, even if he prays, fasts, and claims to be a Muslim: when he speaks he lies; when he makes a promise he breaks it and when he is entrusted with anything, he betrays his trust.'

Al-Bukhaaree relates on the authority of Ibn Mas'ood that the Prophet ﷺ said, 'On the Day of Arising, every deceitful man will bear a banner and it will be said, "Behold the deception of so and so!" Al-Bukhaaree and Muslim also record on the authority of 'Abdullaah ibn 'Amr that the Prophet ﷺ said, 'There are four things which make a man a pure hypocrite, if they are all present within him, and a partial hypocrite if one of them is present: when he speaks he lies; if he commits himself, he cheats; if he makes promises he

breaks them; and if he argues, he behaves in an evil manner.'

Allah, Most High, said, 'O you who truly believe! Fulfil your pledges (contractual commitments).' (*al-Maa'idah* 5: 1) This refers to one's promise to observe Allah's commands and prohibitions. This denotes a solemn undertaking, or promise, involving more than one party. These pledges are of three kinds:

(1) The pledges between man and Allah (literally man's obligations towards Allah),
(2) between man and his own soul, and
(3) between the individual and his fellow men. This embraces all of man's moral and social responsibilities.

Hence, if you tell Mum that you will be back from the game at 10:00, be home on time. Ten o'clock means just that! For you, rather ten o'clock should mean 9:55! If you offer to clean the garden for Dad, then fulfil your promise. Do the job. Keep working until you finish it.

If someone gives you something for safe-keeping, take good care of it. Return it to its rightful owner on demand. It is a trust. If you borrow notebooks from a friend, return them on time. If you borrow books from a library or a friend, return them on time. They are a trust. If you know someone's secret, keep it concealed. It is a trust. If someone is employed to do a certain job, then doing it well with a sense of responsibility is a matter of trust. If someone is employed for a period of eight hours, and he wastes his duty hours in laziness or making personal phone-calls, or by arriving late or leaving early, then he is not fulfilling the trust.

The secret of being dependable is constancy: to be on time on all occasions, to finish one's work and do it well and to keep every promise.

The Seventh Attribute: 'And Those who Strictly Guard their Prayers.' (Verse 9)

Strictly guarding one's prayers here means to offer them regularly and at their appointed times. The word *salawaat* (prayers) has been used in its plural form to include all the daily five prayers. In an early verse, the word *salaat* was used in the singular form. It was because the emphasis was on *khushoo'*, which is the 'soul' of prayers, whether they are obligatory, *Sunnah*, or voluntary (*nawaafil*).

> Allah's Messenger ﷺ said: "The most virtuous deed is *salaat* during its appropriate time..." (Muslim)

The verse states that the believers persistently offer their prayers at their fixed times, with proper bowings and prostrations. It is important to realize

that Allah praises the believers at the beginning of this *soorah* and one of the first descriptions He states is their adherence to the prayers.

'...Who Shall Inherit Paradise. They Shall Dwell therein forever.' (Verses 10-11)

Al-Bukhaaree and Muslim have recorded that Allah's Messenger ﷺ said, 'If you ask Allah for Paradise, then ask Him for *al-Firdaws*: for it is the highest part of Paradise, in the middle of Paradise and from it spring the rivers of Paradise. Above it is the Mighty Throne of the Most Merciful.'

A careful study of the above seven attributes will show that they embrace all the duties man owes to Allah and his fellow men. They contain all the laws governing those duties. A person who possesses these qualities is a true believer – a *mu'min*. He deserves *falaah* (success) in this world and the hereafter. It is also significant to realize that these seven attributes begin and end with a reference to the obligatory prayers. This indicates that if the prayers are offered in the prescribed manner with all their requirements and at their stated times, the other attributes will naturally follow.



- What are the four qualities of a hypocrite?
- What comprises man's social responsibilities?
- List the seven attributes that a true believer possesses.

Exercise

A. Give English meanings for these Arabic terms.

1. *Eemaan*
2. *Mu'min*
3. *Falaah*
4. *Khushoo'*
5. *Laghw*
6. *Amaanah*
7. *Salawaat*
8. *Al-Firdaws*

B. Fill in the blanks.

1. One's dress and general behaviour are to be guided by _____ and not by blind _____.
2. One of the distinguishing qualities of a believer is that he is _____.
3. The secret of being dependable is _____.

C. Think-up

1. This lesson states a common problem that faces the *ummah* today. Make groups in your class and make points by way of a solution to the problem.
2. Can you think of why dating is forbidden in Islam?
3. How is prayer related to all the seven attributes of a believer?

03 Shame, or Hayaa'

We have been discussing a number of topics that are very relevant to your life right now, as well as to your future. In this lesson, we will touch on the topic of shame, modesty or *al-hayaa'*. We will also discuss a number of things that are closely related to shame, like clothing, styles, shows and literature.

Allah, Most High, does not Forbid you your Fun

Real fun is part of what Allah has permitted for you. He does not forbid you your fun. But it is easy for us to confuse real happiness with glittering-but-quickly-fading 'fun' that leaves us *downright* unhappy.

Allah's Messenger ﷺ once said, 'From the words of the previous prophets that people still find are, "If you feel no shame, then do as you wish."' This is an authentic *hadeeth* recorded by al-Bukhaaree, Abu Daawood and Ibn Maajah. The importance of this *hadeeth* lies in the fact that it points to one of the most essential traits a believer can possess: the trait of *hayaa'* – shame; modesty; shyness or bashfulness. All the prophets admired the trait of modesty and ordered their followers to have it.

Modesty is Purity's Safeguard

Shame or modesty is one of the most important factors that are bound to keep a person away from committing a shameful or sinful act. If a person has no feeling of shame, there is nothing to stop him from doing anything. He would do almost anything because he has nothing 'within' him that would tell him that such-and-such a thing does not constitute proper behaviour, and that he should be ashamed to act in such a way. When a person commits sins, his feeling of modesty decreases. As he commits more and more sins, his sense of shame weakens. It weakens to the point that it may not exist at all. When he falls to that depth, he does not care what people might say or think about him. In fact, he might even brag or tell others about his sinful exploits.

The Word *Hayaa'*

Hayaa' is an Arabic word. According to E. W. Lane, it signifies shame; a sense of shame; shyness; bashfulness; or

modesty; a shrinking of the soul from foul conduct through fear of blame. (*Arabic-English Lexicon*, Vol. 1, p. 681, 2003)

It is in fact the feeling of shame that restrains a person from performing evil deeds. If a person has no shame, he will do whatever he pleases. He will care little what anyone might think or say about him. This is because he has no feeling of shame whatsoever. *Hayaa'* is a powerful restraining force in the face of temptation. A person's sense of shame may bother him if nobody saw the shameful act he has committed. His heart will become uneasy. He will be perturbed and will feel ashamed of what he has done.

Hayaa' Distinguishes Man from Animals

Shame is an attribute that truly distinguishes man from animals. Animals do not feel any shame for their actions. Shame is in fact a trait that controls man's behaviour. It restrains him from acts that are considered shameful and offensive.

The Importance and Virtues of _Hayaa'_

Allah's Messenger ﷺ discussed the importance and virtues of modesty on several occasions. He said, 'Faith has some seventy-odd or sixty-odd branches. The most virtuous of them is the statement: there is no god but Allah; and the slightest of them is to remove something harmful from the road. And *hayaa'* is a branch of faith.' (al-Bukhaaree and Muslim)

Removing a harmful object from the path is once again an act of charity in thankfulness to Allah; that is available to almost anyone. Deplorably enough, many Muslims see something harmful on the road, but they think that it is not their business to do anything about it. If the Muslims today were to act upon this teaching of the Prophet ﷺ, the roads of the Muslims would be the cleanest roads in the world.

In the above-quoted *hadeeth*, *hayaa'* is referred to as faith or part of faith because it calls or leads a person to all of the other branches of faith.

The Prophet ﷺ also said, 'Shame or modesty brings forth nothing but goodness.' (al-Bukhaaree and Muslim)



- Explain the *hadeeth*, 'If you feel no shame, then do as you wish.'
- Explain the term '*hayaa*,'' and mention the various meanings it entails.
- How does the attribute of *hayaa'* work in keeping a believer from committing shameful acts?
- Why is *hayaa'* referred to as part of faith?

Modesty was the Characteristic of all the Prophets

Allah's Messenger ﷺ is reported to have said, 'Certainly Moosaa was modest; a shy person. No part of his skin was seen due to modesty.' (al-Bukhaaree)

Allah's Messenger ﷺ was the Most Modest of all the People

Allah's Messenger ﷺ was the most modest of all the people. Abu Sa'eed al-Khudree ؓ said, 'Allah's Messenger ﷺ was more bashful than the virgin girls kept in their private apartments. If he saw anything he did not like, we would recognize it on his face.' (al-Bukhaaree and Muslim)

Aai'shah ؓ also said, 'When the Prophet ﷺ heard something which he did not like about anyone, he would say, "What do you think about a people who do or say this?" So he would forbid it without actually naming the one who had done it.' (al-Bukhaaree, Muslim and at-Tirmidhee)

Human Beings and Angels

Every human being has angels with him all the time. They witness everything he does or says. A Muslim, therefore, should be heedful of their presence. He should be modest to perform shameful acts before them in the same way that he is shy to perform shameful deeds in front of humans. There is no good in a person who has no shame with respect to others. Above all, a believer must have modesty towards himself. This is very close to the concept of self-respect or dignity.

Dignity is the Natural Right of every Individual

Dignity is the natural right of every individual. Dignity is the quality of being worthy of honour or respect. It is not permissible to violate the personal dignity of anyone, even that of one's own self. Hence, a person should be ashamed of himself when he performs deeds that are shameful. Allah's Messenger ﷺ once said, 'All of my *Ummah* (nation or community) are good enough to be forgiven, except for those who commit sins openly. Among those who commit sins openly is a person who performs a deed during the night, and although Allah has concealed his sins in the morning he says, "O so-and-so! Last night I did such-and-such a thing." He spent the night being concealed by His Lord, and in the morning he unveils Allah's concealment from himself.' (al-Bukhaaree and Muslim)

Such people commit evil in private, in darkness or away from the public eye. Then, instead of trying to make up for it or ask forgiveness of Allah, they actually broadcast and make public their sins, in violation of self-respect, self-restraint, dignity, or social decorum.

Two Types of Modesty: Natural and Acquired

Modesty can be classified into two types – natural and acquired. Modesty is a characteristic that every human being possesses. One of the aspects of shame, or *hayaa'*, which is naturally found in humans, is the wish to conceal one's private parts. Like all natural characteristics, this trait can be developed and nurtured. It is, however, very important to realize that some people possess modesty naturally and, as a result, they restrain themselves from committing shameful acts. But if this is not accompanied by the intention to please Allah, they will not be rewarded for it.

How to Form an Upright Sense of Modesty?

Given the importance of the concept of modesty in the teachings of Islam, it is of great significance that this character be developed in children as they grow up. Both young boys and girls should be taught to be modest in front of others. They should be made to realize that thoughts, words and actions may be hidden from the eyes of men, but not from Allah.

One should be ashamed not to perform the obligatory deeds. At the same time, one should not feel shy to perform permissible deeds. One must openly proclaim the truth when it is his duty to do so. He should never lie and feel shy needlessly. Lying is hateful. It is harmful under every aspect. Lying in deeds is even worse. Under this category comes acting out of human respect, or for fear of what others might think. This includes hypocrisy too, which makes a show of qualities one does not possess to win for oneself undeserved praise and respect. Those who are unfaithful to their promises are also guilty of lying indeed. One must practise the virtue of modesty even when his only witness is Allah. A person of modesty does not steal, damage, abuse or use unlawfully what belongs to others.

Modesty is True when it is in Conformity with the Glorious Qur'an and the *Sunnah* of the Prophet ﷺ

Keep clearly in mind that modesty is true when it is in conformity with the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*. Each person, therefore, has the duty to increases his knowledge of the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* until it reaches that degree of knowledge which is sufficient for him to live rightly in his own state of life.

Modesty is the characteristic we should cultivate. It makes us avoid anything displeasing to Allah. A person of modesty is a true person of character. He enjoys peace of mind and peace of heart. He is esteemed and trusted by all. To form modesty, it is not enough to avoid evil actions. One must also avoid evil thoughts, words and sentiments.

One must acquire the virtue of honesty, humility, self-control, and so forth. The person of modesty is respected. He wins the confidence of others. He establishes cordial relations with others. While the person of no shame is shunned and despised, he is a cause of social disunion. There is no peace for the shameless who tends to act contrary to *hayaa'*. To protect our modesty from harm, therefore, let us make a daily examination of our thoughts, words, deeds and shortcomings.

Offer more optional prayers. Deepen your faith. Lift up your heart. Draw close to Allah. Follow the teachings of the Prophet ﷺ in every step of your life.

Things which Harm and Dampen the Sense of Modesty

The mass media, whatever you see, materialism (a tendency to be more interested in material possessions, physical comforts, etc. than in spiritual values) permeate our existence. All this produces harmful fruits. We see how much radio, motion pictures and television, together with bad books, shamelessly illustrated magazines, unchaste stage shows, immoral dances, and immodesty on the beaches have contributed towards the increase of superficiality, worldliness and love for physical pleasure in many.

Immoral or suggestive books and magazines give rise to evil inclinations. Many young people owe their depraved lives to obscene films and books. 'It was bad reading and films that brought me here,' prisoners often confide to their jail wardens.

The Effects of Present-Day Media

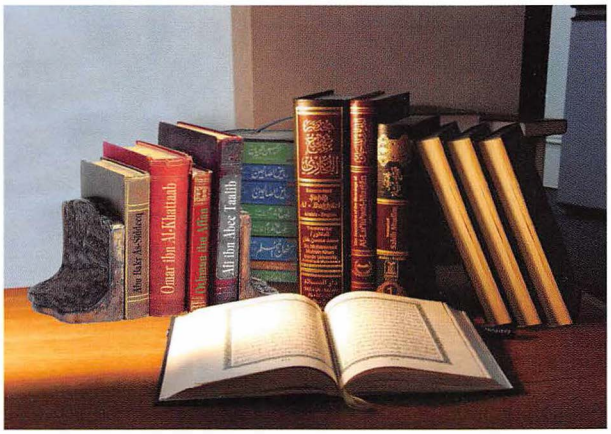
It is very important to realize that the heart definitely gets affected and influenced by what it witnesses and what it becomes willing to accept. One of the worst effects of the present-day media is that Muslims are witnessing on television and in movies acts that are clearly prohibited. When they continually watch them over and over again, they are no longer shocked by them. Their emotions no longer race. They gradually begin to accept such evils as normal. They often even begin to accept them and think of them as part of modern-day life.

The World of Tomorrow is your World

In the early evening of Thursday 22 September, 1988, a woman was raped at a local train station in Chicago in the presence of several people.

The horrifying feature of this incident was that nobody moved to help the victim. Her cries went unheeded, even though the rape took place during the rush hour. Several people were looking. She asked them for help. No one came to her aid!

You and your friends can work together to combat evils which threaten today's young people. The world of tomorrow is your world. Feel responsibility for it. Ask your elders for help. What you read and watch now will come to your mind at decisive moments over and over again throughout the years to come. The teenagers in the western world admit repeatedly that much of what they find themselves doing, saying and thinking, is directly traceable to something they have read, or to a television film or show they have watched. Be careful about what you permit to pass by your eyes and then settle in your mind.



Read Good Books

On the other hand, a good book can so mightily impress you, as to start you thinking in whole new directions, give you great ideas and ideals, and wonderfully shape your personality.

This is not the place to talk about the various ways of wearing your hair, or about particular fashions, etc. The main problem in the matter of modern styles that has to be addressed is the moral one! Often against the teachings of Islam, girls dress immodestly by wearing low-slung tight trousers or hipsters, or by not wearing as much clothing as they should. However, the moral problem is especially true with boys. Possibly many girls are unaware that their immodest clothing causes boys very severe temptation against purity. Keep clearly in mind that the choice of clothing should first be governed by the unchanging principles of decency as taught by the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*.

Modesty is one of the characteristics of a true believer. Allah's Messenger ﷺ once passed by a man who was criticizing his brother for his modesty. So he said, 'Leave him alone, for modesty is part of faith.' (al-Bukhaaree and Muslim)

However, it is important to realize that the quality of modesty does not prevent a Muslim from saying the truth. It does not prevent him from seeking knowledge, etc. It does not stop him from commanding good and forbidding evil.



- What factors dampen the sense of modesty?
- The attribute of modesty prevents one from committing sins. However, what causes one to fall into sins? Discuss.

Exercise

A. Fill in the blanks.

1. Allah does not forbid you your _____.
2. *Hayaa'* is one of the _____ a believer can possess.
3. _____ distinguishes man from animals.
4. *H*ayaa' is a part of _____.
5. Modesty is of two types: _____ and _____.
6. Modesty is true when it is in conformity to _____ and _____.

B. Think-up

1. How can we regain our self-respect after committing sins?
2. How should we go about forming an upright sense of modesty? (Hint: Start your answer mentioning what needs to be done from childhood through adolescence and beyond).

04 Salaatul-Istikhaarah

Prayer for Guidance

Salaatul-Istikhaarah is the prayer for guidance in choosing the best option, and it has a specific supplication (*Du'aa*). When a problem confronts us and we are not able to decide how to resolve it, we should turn to our Lord. We should ask Him to set us in the right direction. After all, no one can be closer to us than He is! Remember that astrology, palmistry, numerology, feng shui (a system for deciding the right position for a building and for placing objects in order to make people happy) etc., have no place in Islam. Faint-hearted people who are weak in their faith turn to astrologers, palmists, numerologists and tarot readers. (Tarot denotes a set of special cards with pictures on them, used for telling somebody what will happen to them in the future) Looking for short-cuts and easy answers, these people become victims of deceivers who are self-proclaimed holy men.

War against Superstitions and Myths

A class of deceivers known as soothsayers (those who are believed to be able to tell the future) or diviners, existed in the Arab society before and during the Prophet's time. They pretended to know the events of the past and the future through their contact with *Jinn* or through other hidden sources. Allah's Messenger ﷺ declared war against this deception, which had no basis in divine guidance. Allah says, 'Say: No one in the heavens and the earth knows the unseen except Allah.' (27: 65)

Believing in those who Foretell the Future Constitutes an Act of *Kufr*

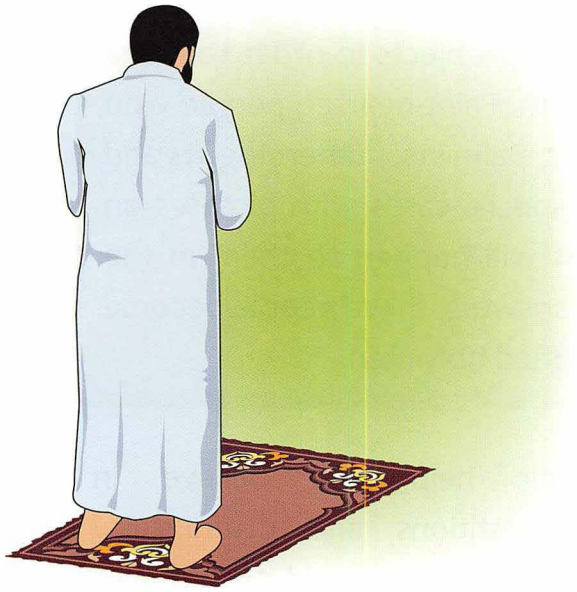
Islam's campaign was not confined to the soothsayers and diviners. It also included all those who go to them, seek their help and believe in their superstitions and utterances. Allah's Messenger ﷺ said, 'The prayer of one who goes to a soothsayer, asks him something, and believes in what he says will not be accepted for forty days.' (Muslim)

He also said, 'Whoever goes to a soothsayer and believes in what he says has denied what was revealed to Muhammad .' (Ahmad; and it is *saheeh*)

Allah, Most High, has liberated His believers from all such ridiculous behaviour by giving them the gift of *Salaatul-Istikhaarah* through His Final Messenger.



- What are the unlawful ways of seeking guidance regarding the future? What should we do instead?
- What did Allah's Messenger ﷺ say regarding soothsayers?
- Does going to a soothsayer entail that prayer will not be accepted for forty days? Discuss this point in the light of *hadeeth*.



Salaatul-Istikhaarah

The expression *Istikhaarah* denotes to seek the better choice. Muslims have practised *Istikhaarah* from the earliest time. *Istikhaarah* is the prayer of a man who has not yet made up his mind regarding an intended enterprise, a journey, marriage, etc.

Istikhaarah means to ask Allah to guide one to the right kind of action concerning any matter or task. It is to seek guidance from Allah by offering the prayer of supplication. We should practise the supplication of *Istikhaarah* in regard to every significant matter where one is ignorant of the good or evil outcome of intended enterprise.

The Prayer for Guidance and the *Du'aa*

According to a *hadeeth* transmitted on the authority of Jaabir ibn Abdullaah ﷺ, who said, 'Allah's Messenger ﷺ used to teach us how to seek guidance in choosing the best course of action available in a practical enterprise, just as he would sometimes teach us a *soorah* from the Qur'an, "If one of you is concerned about some practical undertaking, he should perform two unit of prayer (*raka'atayn*), other than an obligatory prayer, but voluntary." Then he should say,

اَللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْتَخِيرُكَ بِعِلْمِكَ وَأَسْتَقْدِرُكَ بِقُدْرَتِكَ وَأَسْأَلُكَ مِنْ فَضْلِكَ الْعَظِيمِ فَإِنَّكَ تَقْدِرُ وَلَا أَقْدِرُ وَتَعْلَمُ وَلَا أَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتَ عَلَّامُ الْغُيُوبِ، اَللَّهُمَّ إِنْ كُنْتَ تَعْلَمُ أَنَّ هَذَا الْأَمْرَ خَيْرٌ لِي فِي دِينِي وَمَعَاشِي وَعَاقِبَةِ أَمْرِي فَاقْدُرْهُ لِي وَيَسِّرْهُ لِي ثُمَّ بَارِكْ لِي فِيهِ، وَإِن كُنتَ تَعْلَمُ أَنَّ هَذَا الْأَمْرَ شَرٌّ لِي فِي دِينِي وَمَعَاشِي وَعَاقِبَةِ أَمْرِي فَاصْرِفْهُ عَنِّي وَاصْرِفْنِي عَنْهُ وَاقْدُرْ لِيَ الْخَيْرَ حَيْثُ كَانَ ثُمَّ أَرْضِنِي بِهِ.

'O Allah, I ask You to show me what is best through Your knowledge, and bring it to pass through Your Power, and I ask You of Your immense favour; for You are all-Powerful and I am not. You know but I do not, and You are the Knower of the unseen. O Allah! If You know this matter (at this point the supplicant should state or at least visualize the exact nature of the proposed enterprise) is in the best interests of my religion, my life in this world, and final outcome, in both the short term and long term, then bring it about and make it easy for me, and bless me with abundance therein. And if You know that this undertaking is evil for me in my religion, my life in this world, and the final outcome, in both the short term and long term, then turn it away from me, and turn me away from it, and bring about the good for me, whatever it may be, and make me pleased with it.' (al-Bukhaaree)

Salaatul-Istikhaarah is a *Sunnah* of the Prophet ﷺ. There is nothing authentic regarding any specific *soorah* that is to be recited in the prayer (means any particular *soorah*), nor is there any authentic report concerning how many times one should repeat it.

Imaam an-Nawawee said: 'After practising the *istikhaarah*, a person should do what he is wholeheartedly inclined to do, and feels good about doing. If his feelings change, then he should leave what he has intended to do.'

The *istikhaarah* prayer can be performed at any time except in the forbidden hours for prayer. Times when the prayer is forbidden are:

1. From sunrise until the sun is a spear's length above the horizon;
2. From the time the sun is at its highest point in the sky until it moves on;
3. From when the sun yellows, before sunset until after it has set;
4. After praying the current dawn prayer; and
5. After praying the current mid-afternoon prayer (*al-'Asr*)

Some people think that the right time for the performance of *Salaatul-Istikhaarah* is before going to bed. This is simply not true. It is, however, allowed. One may offer it at that time if one desires to do so. The supplication (*Du'aa*) can be recited after performing the two units of prayer or even before *tasleem* (i.e. the final greeting *'Assalaamu alaikum'* to conclude the prayer) after *tashahhud*. In order to enjoy these delightful moments, you will have to memorize the *Du'aa* of *istikhaarah*. If, however, someone does not know this *Du'aa* by heart, he can read it.



- When should one perform *istikhaarah*? How many times should it be performed?
- What should one do after performing *istikhaarah*?
- When should one recite the *Du'aa* of *istikhaarah*?

05 Prophet Daawood عليه السلام

The Glorious Qur'an Makes Mention of Allah's Blessings

Allah, Most High, frequently speaks of the numerous blessings He bestowed upon many of His Prophets, including Daawood and Sulaymaan, peace be upon them.

Prophet Daawood's Ancestry

He was Daawood, son of Eesha, son of Uwayd. He was a descendant of Yahooda, son of Ya'qoob.

His voice and appearance were handsome. Prophethood and kingship were united in him. Historians report that he lived a hundred years, that he reigned for forty years, and that he had twelve sons. Allah knows best.

Daawood's Bravery

The king of the Israelites, Taaloot (Saul), called the Israelites to fight Jaaloot (Goliath) and his army. Jaaloot (Goliath) and his forces had driven out the Israelites from Palestine, in the period that followed Prophet Moosaa عليه السلام. The army of Taaloot (Saul) fought them, and among them was Daawood, who himself killed Jaaloot.

Kingship and Prophethood

Allah united in Daawood both kingship and Prophethood, making him the king after he had killed Jaaloot. Before him, kingship had been vested in one tribe and Prophethood in another, but they were brought together in Daawood عليه السلام.



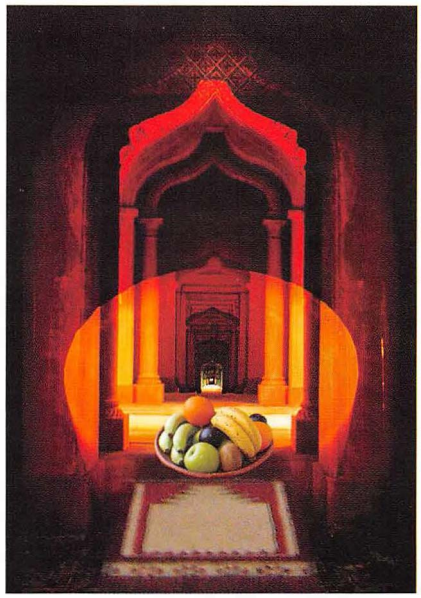
Allah taught Daawood عليه السلام to make armour from iron to guard against battles with the enemy. He instructed him in its manufacture and softened iron for him to the extent that he could work with it by hand without the need for fire or a hammer. He was the first to make armour from chain mail.



- Why did Taaloot call the Israelites to fight Jaaloot?
- How did Allah guide Daawood in making armour?

Daawood's Piety

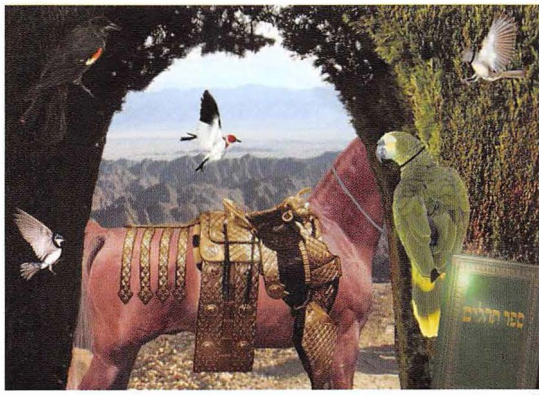
Prophet Daawood عليه السلام was very pious. He was a modest, penitent slave of Allah. He always remembered Allah and spent long periods of time praying to Him and glorifying Him. He was endowed with so much inner strength. Allah's Messenger ﷺ once said of him, 'The most beloved prayer to Allah is the prayer of Daawood. The most beloved fast to Allah is the fast of Daawood. He used to sleep half the night, then keep vigil for another third of it, then sleep for another sixth. He used to fast for a day, and then break the fast for a day. He did not flee when he met an enemy in battle.' (al-Bukhaaree and Muslim)



Zaboor is the name of the book revealed to Daawood عليه السلام. It contained wisdom and warnings for his people. According to a *hadeeth* narrated by Imaam Ahmad, it was revealed to him in the month of Ramadhaan.

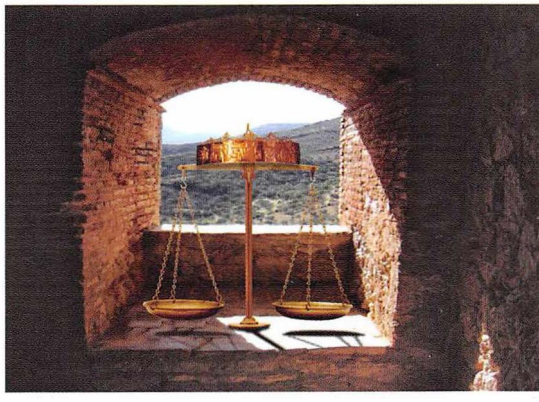
Allah Had Given Prophet Daawood عليه السلام a Great Voice

Allah had given Prophet Daawood عليه السلام a beautiful voice. Whenever he recited the Zaboor, the birds would pause in the air and echo with his recitation, praising with his praises. Likewise, the mountains responded to him, singing Allah's praises with him, every morning and every evening. He used to recite the Zaboor with a voice that was unlike anything that had been heard before. Prophet Daawood عليه السلام ate from the work of his own hands.



Prophet Daawood's Wisdom

Prophet Daawood عليه السلام was known for his wise judgements. He was abundant in worship. He performed many sacrifices so that not a single hour passed of the night and beginning and end of the day without the people of his house being in worship of Allah Most High. He is mentioned by name sixteen times in the Glorious Qur'an.



Exercise

A. Fill in the blanks.

1. Daawood عليه السلام was a prophet as well as a _____.
2. _____ is the name of the book revealed to Daawood عليه السلام .
3. Prophet Daawood is mentioned by name _____ times in the Qur'an.

B. Think-up

Why did nature respond to the voice of Daawood?

Abu Bakr As-Siddeeq ﷺ:
The Champion of Truth

His Name and Ancestry

His full name was Abu Bakr Abdullaah ibn Abu Quhaafah. He had the honorific surname of al-Ateeq, which is variously explained by scholars. The majority of scholars hold that 'Ateeq was his surname, not his name. To some he was called 'Ateeq, because he was handsome and graceful. Some argue that he was called Ateeq, because of his spotless ancestry.

His real name was Abdullaah. Allah's Messenger ﷺ named him Abdullaah. His mother was Salmah bint Sakhr. She was the cousin of Abu Quhaafah and was widely known as Ummul-Khayr. The name of his father Abu Quhaafah, was Uthmaan. Abu Bakr was his *Kunyah*: by-name or agnomen. The Arabs' polite way of addressing people is by referring to their parenthood, so that one is addressed as father or mother of so and so. This specific kind of surname is called *kunyah*, which is often rendered as agnomen. His mother and father both belonged to the Makkan family of Ka'b ibn Sa'd of the clan of Taym, a branch of the Quraysh.

Abu Bakr ﷺ was younger than the Prophet ﷺ. He was born and brought up in Makkah.

Abu Bakr embraces Islam

Among men, Abu Bakr as-Siddeeq was the first to believe in the Prophet ﷺ and was the first to offer prayers led by the Prophet ﷺ. In fact, he was the first to embrace Islam among the grown-up men, Ali among the boys, and Khadeejah ﷺ among women.

Abu Bakr belonged to the Prophet's oldest supporters. He soon assumed an important position in the newly-formed community of believers. Especially characteristic of him was his unshakeable faith in Allah's Messenger ﷺ. On occasions when others doubted, for instance, after the Prophet's account of his journey at night (*al-Mi'raaj*) or when they did not know what to make of his conduct, as on the occasion of al-Hudaybiyyah Peace Treaty, he remained unshaken. It is this faithfulness, which gained him the surname of as-Siddeeq – which means the great confirmer of the truth – which has constantly remained attached to him throughout the historical tradition of Islam.

His character was gentle. During the reading of the Gracious Qur'an, he shed tears and as his daughter Aai'shah ﷺ related, he wept with joy at the news that he might accompany the Messenger of Allah ﷺ in his emigration.

He was liked and respected, for he was a man of knowledge, wisdom, easy manners, justice, righteousness and an agreeable presence. Many would come to consult him

about this or that. It is because of this that when the Prophet ﷺ invited him to accept Islam, he embraced it immediately. He testified to his Messengership without hesitation. He feared nothing and took it upon himself to follow and adhere to the truth. He promised to lend all help and support. He fulfilled this promise in the face of hardship and misery.



Many, including Uthmaan ibn Affaan, Talhah ibn Ubaydullah, Sa'd ibn Abee Waqqaas, Abdur-Rahmaan ibn Awf, and Uthmaan ibn Madh'oon accepted Islam at the hands of Abu Bakr. May Allah be well pleased with them all. He purchased the freedom of several slaves. No sacrifice was too great in his eyes for the sake of Allah and His Messenger ﷺ. He never left the company of the Prophet ﷺ. Amid the greatest dangers, he faithfully stood by the Prophet ﷺ, his friend and master. Allah's Messenger ﷺ chose him to accompany him when he emigrated from Makkah.

His self-sacrificing companionship was rewarded by him being referred to in the Glorious Qur'an as 'the second of the two' (*Soorat at-Tawbah*: 40). On that very occasion, the Prophet ﷺ said to him, 'What could, in your opinion, happen to two [men] who have Allah as the third with them?' (al-Bukhaaree)

Abu Bakr never left the company of the Prophet ﷺ without his permission. He emigrated for the sake of Allah and His Messenger ﷺ, leaving his wife and children alone in Makkah, stayed with the Prophet ﷺ in the cave and accompanied him in every battle. His family also emigrated to Madeenah later with the exception of his son Abdur-Rahmaan, who remained an unbeliever and had fought at Badr against the Muslims, till he finally accepted Islam and emigrated to Madeenah.

In Madeenah, Abu Bakr set up a modest household in the suburb of as-Sunh. Through his daughter Aai'shah, whom Allah's Messenger ﷺ had married shortly after the emigration, the tie between the two was strengthened still further. Abu Bakr was most valiant. He was nearly always with the Prophet ﷺ and accompanied him on all his expeditions. Allah's Messenger ﷺ entrusted him with a standard in the Khaybar campaign and later in the Tabook expedition. Allah's Messenger ﷺ sent him in the year 9 AH to Makkah to lead the pilgrimage.

He was the most generous among the companions of the Prophet ﷺ. He was the most learned and wise. He had knowledge of the Qur'an, more than all others. This is the reason why Allah's

Messenger ﷺ, during the days of his final sickness, had delegated the task of leading the prescribed prayers to him. He had deep knowledge of the *Sunnah* of the Prophet ﷺ. The companions turned to him for opinions. His memory was very strong.

He possessed a keen power of judgement. He enjoyed the company of the Prophet ﷺ right from the beginning of his Prophethood until the end of his earthly life. After the death of the Prophet ﷺ, these distinctions and outstanding qualities made him well suited to be the head of the Muslim community, or caliph – in Arabic *Khaleefah*, the full title being *Khaleefatu Rasoolillaah*, the successor for the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.



- What is *kunyah*?
- What special characteristic of Abu Bakr ﷺ earned him the title of as-Siddeeq?

The Caliphate of Abu Bakr as-Siddeeq ﷺ

When the earthly life of Allah's Messenger ﷺ had ended, the news of his death descended on the companions like a thunderbolt. They were stunned because of their intense love for him. Every one of the companions thought that the Prophet ﷺ was more gracious and considerate to him than to any other companion. Some of them could hardly believe the news of his death. Umar ibn al-Khattaab rebuked the man who told him about the Prophet's death. He went to the mosque and addressed the people saying, 'He has not died. He has rather gone to his Lord, just as Moosaa عليه السلام had gone, remaining absent from his people for forty nights, after which he returned to his people. By Allah, the Messenger of Allah will indeed return, just as Moosaa had returned to his people.' Then Umar warned the audience that he would cut off the hands and legs of those men who claimed that the Prophet ﷺ was dead.

Abu Bakr's Bravery

When Umar ﷺ was speaking thus, Abu Bakr arrived on horseback from as-Sunh, for the news had quickly spread over the whole oasis. Without pausing to speak to anyone, he went straight to his daughter's apartment and drew back from the Prophet's face the mantle with which he had been covered. He gazed at him and then kissed him between his eyes, saying, 'Dearer than my father and mother, you have tasted death which Allah has decreed for you. No death after that shall befall you.'

When Abu Bakr ﷺ said that Allah would not comibne two deaths upon

the Prophet ﷺ, he was refuting Umar's claim that the Prophet ﷺ would come back to life. Reverently, he drew the mantle over his face again and went out to the throng of men whom Umar ﷺ was still addressing. He said, 'Gently, O Umar!' After giving praise to Allah, Abu Bakr ﷺ said, 'O people, whoever worships Muhammad ﷺ, Muhammad ﷺ is indeed dead; and whoever worships Allah, indeed Allah is Living and does not die.' Then he recited the following verse, which had been revealed after the Battle of Uhud: 'Muhammad is but a Messenger, and Messengers have passed away before him. If he dies or be slain, will you then turn upon your heels? Whoever turns upon his heels will thereby do no harm to Allah, and Allah will reward the thankful.' (3: 144)

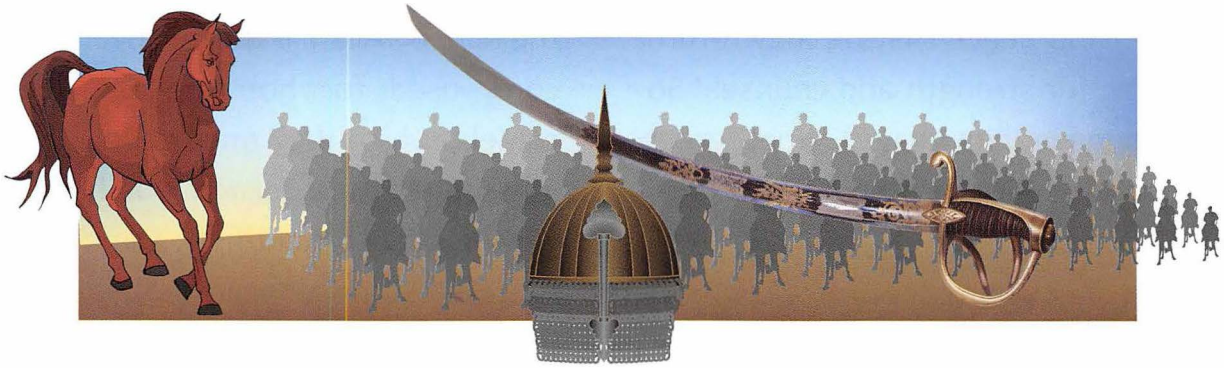
It was as if the people had not known of the revelation of this verse until Abu Bakr recited it that day. They took it from him, and it was on all their lips. Umar confessed afterwards, 'When I heard Abu Bakr recite that verse, I was so astounded that I fell to the ground. My legs would no longer carry me, and I knew that Allah's Messenger ﷺ had died.'

This incident is the strongest evidence of Abu Bakr's bravery; if bravery is defined as having a firm and steadfast heart during the times of hardships and calamities. And there was no calamity what was greater than the death of Allah's Messenger ﷺ. May Allah be well pleased with Abu Bakr, who solved many of the problems that afflicted Muslims after the death of Allah's Messenger ﷺ. As for the caliphate of Abu Bakr as-Siddeeq, it came about through the unanimous agreement of the Helpers (*Ansaar*) and the Emigrants (*Muhaajiroon*). There was no disagreement, especially when it was known that the Prophet ﷺ had appointed him to lead them as their *imaam* in prayer before his death. Then Abu Bakr gave thanks to Allah and addressed the people, saying, 'I have been given the authority over you, and I am not the best of you. If I do well, help me; if I do wrong, set me right. Sincere regard for truth is faithfulness and disregard for truth is deception. The weak amongst you shall be strong with me until I have secured his rights, if Allah wills, and the strong amongst you shall be weak with me until I have grabbed from him the rights of others, if Allah wills. Obey me so long as I obey Allah and His Messenger ﷺ. If I disobey Allah and His Messenger ﷺ, you owe me no obedience. Arise for your prayer, may Allah have mercy on you.'

Through his simple but sturdy character and strong determination, Abu Bakr conducted the young state of Madeenah through the most difficult and dangerous times, and left it at his death in such a firm position that it could support the rule of the powerful and talented Umar ibn al-Khattaab.



- Mention some of the aspects of Abu Bakr's extraordinary character.
- Write briefly about how Abu Bakr helped to avert tribulation after the Prophet's death.
- How did Abu Bakr come to be the caliph?



Expedition to the Syrian Border

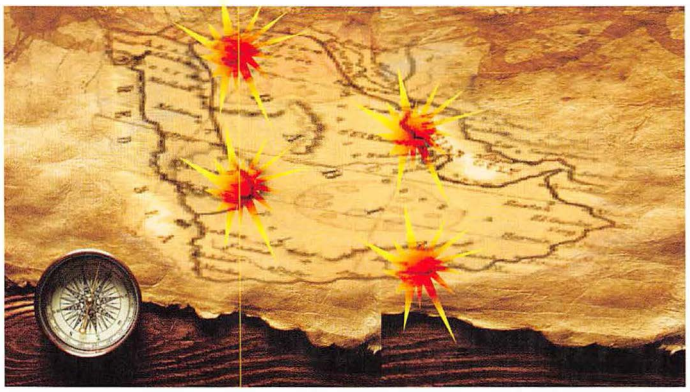
Abu Bakr had soon an occasion for showing his unwavering resolve to carry out, to the utmost, the will of Allah's Messenger ﷺ, in matters both large and small. Just before he fell sick, the Prophet ﷺ had given orders for an expedition to the Syrian border. It was to avenge the disaster which had befallen the Muslim army in the field of Mu'tah. In that expedition, Zayd ibn Haarithah, who led the army, fell. His son Usaamah, though still a young man of seventeen years, was appointed by the Prophet ﷺ to the army commander. The camp, including all available fighting men, had been formed at Al-Jurf, outside Madeenah, on the Syrian road. Usaamah had broken the camp on the death of the Prophet ﷺ.

The next day after Abu Bakr became caliph, he took the banner and, restoring it to Usaamah, in token that he was still the army commander, bade the army to march to the Syrian border against the Romans. The sense of the army, and of Usaamah himself, was against leaving the city thus defenceless, and the caliph exposed to risk of sudden danger. But Abu Bakr was firm. Calm and unmoved, Abu Bakr said, 'Were the city swarming round with packs of starving wolves, and I left solitary and alone, the force will go; not a word from Allah's Messenger ﷺ, my master's lips, shall fall to the ground.'

It was suggested that instead of Usaamah, a more experienced general should command. To this demand, the caliph's anger kindled, 'Shall the Messenger of Allah ﷺ appoint a man to the command and I, removing him, appoint another in his place?'

While all was ready for the march, Abu Bakr repaired to the camp, and accompanied the army a little way on

foot, saying, 'I will walk and soil my feet, a little moment, in the way of Allah, Most High. Truly every step trodden in the way of the Lord is equal to the merit of manifold good works, and wipes out a multitude of sins.' After a while, he paused and said to Usaamah, 'If it be your will, give Umar leave that he may return to the city, for strength and counsel.' So Usaamah gave him leave. What great discipline!



Abu Bakr ﷺ Handles Widespread Apostasies*

During the Prophet's twilight days, some of the hypocrites had claimed Prophethood for themselves. Among them was Musaylimah al-Kadhdhaab – Musaylimah, the Liar. Now, sparked by the Prophet's decease, large-scale apostasy flared across most of the region. Some of their tribal leaders, who had lost their positions during the Prophet's lifetime, followed Musaylimah's example, giving rise to new false prophets, such as Tulayhah ibn Khuwwaylid and the false prophetess Sajah bint al-Haarith ibn Suwayd, a Christian stalwart.

The situation was so acute that some Bedouin Arabs even refused to pay the *Zakaat*, or the purifying dues. The situation kindled Abu Bakr's anger. He insisted, 'By Allah! I will definitely fight anyone who separates prayer from *Zakaat*, for *Zakaat* is an obligation upon the rich. By Allah, if there is even a single cord, used for hobbling the feet of camels, which they once gave to Allah's Messenger ﷺ as *Zakaat*, but have now withheld it, I would fight them over it.' Abu Bakr stood alone in his resolve, like a firm rock; and every sincere believer sided with him to combat them.

Abu Bakr hurried to Dhul-Qassaa, some nine kilometres from Madeenah. He summoned all the available troops of the Muslim army and distributed them into eleven regiments; appointed a distinguished commander for each, along with a banner and a specific target and fought the rebellious tribes and the false prophets.

Of these, perhaps the biggest and the fiercest battle was waged in Yamaamah against Musaylimah, whose forces exceeded forty thousand and enjoyed very strong tribal ties in the area. Ikrimah ibn Abu Jahl was sent to finish him, but because of his limited success, he was dispatched to some other territory. The army was told to wait for the arrival of a new commander, Khaalid ibn al-Waleed, who, by the Grace of Allah, defeated Musaylimah's formidable forces.

*Apostasies is the plural of the expression apostasy. Generally, apostasy denotes rejection or desertion of one's religious Faith.

Following the Prophet's example, Abu Bakr treated the vanquished mercifully, and thus helped restore peace in the country.



Abu Bakr as-Siddeeq ﷺ and the Compilation of the Qur'an

During the battle of Yamaamah against Musaylimah the Liar, around seventy companions, who had memorized the Qur'an, were martyred. This battle took place in the year 12 AH. The martyrdom of such a large number of memorizers of the Glorious Qur'an alarmed Umar ﷺ. He went to Abu Bakr ﷺ and said, 'Many of the memorizers of the Qur'an have died. I am scared lest more die in the forthcoming battles. This might lead to the loss of the Qur'an, unless you compile it.' Umar ﷺ not only realized the danger of this great loss, but also proposed a solution.

Abu Bakr ﷺ replied, 'How can I do that which Allah's Messenger ﷺ did not do?' Abu Bakr could not even think of undertaking a project that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ had neither done nor commanded to be done.

However, Umar continued to convince him. He spoke to him of the merits of such an idea. Finally, Abu Bakr understood Umar's arguments and agreed to the project. They both decided to put Zayd ibn Thaabit ﷺ in charge of collecting the entire Qur'an in one single manuscript. Zayd ibn Thaabit was the person best suited for the job. He set about collecting the various fragments of the Qur'an from 'the pieces of wood and the breasts of people'. The people brought him the scraps and parchments upon which they had written the Qur'an. Now for the first time, the Qur'an was in the form of one book, barely two years after the death of the Prophet ﷺ, when all of the prominent companions were still alive, had the Qur'an been compiled. The written copy of the Qur'an was called a *Mus-haf*. It remained with Abu Bakr and after his death, with Umar ﷺ, then with Hafsah ﷺ, the daughter of Umar and a wife of the Prophet ﷺ. Thus the Qur'an was preserved in its entirety. None of its verses was lost or omitted. In this, Abu Bakr accomplished a momentous task.

Abu Bakr ﷺ died on the 22nd *Jamaada Al-Aakhirah*, in the year 13 AH, and was buried beside the Prophet ﷺ. His short reign of about two years and six months was mostly taken up by wars. During his caliphate, parts of Syria joined the Islamic lands as well as part of Iraq.



- What is apostasy?
- What did Abu Bakr ﷺ do with the renegades and apostates?
- Why did Umar ﷺ feel a need to compile the Qur'an?

Abu Bakr's Personality

As Caliph, he lived as simply as before, at first in his house in as-Sunh and subsequently, when the distance became inconvenient, in the town itself.

Tradition gives us a good description of Abu Bakr's appearance: he was somewhat short in stature, his face thin, smooth and fair; nose aquiline and sharp; forehead high and deep-set eyes. The question with him ever was: What did Allah's Messenger ﷺ command? From this he never moved a hair's breadth. May Allah be well pleased with him.

Exercise

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

1. After the Prophet ﷺ passed away, the expedition to the Syrian border was abandoned. _____
2. When Abu Bakr ﷺ requested, Usaamah ﷺ agreed to Umar ﷺ leaving the army. _____
3. Abu Bakr ﷺ replaced Usaamah as commander of the army. _____
4. There was no disagreement regarding the caliphate of Abu Bakr ﷺ. _____

B. Fill in the blanks

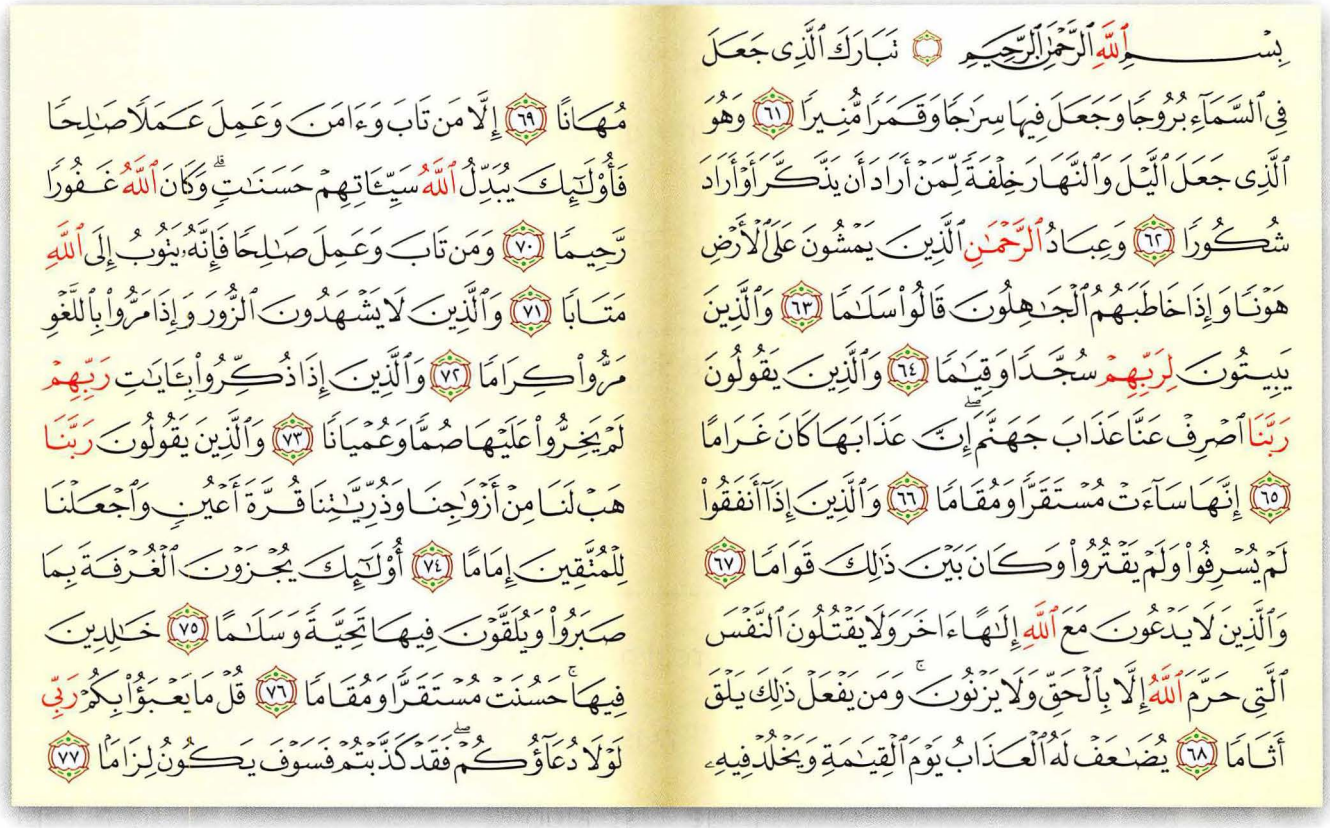
1. Abu Bakr ﷺ had the honorific surname of _____.
2. Abu Bakr's real name was _____.
3. Abu Bakr ﷺ was born and raised in _____.
4. He was the first among _____ to accept Islam.
5. The Arabic word *kadh-dhaab* means _____.
6. _____ was called *Mus-haf*.
7. _____ was chosen to be in charge of the compilation of the Qur'an.

07

The Criterion

Soorat Al-Furqaan 25: 61-77

As part of our readings from the Glorious Qur'an, the present lesson consists of seventeen verses of *Soorat Al-Furqaan*, namely from verse sixty-one to verse seventy-seven. *Soorat Al-Furqaan*, which is the twenty-fifth *soorah* of the Noble Qur'an, consists of seventy-seven verses. The title of *Soorat Al-Furqaan* signifies criterion or standard. It signifies separation between the truth and falsehood. It denotes the distinction between Divine Guidance and wrong beliefs. The reference here is to the Glorious Qur'an.


بِسْمِ ٱللَّهِ ٱلرَّحْمَٰنِ ٱلرَّحِيمِ ۝ تَبَارَكَ ٱلَّذِى جَعَلَ
فِى ٱلسَّمَآءِ بُرُوجًا وَجَعَلَ فِيهَا سِرَٰجًا وَقَمَرًا مُّنِيرًا ﴿٦١﴾ وَهُوَ
ٱلَّذِى جَعَلَ ٱلَّيْلَ وَٱلنَّهَارَ خِلْفَةً لِّمَنْ أَرَادَ أَن يَذَّكَّرَ أَوْ أَرَادَ
شُكُورًا ﴿٦٢﴾ وَعِبَادُ ٱلرَّحْمَٰنِ ٱلَّذِينَ يَمْشُونَ عَلَى ٱلْأَرْضِ
هَوْنًا وَإِذَا خَاطَبَهُمُ ٱلْجَٰهِلُونَ قَالُوا۟ سَلَٰمًا ﴿٦٣﴾ وَٱلَّذِينَ
يَبِيتُونَ لِرَبِّهِمْ سُجَّدًا وَقِيَٰمًا ﴿٦٤﴾ وَٱلَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ
رَبَّنَا ٱصْرِفْ عَنَّا عَذَابَ جَهَنَّمَ ۖ إِنَّ عَذَابَهَا كَانَ غَرَامًا
﴿٦٥﴾ إِنَّهَا سَآءَتْ مُسْتَقَرًّا وَمُقَامًا ﴿٦٦﴾ وَٱلَّذِينَ إِذَآ أَنفَقُوا۟
لَمْ يُسْرِفُوا۟ وَلَمْ يَقْتُرُوا۟ وَكَانَ بَيْنَ ذَٰلِكَ قَوَامًا ﴿٦٧﴾
وَٱلَّذِينَ لَا يَدْعُونَ مَعَ ٱللَّهِ إِلَٰهًا ءَاخَرَ وَلَا يَقْتُلُونَ ٱلنَّفْسَ
ٱلَّتِى حَرَّمَ ٱللَّهُ إِلَّا بِٱلْحَقِّ وَلَا يَزْنُونَ ۚ وَمَن يَفْعَلْ ذَٰلِكَ يَلْقَ
أَثَامًا ﴿٦٨﴾ يُضَٰعَفْ لَهُ ٱلْعَذَابُ يَوْمَ ٱلْقِيَٰمَةِ وَيَخْلُدْ فِيهِۦ
مُهَانًا ﴿٦٩﴾ إِلَّا مَن تَابَ وَءَامَنَ وَعَمِلَ عَمَلًا صَٰلِحًا
فَأُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ يُبَدِّلُ ٱللَّهُ سَيِّـَٔاتِهِمْ حَسَنَٰتٍ ۗ وَكَانَ ٱللَّهُ غَفُورًا
رَّحِيمًا ﴿٧٠﴾ وَمَن تَابَ وَعَمِلَ صَٰلِحًا فَإِنَّهُۥ يَتُوبُ إِلَى ٱللَّهِ
مَتَابًا ﴿٧١﴾ وَٱلَّذِينَ لَا يَشْهَدُونَ ٱلزُّورَ وَإِذَا مَرُّوا۟ بِٱللَّغْوِ
مَرُّوا۟ كِرَامًا ﴿٧٢﴾ وَٱلَّذِينَ إِذَا ذُكِّرُوا۟ بِـَٔايَٰتِ رَبِّهِمْ
لَمْ يَخِرُّوا۟ عَلَيْهَا صُمًّا وَعُمْيَانًا ﴿٧٣﴾ وَٱلَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا
هَبْ لَنَا مِنْ أَزْوَٰجِنَا وَذُرِّيَّٰتِنَا قُرَّةَ أَعْيُنٍ وَٱجْعَلْنَا
لِلْمُتَّقِينَ إِمَامًا ﴿٧٤﴾ أُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ يُجْزَوْنَ ٱلْغُرْفَةَ بِمَا
صَبَرُوا۟ وَيُلَقَّوْنَ فِيهَا تَحِيَّةً وَسَلَٰمًا ﴿٧٥﴾ خَٰلِدِينَ
فِيهَا ۚ حَسُنَتْ مُسْتَقَرًّا وَمُقَامًا ﴿٧٦﴾ قُلْ مَا يَعْبَؤُا۟ بِكُمْ رَبِّى
لَوْلَا دُعَآؤُكُمْ ۖ فَقَدْ كَذَّبْتُمْ فَسَوْفَ يَكُونُ لِزَامًا ﴿٧٧﴾

The Meaning of the Translation of these Verses

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

61. Blessed is He Who has set up in the sky constellations, and has placed among them a lamp, and a light-giving moon.

62. And it is He Who causes the night and the day to succeed one another; for those who want to reflect or want to be grateful.

63. And servants of the Most Gracious, those who walk gently on earth, and whenever the foolish address them, say, 'Peace!'

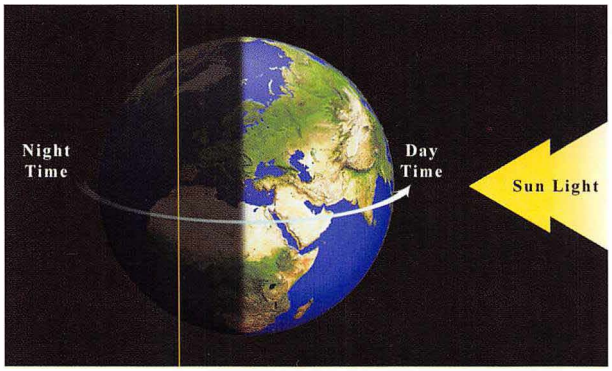
64. And those who spend the night for their Lord, prostrating and standing.
65. And those who say, 'Our Lord! Turn from us the punishment of Hell; surely its punishment is unrelenting.
66. It is indeed an evil dwelling place and abode!'
67. And those who, whenever they spend, are neither wasteful, nor stingy, but are in a just balance between them.
68. And those who call not upon any other god together with Allah, and do not kill any being Allah has forbidden except by right. And do not commit *zinaa* – anyone who does that will receive an evil punishment.
69. The punishment will be doubled for him on the Day of Resurrection, and he will remain in that state, humiliated.
70. Except those who repent and believe and do righteous works – those Allah will change their evil deeds into good deeds; for Allah is ever All-Forgiving, Most Merciful.
71. And whoever repents and does righteous works, he truly turns to Allah repentant.
72. And those who never testify to falsehood, and when they pass by folly, they pass by it with dignity.
73. And those who, whenever they are reminded of the signs of their Lord, do not fall upon them, deaf and dumb.
74. And those who say, 'Our Lord! Grant us, from our spouses and our offspring, the comfort to our eyes, and make us the leaders of those who have *taqwaa*.'
75. They will be rewarded with the highest of heavenly abodes, because of their patience, where they will be greeted with salutations and peace.
76. Abiding therein – what an excellent dwelling place and abode!
77. Say: 'My Lord pays attention to you only because of your invocation to Him. But you have denied, so punishment is bound to come.'

Explanation



'Blessed is He Who placed in the sky Constellations (*Burooj*).' (Verse 61)

The term *burooj* refers to the large stars. The sun is called here a lamp. It sends light to our planet as well as to other planets. Among them there is a light-giving moon. It spreads a gentle air of calm. These objects testify to Allah's immense power. The Qur'an invites man to ponder over these wonders of the universe.



'it is He Who causes the night and the day to succeed one another.' (Verse 62)

This verse refers to the succession of the day and the night which are two of Allah's great signs that people always overlook. A little reflection on them is, however, enough for anyone who would pay heed or would show gratitude. Scientists tell us that life would not be possible if the length of the day and night cycle was changed. A hope-inspiring *hadeeth* has been recorded by Imaam Muslim, 'Allah spreads forth His Hand at night for the one who has done evil during the day to repent, and He spreads forth His Hand during the day for the one who has done evil during the night to repent.' (Muslim)

'And the servants of the Most Gracious are those who walk gently on earth.' (Verse 63)

Attributes of the servants of the Most Gracious:

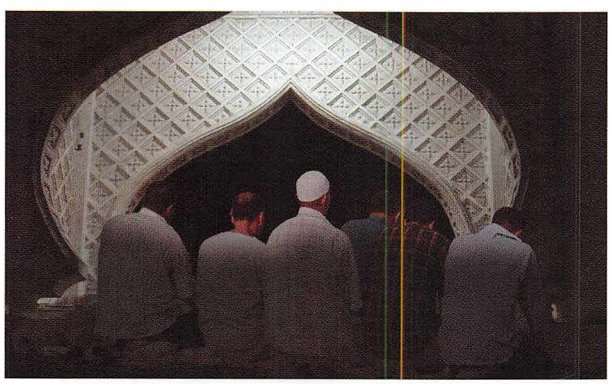
The first attribute of the true servants of Allah, Most High, is that they walk gently. They do not walk with affectation, display or arrogance.

Walking is an open expression of one's personality. A serious, confident and sound personality expresses itself through its gait. A person of this type walks with an air of dignity and reassurance. His gait expresses clarity of purpose and strength. To 'walk gently on earth' does not mean that the believers hang their heads down. The meaning is that they do not strut about arrogantly, like haughty tyrants. On the contrary, their gait is gentle, of noble and upright people. The gentle gait neither signifies that of the weak or sickly, nor that of the hypocrites who adopt it artificially to show their humility and heedfulness of Allah, Most High. Allah's Messenger ﷺ used to walk with firm and quick steps as if he were walking down a slope.

One's gait is the first indicator of one's whole character and personality. The gait of a cunning man is different from that of a tyrant. It is different from the gait of a civilized and upright person. It is again different from that of someone who is arrogant or a criminal. In reality, one can tell a lot about a person by simply looking at the way he walks.

Al-jaahiloon, or the foolish and the ignorant, does not mean the illiterate. Rather, it implies ill-mannered people. It implies those who are rough and ill-bred. The true servants of the Merciful One do not respond to indecency by themselves turning to indecency. They do not respond to abuse by hurling abuse in

return. They rather prefer to turn away from those who behave so by simply saying, 'peace be upon you.' It should, however, be kept clearly in mind that this is by no means a sign of weakness or inability. It is simply a dignified approach. Their dignity does not permit them to waste their time and energy over what is unbefitting for the decent. The fact of the matter is that Allah's true servants do not bother themselves with other people's absurdities and stupidities. They do not waste their time and energy in futile arguments with such people. They recognize that engaging in an argument with people who argue for only argument's sake is rather fruitless.



'And those who spend the night for their Lord ...' (Verse 64)

The preceding verse portrays their daytime lives. This verse depicts how they spend their nights. The believers do not spend their nights in the unfettered pursuit of pleasures. They do not spend them in gossiping and telling tales. Rather, they spend them in prayer, supplication and remembrance of Allah – standing, sitting and reclining. This aspect of their lives is repeatedly presented in the Glorious Qur'an: 'Their sides forsake their beds, and they invoke their Lord in fear and hope.' (32:16). 'And these people [of Paradise] slept but little during the night and sought forgiveness in the hours before dawn.' (51: 17-18)

This verse underscores two of the main movements Muslims perform in prayer – prostration and standing. Thus it reflects their actions in the depth of the night, when others are fast asleep. The true servants of Allah stay up prostrating themselves and standing before their Lord. They have something that they enjoy. It gives them far more comfort, energy and delight than sleep can ever give. Other people are concerned with their position on earth, while these true servants of Allah hope in reward from the Most Merciful.

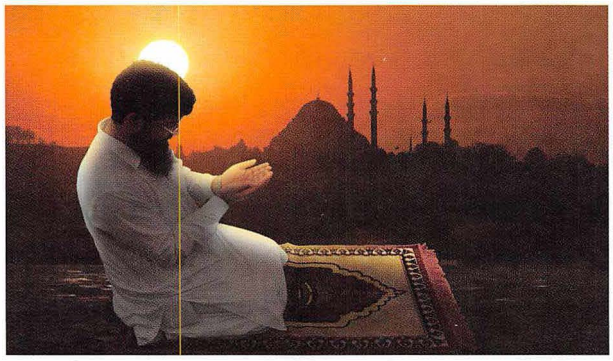
Abu Hurayrah ﷺ reports Allah's Messenger ﷺ as saying, 'Our Lord, the Blessed and the Exalted, descends every night to the lowest heaven when one-third of the latter part of the night is



- What does the title of the soo*rah* signify?
- What does our gait reflect? How does a believer walk?
- Who is a 'foolish' person? How should a Muslim deal with him?

left and says, "Is there anyone who supplicates Me so that I may answer him? Is there anyone who asks Me so that I may give him? Is there anyone who asks My forgiveness, so that I may forgive him.' (al-Bukhaaree)

Jaabir ﷺ narrates, 'I heard Allah's Messenger ﷺ say, "There is an hour during the night in which no Muslim asks Allah for good in this world and the next but Allah gives it to him; and this is every night."' (Muslim)



'And those who say, "O our Lord! Turn from us the punishment of Hell..."' (Verses 65-66)

The worship of these sincere believers does not make them proud. They do not suffer from the illusion that they are Allah's favourites. Despite their many virtues, their supplications and their devoted worship, they fear lest any lapse on their part causes them to be condemned to punishment. They have not seen Hell or its suffering, but they believe in it. They also picture it according to its description in the Noble Qur'an and in the Prophet's Traditions. Thus their genuine fear of it is the fruit of their faith.

'And who, whenever they spend, are neither wasteful nor stingy...' (Verse 67)

Another distinguishing trait of the believers is that they are not wasteful. They do not squander their wealth on vain and evil things like lavish weddings, or in drinking, smoking and gambling. They do not waste their wealth on unjustified festivities and amusements. Nor do they spend beyond their means for show on food, houses, clothing, and profitless décor, etc. At the same time, they are not miserly. It is not their wont to leave spending on their families, giving anything in charity, or for a good cause. On the contrary, they live moderately. In fact, moderation was the distinguishing characteristic of the Prophet ﷺ and his companions.

It is important, however, to know what is meant by extravagance or wastefulness and miserliness in Islam. Wastefulness consists of

(1) spending money on unlawful things;
(2) overspending on lawful things, in the sense that one spends more than one can afford, or acquires what one has no need for.

In contrast, miserliness involves

(1) refusal to spend on one's own genuine needs or on the needs of one's family, or
(2) refusal to spend on charity.

The Qur'an sets a middle course between these two extremes. Indeed, balance is the distinctive feature that Islam establishes in the life of the individual and the community at large.

'And who call not upon any other god together with Allah...' (Verses 68-69)

The next important quality of Allah's true servants is that they never invoke any other deity along with Allah. They do not take any human being's life – the life which Allah has willed to be sacred, except for a just cause. And they do not commit *zinaa* (any unlawful sexual relations or what leads to that). Whoever does any of these things will face punishment. His suffering will be doubled on the Day of Resurrection and will then abide therein in disgrace. The true believers shun these three major sins: *shirk* – associating others with Allah, murder and *zinaa*. Allah's Messenger ﷺ stressed the gravity of these sins in many of his sayings; for instance, Abdullaah ibn Mas'ood ﷺ states that once the Prophet ﷺ was asked, 'What is the gravest sin? The Prophet ﷺ said, "To make an equal for Allah, though He is the One who has created you." When asked about the next gravest sin, the Prophet ﷺ said, "That you kill your child for fear that he will share your food with you." When asked about the third gravest sin, the Prophet ﷺ said, "To commit adultery with your neighbour's wife." (al-Bukhaaree)

Though there are many other major sins, these were the most common in the Arabian society at that time. Believers are marked out from others by stating that they refrain from these sins.



- How do the servants of Allah spend their nights?
- What do extravagance and miserliness mean? Which way should Muslims adopt as far as money is concerned?
- What are the three major sins mentioned here that the believers must shun? Why are these sins repeatedly mentioned?

'The punishment will be doubled for him on the Day of Resurrection.' (Verse 69)

This means that the punishment will be repetitive and intensified. The punishment will continue and will be made more intense.

'Except those who repent and believe, and do righteous works...' (Verses 70-71)

This is good news for the sinners who repent in the life of this world and

firmly decide to correct their behaviour. The present verse provides a ray of hope to all sinners without exception. It prompts and inspires them to turn to Allah in repentance and to mend their ways. It is only the hope of forgiveness which can save a sinner and bring him out of the vicious circle of sin. A man in despair can easily turn into a devil, but the door of repentance is always open to admit anyone whose conscience is awakened and wants to turn to Allah in repentance. No one is ever turned away from it. No matter whom he might be, or what sins he might have committed in the past. Those who repent, and attain to faith and do righteous deeds are promised that whatever sins they have committed prior to their repentance will be forgiven. Their sins will be changed into good deeds, which will be added to their newly earned good actions. This is an aspect of Allah's bounty. Allah is indeed Ever-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

'And those who never testify to falsehood...' (Verse 72)

Further qualities of true believers:

The *soorah* continues to outline the qualities of the true servants of the Most Merciful: Those who never bear witness to what is false; whenever they pass by people engaged in silly things, they pass on with dignity. This means they never give false testimony. They know that such an action leads to seizing people's rights and helps injustice. It may also be taken to mean that they do not attend any place or stay with any group where falsehood is said or done. They steer away from such places or company so as not to be a party to anything that happens there. A believer has more serious preoccupations that leave no time for him to engage in senseless and idle pursuits.

'And those who, whenever they are reminded of the signs of their Lord...' (Verse 73)

The true servants of Allah are quick to remember when a reminder is given to them. Their hearts are open to the understanding of Allah's signs and revelations. Some people approach the Divine Scripture with a mere outward show of eagerness. They throw themselves upon it, for the sake of



- What does the Qur'an mean when it says 'his punishment will be doubled'?
- Under what condition will Allah forgive the sinners?
- When the true servants of Allah pass by people engaged in silly things, they pass on with dignity. What does this mean, and why do they behave so?

appearances. In reality, they do not make the least attempt to understand the message as such. Hence, they remain deaf and dumb to its contents. Those with *taqwaa*, on the other hand, are deeply desirous of understanding it. They listen to it with wide-awake ears and look into it with seeing eyes.

'And those who say, "Our Lord! Grant us..." (Verse 74)

This means: Grant us faith. Grant us excellent moral conduct and the ability to do righteous deeds.

'They will be rewarded with the highest of heavenly abodes...' (Verses 75-76)

The word patience (*sabr*) is used here in its most comprehensive sense. Variously, it means to endure persecution at the hands of the enemies of truth with courage. It means to beat whatever hardships come one's way while striving to establish the true faith in Allah. It also means to remain steadfast against all fears. It also means to refuse to succumb to temptations and to resolutely fulfil one's obligations in spite of Satan's temptations and one's own lower self, or *nafs*.

The word *ghurfah* denotes a lofty abode. It is generally translated as the upper chamber, which brings to mind a two-storied building. The word may be taken to mean in this context either Paradise or a special place in Paradise.

'Say: My Lord pays attention to you...' (Verse 77)

If one does not worship Allah, does not supplicate to Him for one's needs or does not seek His help, then one is not worth anything to Allah. Allah does not care for people just because they are His creatures. If they do not obey Him, this will certainly not endear such people to Allah. Nevertheless, if someone were to stretch out his hands to Him in supplication, he will instantly find Allah turning to him in Mercy. As for those who arrogantly refuse to worship Him or pray to Him, and belie His message, they are sure to incur Allah's punishment.



- How do the true servants of Allah respond to His signs?
- Explain briefly the word *sabr*.
- What does the word *ghurfah* mean in the context of Paradise?

Exercise

A. Fill in the blanks.

1. The stars, the sun, the moon and the day and the night testify to _____.
2. Turning away from an ill-mannered person is a _____ approach.
3. A believer has no time for _____ and _____ pursuits.
4. It is only the hope of _____ which can save a sinner.

B. Think-up

1. Why do you think sincere believers still pray to Allah against the punishment of Hell?
2. After much sinning, if a person accepts Islam at the age of 45, what will happen to his sins? Will Allah take him to account for them?
3. Mention the qualities of the true servants of Allah. Measure yourself against them and see how you can improve yourself.

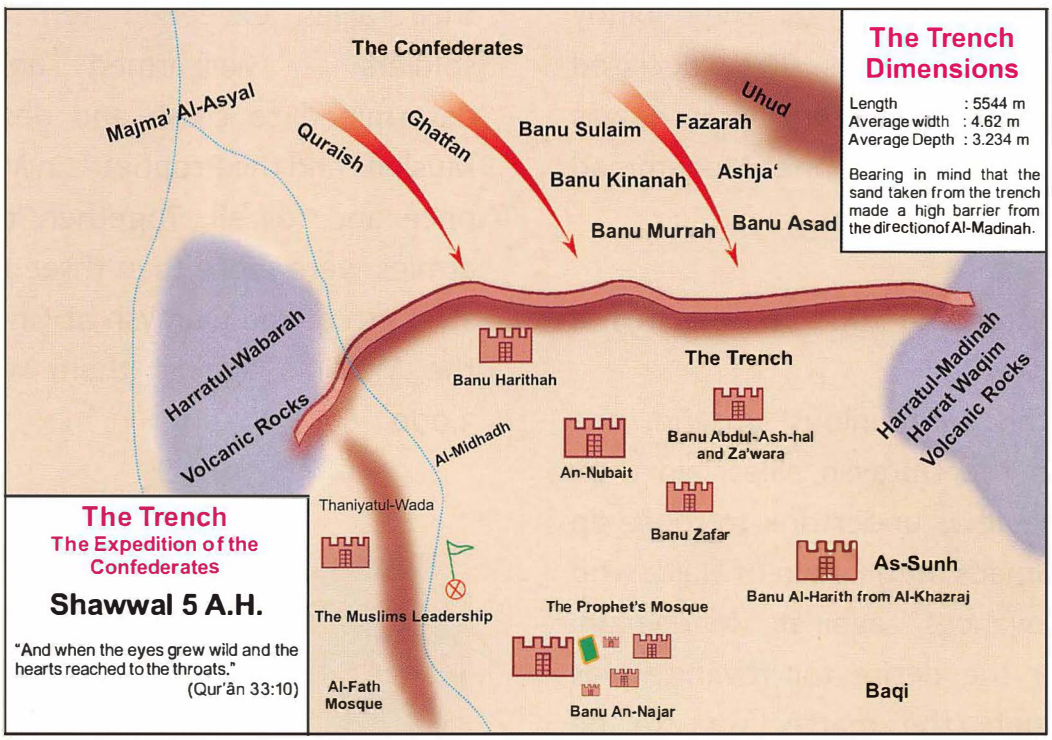
C. Learn the short *du'aa* in verse 74, and recite it daily.

The Battle of the Trench (*Al-Khandaq*)

The Battle of the Trench is known by various names: the Battle of the Clans or Confederates (*al-Ahzaab*); the Battle of the Siege of al-Madeenah.

Date of the Battle

The Battle of the Trench took place in the month of *Shawwaal* in the fifth year after the *Hijrah* or emigration (January, 627 AD).



Causes of the Battle

A state of war existed between the Muslims and the Quraysh. The struggle between them had not ended after the Battle of Uhud. It rather continued until the fall of Makkah. Therefore, the pagans made every effort to destroy the Muslims. There were, however, some direct causes that led to the battle.

1. The Quraysh had failed at Uhud to secure their trade routes to Syria. The Quraysh, therefore, did everything to destroy the Muslim power which they saw as a constant threat to their trade routes and their status among the Arabs.
2. The exiled Jews of Banu an-Nadheer who had settled in Khaybar were determined to recover the land they had lost. When they were expelled from Madeenah, they had carried with them not only their wealth and belongings, but also their hatred of Islam and malice. Their hopes had centred on the preparation of the Quraysh for a final attack on the Prophet ﷺ.
3. In Khaybar, they began to discuss plans to bring down the Muslims. They agreed that their best option was to form alliances with other tribes and to

attack Madeenah with a huge army. To accomplish their goal, they sent forth a secret delegation to Makkah. It consisted of several chieftains of Banu an-Nadheer and the Waa'il tribes. They instigated the Quraysh to fight the Prophet ﷺ. They promised to fight alongside with them till they jointly uprooted the Muslims. They declared that the religion of the Quraysh was better than that of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

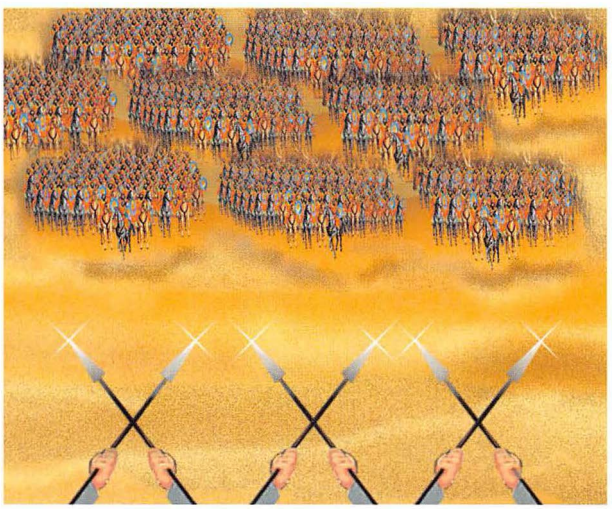
The Efforts of the Jews to Form a Confederacy

On this harmonious ground, the Jews and the Quraysh allies laid their plans. The Jews undertook to rouse up all the nomads in the plain of Najd, who had grievances against Madeenah. Wherever the desire for revenge was not enough, the matter was to be clinched by bribery.

Banu Asad readily agreed to help. Banu Ghatafaan were promised half the date harvest of Khaybar for one year if they joined the Confederacy. They too agreed to join. Khaybar was known for its plentiful dates. An entire year's worth of harvest was simply too tempting an offer to refuse. The Jews also succeeded in securing a contingent from Banu Sulaym.

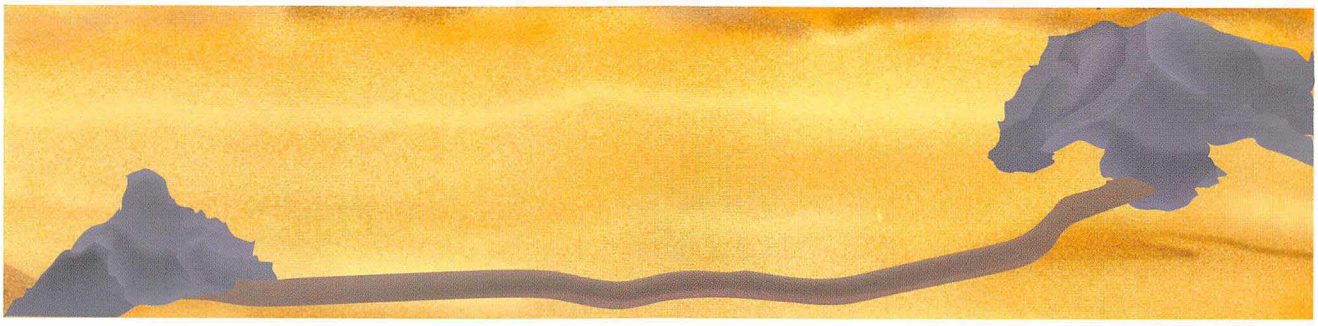
The Quraysh themselves and their closest allies were four thousand strong. Together with one or two other contingents from the south, they were to march out of Makkah along the coastal route to Madeenah. It was the same route which they had taken to Uhud.

The second army was to close in on Madeenah from the east; that is from the plain of Najd. Altogether, the combined forces of the Quraysh and their allies exceeded ten thousand soldiers – well-armed and quite determined to crush and destroy the Muslims and the Prophet ﷺ in Madeenah once and for all. Together, the allied armies were more than three times the strength of the Quraysh at Uhud, while the Muslims against them were only 3,000.



Allah's Messenger ﷺ Learns about the Confederate Army

Because of constant external threat, the Muslims were always on alert. They paid close attention to the movements of the enemy. Soon the news of the huge confederate army reached Madeenah.



Allah's Messenger ﷺ Holds a Council of War

Allah's Messenger ﷺ soon summoned his companions to a consultation. Many opinions were expressed as to what should be the best plan of action. The situation was indeed grave. The very existence of the Muslims as a community was in peril. The only way for them to defend themselves and their territory was to fortify and defend the city from within.

The Trench (*al-Khandaq*)

It was determined to dig a trench to fortify the city. Time was short. All efforts were to be strained to the utmost if no dangerous gap was to be left in the defences. But the trench did not need to be continuous. At many places a long stretch of fortress-like dwellings at the edge of the city was adequate protection. To the northwest, there were some masses of rock which in themselves were impregnable. They merely needed to be connected to each other. The nearest of them, known as Mount Sal', was to be brought within the entrenchments. The ground in front of it was an excellent site for camping. This was to be the longest single stretch of trench and also the most important.

The Fortresses of Banu Quraydhah

On the southwestern front of Madeenah, huge fortresses of Banu Quraydhah were situated. This practically guaranteed that the Muslims would be protected from the rear of the enemy armies. Banu Quraydhah was the last Jewish tribe to remain in Madeenah. Like Banu Qaynuqaa and Banu an-Nadheer, Banu Quraydhah were a supposed ally of the Muslims. They had a treaty with the Muslims. Under the terms of the treaty, the Jews of Banu Quraydhah had vowed not to fight along with or support a foreign invader against the Muslims. Besides, it was their responsibility to protect the Muslims in case of an attack by a foreign invader. Theoretically, therefore, the Muslims had nothing to fear from their southwestern front. However, practically, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ had been already deceived by the two other Jewish tribes. So he vigilantly watched to see how Banu Quraydhah would react to the attack which was being made on Madeenah.



- Mention, very briefly, the causes for the Battle of the Trench.
- How did the Jews manage to get Banu Ghatafaan to join the confederacy?
- How strong was the confederate army, and how strong was the Muslim army?
- Did the trench need to be continuous? Why?

The Muslims Begin to Dig the Trench

Digging trenches was new to Arab warfare. This shows that the Prophet ﷺ was willing to try new strategies and methods to overcome the enemy.

The Muslims began to dig the trench. It stretched from Ajam ash-Shaykhayn in the east, to al-Madhaad in the west. It was about 5,000 forearm's lengths long, nine wide and its depth varied between seven to ten forearm's lengths. The *Muhaajiroon*, or the Emigrants, were responsible for digging from the fortress of Raatij in the east to the fortress of Dhubaab, whereas the *Ansaar* or the Helpers, were responsible for digging from Dhubaab to the mountain in Abid in the west.

Allah's Messenger ﷺ planned the trench. He made each section of his companions responsible for a part of the trench and he himself worked with them. The companions went out at dawn everyday immediately after the Dawn prayer, and came home at twilight. On one of the first mornings, Allah's Messenger ﷺ chanted a reminder of their work at building the mosque.

'O Allah, no good is but the good of the hereafter. Forgive the Helpers and the Emigrants.' It was immediately taken up by them all. Sometimes they chanted, 'O Allah, no life is but the afterlife. Have Mercy on the Helpers and the Emigrants.'

The companions reminded each other that the time was short. The enemy would soon be upon them. The Muslims undertook the work with great zeal and enthusiasm.

Everyone participated in the digging without exception, whether rich or poor, slave or free men. They had a good example in the Prophet ﷺ. Sometimes, he worked with the Emigrants and sometimes with the Helpers; sometimes with a pickaxe, sometimes with a shovel, and sometimes with a carrier.

He joined them in the chorus, 'O Allah! But for You We never would have been guided, never had given alms, nor offered any prayers for You. Send then serenity upon us; make firm our feet for the encounter. The tribes have rebelled against us; sought to pervert us, but we refused.' Allah's Messenger ﷺ would reply to them, 'O Allah, surely there is no

good but that of the hereafter, so bless the Emigrants and the Helpers.'

Most of the diggers at the trench normally did not have enough to eat. The hard work increased the pangs of hunger. For food, they had barley cooked with little butter. It was not very tasty, nor of good smell. But the extreme hunger made it tasty. At times, they did not even have that and had to contend themselves with a few dates. There was actually a time when they got nothing to eat for three consecutive days. This led them to such pangs of hunger that they had to tie rocks to their stomachs, Allah's Messenger ﷺ not being an exception.

The weather was very cold. Famine had struck Madeenah at that time. The work was extremely hard. Seeing that the Prophet ﷺ himself took part in the actual digging, no companion spared any effort to complete the work before the arrival of the enemy.

Conclusive Proofs of the Prophet's Mission in the Form of Miracles

Wherever the Prophet ﷺ might be, it was understood that he must be informed of any unusual difficulty. One day, the Emigrants needed help. After many vain attempts to split or dislodge a rock they had struck, they went to the Prophet ﷺ. He came and took a pickaxe and gave the rock a blow. He gave it another blow. A third blow split the rock into fragments. Allah's Messenger ﷺ



then said, 'Through the first, Allah has given me the keys of Syria, and by Allah, I can see its red palaces now. Through the second, He has opened unto me Persia, and by Allah, I can see its white palaces now. Through the third, He has opened unto me Yemen and by Allah, I can see the gates of Sanaa from where I now stand.' (Ahmad, and it is *hasan*)

These words predicted that the kingdoms referred to by the Prophet ﷺ would fall to Muslims in the future.

Jaabir رضي الله عنه had been struck by the Prophet's increasing pangs of hunger. That evening he asked his wife if she could cook him a meal. 'We have nothing but this goat and a measure of barley,' she said. So he slaughtered the goat, and she roasted it and ground the barley, and made some bread. Then, Jaabir رضي الله عنه went to the Prophet ﷺ as he was leaving the trench and invited him to the meal of mutton and bread. Jaabir رضي الله عنه says, 'I wanted him to come alone,

but the Prophet ﷺ told a crier to call out, "Go with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ to the house of Jaabir. Respond, for Jaabir invites you.'" Jaabir ؓ went ahead to warn his wife. She asked, 'Did you invite them, or did he?' Jaabir replied, 'No, he invited them.' 'Then let them come,' she said, 'for Allah and His Messenger know best.'

The meal was placed in front of the Prophet ﷺ . He blessed it and uttered the Name of Allah and began to serve the food to the companions. The companions arrived in groups. When they had eaten their fill, they rose and went away, making room for another group. It went on until everyone had eaten his fill. They were at least a thousand. They all satisfied their hunger, and there still remained some mutton and some bread. They were even able to give some of it to their neighbours.

Scarcely had the trench been finished – it took six days in all, when news came that the army of the Quraysh was approaching the valley of Aqeeq. They were now a little to the southwest of the town. The Ghatafaan and other tribes of Najd were moving towards Uhud from the east. All the overlying houses of the city had already been evacuated and their dwellers housed within fortresses. The Prophet ﷺ had given orders for every woman and child to be allocated a place of safety in one or the other upper rooms of the fortresses. Then he camped with his companions, about three thousand in all, on the chosen site. His tent of red leather was pitched at the foot of Mount Sal'.



- How did the Prophet ﷺ help in the digging of the trench?
- Where were the women and children housed?

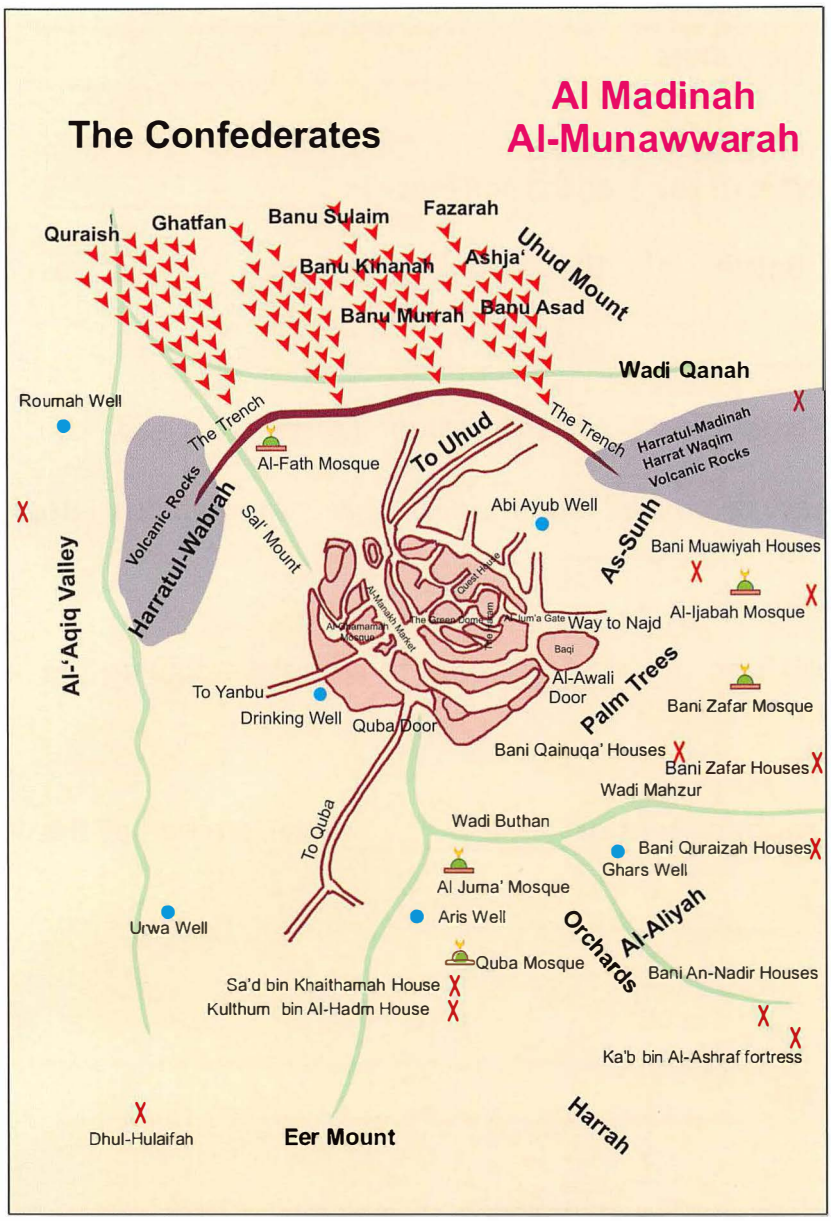
Exercise

A. Fill in the blanks.

1. The Battle of the Trench took place in _____.
2. The Battle of the Trench is also known as _____ and _____.
3. After the news of the allied forces reached the Prophet ﷺ, he summoned his companions to _____.
4. It took them _____ days to complete digging the trench.
5. The Prophet's tent of _____ was pitched at the foot of _____.

B. Think up

Whose idea was it to dig the trench?



The Siege

The Makkan army and their allies pitched their camps not far from Uhud. The two armies now joined together and advanced in the direction of the city. Abu Sufyaan was commander-in-chief. However, by turns, each of the various leaders was to have his day of honour in which he would direct the actual fighting. As they approached, they were delighted to see the army camp in front of them outside the city. They had been afraid that they would find them garrisoned behind their battlements. But out in the open they would be able to overwhelm them easily, they thought.

When they came nearer, however, they were amazed that a broad trench lay between them. The archers were lined the whole way along the trench on its further side. Their horses would not be able to cross it easily. They soon realized that they were already within range of the Muslims. So they drew back a little to a safer distance.

Banu Quraydhah Break their Pact with the Prophet ﷺ

The Makkan army and their allies spent the rest of the day in consultation. They concluded that their best hope lay in the possibility of forcing the Muslims to withdraw their troops in large numbers from the north of the city in order to defend it elsewhere. If the trench were sufficiently unguarded, it would not be too hard to cross it, they reckoned. Their thought turned towards Banu Quraydhah. Their fortresses blocked the approach to Madeenah from the southeast.

But a pact existed between the Muslims and the Madeenan Jewish tribe of Banu Quraydhah. Huyayy ibn Akhtab, the chief of Banu an-Nadheer who had come from Khaybar to join the allied army encouraged the Jews of Banu Quraydhah to break the treaty. Banu Quraydhah's breaking of the treaty did not remain hidden. When Allah's Messenger ﷺ heard of it, he was visibly troubled. He realized that it was a serious setback. He sent Az-Zubayr ibn al-Awwaam to find out the truth of the matter. Az-Zubayr brought the worrisome news of their treachery. It was on that day that Allah's Messenger ﷺ said, 'May my parents be sacrificed for you. Every Prophet has a disciple (*hawaaree*) and my disciple is Az-Zubayr.' Then the Prophet ﷺ called Sa'd ibn Mu'aadh, chief of the Aws, and Sa'd ibn Ubaadah, chief of the Khazraj, to him and said, 'Go and see if it is true.' They reached the fortresses of Banu Quraydhah soon after Az-Zubayr found that they had indeed broken the pact and torn the document.

Despite the Prophet's efforts to conceal it, news of the betrayal of their former allies reached the Muslims. The news caused a great deal of panic and fear in their ranks. If the news proved to be true, it would mean that another war front would be opened against them. They were already exhausted and hungry. The weather was exceptionally cold and wet. Their army of just over three thousand men was greatly outnumbered by the combined armies of the Quraysh and the Bedouins of over ten thousand soldiers armed to the teeth. The prospect now, of attack from the inside (from below) by the Jews of Banu Quraydhah was more than some could bear.

The Glorious Qur'an portrays the situation and panic of the Muslims most vividly in *Soorat Al-Ahzaab* which provides a detailed account of the Battle of the Trench. It gives a graphic description of how the forces of injustice and evil arrayed themselves against the believers. It also discloses the secrets of the hypocrites and cautions against their methods of deception, betrayal and obstruction. (33: 9-12)

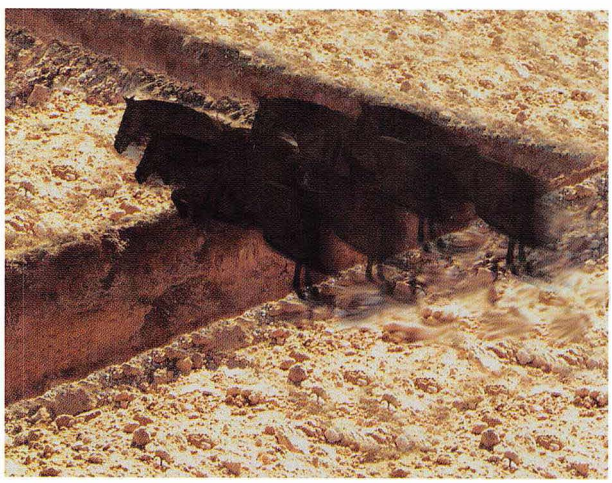
Fear grew intense. The believers harboured every kind of suspicion. Hypocrisy raised its head among the hypocrites.

Allah's Messenger ﷺ Reduces the Strength at the Trench

After Banu Quraydhah's breaking of their pact, it was necessary to reduce the strength of the forces at the trench and to keep a garrison within the city itself. Thus the warning came to the Prophet ﷺ that Huyayy was urging the Quraysh and Ghatafaan to each send by night a thousand men to the fortresses of Banu Quraydhah and from there to raid the centre of the city.

As soon as Allah's Messenger ﷺ heard of it, he sent Zayd ibn Haarithah رضي الله عنه with a troop of three hundred men to patrol the streets of Madeenah. Another troop of two hundred men was also sent. It was led by Salamah ibn Aslam al-Awsee. They guarded Madeenah, loudly reciting the *takbeer* (*Allahu Akbar* – Allah is Supremely Great) each night so that Banu Quraydhah should know that they were around and alert.

The trench also had to be manned day and night. Hence, each man now kept watch for longer hours. The days passed and the strain was very great.



Some Quraysh Manage to Cross the Trench

The obstacle of the trench was quite perplexing to the Quraysh and their allies. The Arabs knew only open combat in open space. The Jews of Arabia, however, used to fight from behind walls and fortifications, as the Qur'an reports in *Soorat Al-Hashr*. But they also had never seen anything like a trench.

The days passed. The strain was tremendous; with Ikrimah ibn Abee Jahl and his men even seeking to cross the trench. But only once did they succeed in crossing the trench, and that was when Ikrimah suddenly noticed that the narrowest section happened, for the moment, to be badly guarded. He succeeded in making his horse leap the gap. He was followed by three others. But by the time the fifth man had crossed, Ali and those with him had re-manned the narrow section and made it once more impregnable. This cut off the retreat of the horsemen who were now on their side.

According to the biographers of the Prophet ﷺ, the Quraysh horsemen who succeeded to cross the trench were:

1. 'Amr ibn Abd Wudd. He was a formidable and well-known fighter of the Quraysh. He was much feared and hated by the Muslims.
2. Ikrimah ibn Abee Jahl. He was the son of the well-known leader of Banu Makhzoom of Quraysh, Abu Jahl, who was killed at Badr.
3. Hubayrah ibn Wahb, from Banu Makhzoom.
4. Dhiraar ibn Khattaab ibn Mirdaas, the poet, and
5. Nawfal ibn Abdullaah.

Ali رضي الله عنه fought a duel with Amr ibn Abd Wudd and killed him although Amr was a famous intrepid fighter. Az-Zubayr رضي الله عنه killed Nawfal ibn Abdullaah, while the others fled.

The crossing of the trench, although abortive, had shown that it was a possibility. The next day, the enemy made attacks at various points even before sunrise. But the believers remained steadfast, despite their weariness from the strain of overlong watches. The enemy tried to force their way again and again everyday, but they could achieve nothing.

The actual fighting remained limited to a discharge of archery. Sa'd ibn Mu'aadh was struck in the arm by an arrow which severed a vein. Many of the horses of the Quraysh and Banu Ghatafaan were severely wounded. Every time the enemy attempted to cross the trench, the Muslims welcomed them with a shower of arrows.

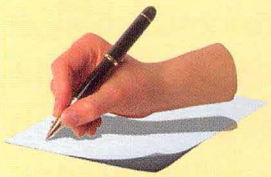
The Battle of the Trench was a Great Trial

The Battle of the trench undoubtedly represents the climax of trial and suffering in the life of the Prophet ﷺ and his companions. It threatened the very existence of the Muslim nation. Never before had the Quraysh and their Jewish allies managed to gather such a mighty army. Never before had they been able to lay siege to Madeenah in such a manner. Never before had the alliance against the Muslims been so extensive. All the enemies of the Muslims had gathered together for the first time. Moreover, they had the best equipment and armaments of the time in Arabia.

It should be remembered that the main objective of the Jews of Banu an-Nadheer, who had instigated the war, was the complete destruction of the Muslims and the Prophet ﷺ. The Battle of al-Ahzaab was truly the most trying and dangerous conflict faced by the Muslims. It was far more perilous than Uhud. It is for this reason that the Glorious Qur'an refers to al-Ahzaab as the occasion when the Muslims were most severely tried and shaken most mightily.

At times the fighting grew intense. The trench had to be guarded by the archers. At times, fighting continued from early morning until the middle of the night. The pagans kept the pressure on the Muslims. They shot arrows at them to push them away from the trench. At one time, the shooting and attempts at crossing the trench were so severe that the Muslims could not perform their *Asr* (mid-afternoon) prayer in congregation. They did it after sunset.

Food was beginning to run short. The nights were exceptionally cold. The hypocrites were passing word that it was not possible to resist such an enemy with only a trench between them, but the faith of the true believers was confirmed by the hardship. How many more such days could be endured?



- After consultation, what decision did the Makkan army reach?
- Why was the breaking of the Treaty by Banu Quraydhah a setback for the Muslims?
- What steps did the Prophet ﷺ take to counter Banu Quraydhah's treachery?
- How did Ikrimah and others manage to cross over the impregnable trench?
- Explain briefly how the Battle of the Trench was a severe trial for the Muslims?

Allah's Messenger ﷺ Resorts to War Tactics

Quite often wars are won by tricks. Sound decisions are very important in winning wars. The Muslims faced overwhelming odds. Their conditions had worsened because of the treachery of Banu Quraydhah. Allah's Messenger ﷺ decided to use intrigue against the enemies. They had done the same thing, especially the Jews.

His aim was to divide the confederates and to destroy their apparent unity. He, therefore, turned his attention to the tribe of Banu Ghatafaan who were the most powerful ally of the Quraysh. Allah's Messenger ﷺ sent an envoy to them with a message, 'Go home. Quit this affair. The Quraysh are merely trying to avenge their defeat at Badr and Uhud. Return home. I will give you one-third of the year's harvest of Madeenah.' The Prophet's envoy put this offer before Banu Ghatafaan. The offer was very tempting and they began to discuss it among themselves. Consequently, their zeal and enthusiasm for fighting began to wane. Many of them were inclined to accept the offer. It considerably weakened their morale.

The Wonderful Trick of Nu'aym ibn Mas'ood

Islam frowns upon deception in life in general, but the case is not so when it comes to warfare. Resorting to military tactics is not deception in its literal sense. It is not something looked down upon in wars. In fact, resorting to stratagem and deception is war itself. Therefore, Allah's Messenger ﷺ resorted to war tactics in order to divide the ranks of the confederates. First, he tried to weaken the resolve of Banu Ghatafaan. He appealed to their greed to convince them to break off from the confederacy. Then Allah presented the Prophet with another opportunity to weaken the enemy.

It came in the person of Nu'aym ibn Mas'ood ﷺ who belonged to the clan of Ashja', an ally of the Quraysh. Allah cast Islam into his heart. One night, he made his way into the city of Madeenah and came to the Muslim camp, where he asked to see the Prophet ﷺ. The Prophet ﷺ asked, 'What has brought you here, Nu'aym?' 'I have come to declare my belief in Islam and testify that you have brought the truth. So bid me what you will, Messenger of Allah. You have only to command me, and I will fulfill your command. My people and others know nothing about my acceptance of Islam.' Allah's Messenger ﷺ replied, 'To the utmost of your power, set them at odds with each other. Cause betrayal among them, if you are able to do so, for war is deception.' Nu'aym's acceptance of Islam was kept a secret to confuse the enemy.

Nu'aym ibn Mas'ood was a friend of the Banu Quraydhah. He went back through the city and made his way to Banu Quraydhah who welcomed him as an old friend. They offered him food and drink. He said, 'I have not come for this. I have come to warn you of my fears for your safety and to give you my counsel.' Then he went on to point out to them that if the Quraysh and Ghatafaan failed to inflict a final defeat on their enemy, they would return home and leave the Jews of Banu Quraydhah at the mercy of Muhammad ﷺ and his followers. Therefore, they should refuse to fight for Quraysh until they gave their leading men as hostages, in guarantee that they would not withdraw until the enemy had been destroyed. Banu Quraydhah accepted his advice with enthusiasm. So they agreed to do what he had said. They promised not to tell his own people or Quraysh that it was he who had given them this counsel.

Then he went to his one-time friend Abu Sufyaan, the commander-in-chief of the Quraysh army. He told him and the other chiefs of Quraysh who were with him that he had a very grave piece of information to deliver, on condition that they would swear not to tell anyone that he was their informer. They readily agreed. He said, 'You must know, and mark my words, that the Jews of Banu Quraydhah have regretted their action opposing Muhammad ﷺ, and they have actually sent a message to tell him so, saying, "We regret what we have done. Will it satisfy you if we take as hostages some of the leading men of Quraysh and Ghatafaan and give them to you that you may cut off their heads? Then we will join you in destroying those who are left." Muhammad ﷺ has sent them his agreement. So if the Jews ask you for some of your men as hostages, do not give them a single man of yours.'

Then he went to his own people, the Ghatafaan, and the other clans of Ghatafaan and told them the same as he had told the Quraysh. In fact, he had no difficulty at all in convincing them of his sincerity and good counsel.

After consultation, the leaders of the allied army decided to put to the test what Nu'aym had said. So they sent Ikrimah ibn Abee Jahl to Banu Quraydhah. Ikrimah told them that it was not possible for them to prolong their siege of Madeenah any longer. Their horses and camels were dying. The morale of their fighters was generally sinking low. It was now the time to attack the Muslims and deal with them once and for all. He continued, 'Make yourselves ready to fight tomorrow so that we rid ourselves of Muhammad and his followers once and for all.' But the response from Banu Quraydhah was quite disappointing. They said that as it was *Sabbath* (Saturday), they could do nothing. Their religion strictly forbade them from doing anything on the *Sabbath*, lest a severe affliction befall them.

They said, 'In no case will we fight against Muhammad unless you give us hostages who will be for us as a security, until we have made an end of him. We fear that if the battle turns against you, you will return to your land, leaving us without support, and we cannot face him alone.' When the message reached the Quraysh and Ghatafaan, they exclaimed, 'By Allah, what Nu'aym told us is indeed the truth.' They then sent word to Banu Quraydhah that they could expect no hostages from them. When the reply reached Banu Quraydhah, they too said what Nu'aym had told them was indeed true.

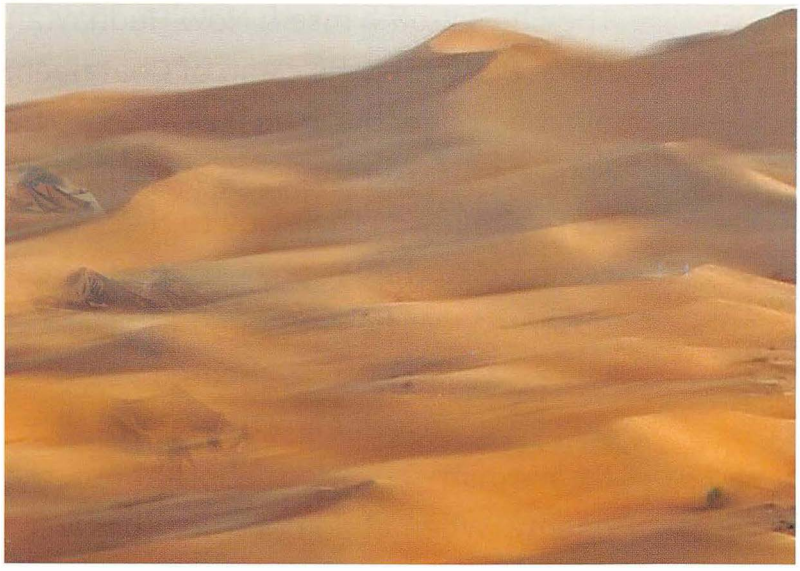
Abu Sufyaan now went to Huyayy and said, 'Where is the help you promised us from your people? They have deserted us. Now they seek to betray us.' Huyayy answered, 'The Sabbath is here. We cannot break the Sabbath. But on Sunday, they will fight against Muhammad and his followers.' It was only then that Abu Sufyaan told him about the demand for hostages. Huyayy was visibly taken aback.

Nu'aym's trick worked wonderfully. Every ally within the confederate army began to doubt the other ally. They no longer trusted one another. This greatly weakened their resolve. This is how Allah's design worked and how Allah's Messenger ﷺ managed to sow distrust, by the Will of Allah, amongst the enemies of Islam.

The provisions of the allied army were running out. Their horses were dying of arrow wounds. Many of their camels had already died. Mutual bitter accusations were on many tongues. Distrust had spread throughout the two invading armies. The expedition had virtually failed, and now the final seal of failure was to come.

Piercing Wind Comes from the East with Heavy Rain

For days the weather had been exceptionally cold and wet. Now a piercing wind came from the east, which forced every man to take shelter. The night fell and a tempest raged all over



the plain. The wind rose to the force of a hurricane. There was soon not one tent left standing throughout the camps of the invaders. Their fires were extinguished. Their cooking pots were overturned by the strong wind. Their food was spilled all over. The men crouched shivering on the ground, huddled together for warmth and shelter. The Quraysh were struck by a frightening thought that Muhammad ﷺ might take advantage of this unfavourable weather and attack them.

The Prophet ﷺ Sends Hudhayfah رضي الله عنه to the Enemy Camp to Gather Information

The Muslim's camp was somewhat sheltered from the wind. The wind blew down none of their tents. It was, however, still a bitterly cold night. Allah's Messenger ﷺ prayed late into the night. He realized that something tremendous was happening in the enemy camps on the other side of the trench.

He went among the men who happened to be nearest to his tent, and the companions heard him say, 'Which of you will rise and go to see what the enemies are about and then return, Allah will rank him with me on the Day of Judgement.' Allah's Messenger ﷺ repeated his call twice, but there was no response. They were so unnerved, so cold and so hungry that no man rose to his feet. When it became clear that no one was intending to offer himself, Allah's Messenger ﷺ called to Hudhayfah ibn al-Yamaan. Hudhayfah rose and went to the Prophet ﷺ. He was prompted into action by having been singled out of the rest. He could not but rise when he heard his name upon the Prophet's lips.

The Prophet ﷺ said to Hudhayfah, 'Go and bring me information about the enemy, and do nothing that may provoke them against me.' Hudhayfah later reported, 'When I left him, I felt warm as if I were walking in a heated bath until I reached them. I saw Abu Sufyaan warming his back against the fire. I put an arrow in the middle of the bow, intending to shoot at him, but I recalled the words of the Messenger of Allah, "Do not provoke them against me." Had I shot at him, I would have hit him.'

Hudhayfah entered amongst the people while the wind and the hosts of

Allah were doing their work against them. He made his way amongst the crouching figures of the Quraysh until he came near to where Abu Sufyaan their commander-in-chief, was seated. It was so dark, cold and noisy that nobody was paying any attention to anything except his own safety and survival. Hudhayfah drew near to Abu Sufyaan.

Then Abu Sufyaan stood up and gave a speech. But at first he warned against the possibility of Muslim spying and infiltration; asking that each one of them must make sure who was sitting next to him. Hudhayfah was very alert and quick indeed. He promptly asked the man sitting next to him about his identity. In this way he avoided the possibility of getting discovered.

Abu Sufyaan cried out in a loud voice, 'Men of Quraysh, our horses and our camels are dying. Banu Quraydhah have failed us. We have been informed that they seek to betray us, and now we have suffered from this violent wind. Therefore, be gone from this place, for I am going.' With these words, he went to his camel and mounted it. He was so eager to set off that he even forgot to untie its hobble. But Ikrimah said, 'Will you depart from us so hastily and leave the men behind?' Abu Sufyaan was ashamed. He made his camel kneel once more and dismounted.

The army broke camp and moved off. Abu Sufyaan waited until most of them were on the homeward march.

Then he set off himself. Now Hudhayfah made his way to the camp of Ghatafaan, but he found the place deserted. The wind had broken their resistance. They were already on their way to Najd, so he returned to the Prophet ﷺ. Hudhayfah observed, 'While returning, I felt as if I were walking in a heated bath. I presented myself before the Prophet ﷺ. I gave him the information about the enemy. When I had done so, I began to feel cold. Allah's Messenger ﷺ wrapped me in a blanket that he had in excess to his own requirement and with which he used to cover himself while saying his prayers. I slept until it was morning. When it was morning, the Prophet ﷺ said, 'Get up, heavy sleeper.' (Muslim)

Thus the confederates (*al-Ahzaab*) departed that night in haste and confusion. They left their things and even some of their weapons.

Bilaal ﷺ pronounced the call to the dawn prayer. When they had prayed their *Fajr* prayer, the approaching light of the day revealed the total emptiness of the plain beyond the trench. There was no sign of the enemy. The Muslims could not believe their eyes. There they saw yet another sign of Allah's Mercy and Bounty. The Prophet's supplication was answered. He had prayed, 'O Allah! Revealer of the Book, Swift caller to account, turn the confederates to flight, turn them to flight, cause them to quake.'

The siege lasted for a month. As a result of various minor fights, three pagans were killed, while six Muslims were martyred. One of them was Sa'd ibn Mu'aadh ﷺ who was struck in the forearm by an arrow which severed a vein. The arrow was shot by Hibbaan ibn Ariqah. After the confederate army had departed, a tent was pitched in the yard of the Prophet's Mosque for Sa'd ﷺ . His wound had not healed. He was being cared for in the tent in the mosque. The Prophet ﷺ had placed him there so that he might visit him more often. Sa'd ﷺ had prayed, 'O Allah! Do not deal me death until You give me satisfaction over Banu Quraydhah.' He was nursed by a woman called Rufaydah, on the order of the Prophet ﷺ . She belonged to the Aslam tribe of the Helpers.



- How did the Prophet ﷺ go about attacking the unity of the confederates? Write briefly.
- Who was Nu'aym? What contribution did he make to the Battle of the Trench?
- What reason did the Banu Quraydhah give for not fighting the Muslims?
- How did Sa'd ibn Mu'aadh get injured?

Exercise

A. Fill in the blanks.

1. _____ was the commander-in-chief of the Muslim army.
2. Huyayy incited _____ into breaking the treaty.
3. 'Every prophet had a disciple, and my disciple is _____.
4. Nu'aym set about sowing seeds of discord in the Banu _____.
5. The siege of Madeenah lasted for _____months.

B. Think-up

1. The Makkans were happy to see the enemy camp in front of them. But what was it that amazed them?
2. Why do you think Hudhayfah did not shoot Abu Sufyaan?
3. Why did the Quraysh retreat?

Salaat-ul-Kusoof

The Eclipse Prayer

The Arabic word *Kusoof* is used for solar eclipse, whereas the word *Khusoof* is used for lunar eclipse. But at times, both solar and lunar eclipses are denoted by one word *Kusoof*. As for the prayer at the eclipse of the sun *(Salaat-ul-Kusoof)*, it is a firmly established practice of the Prophet ﷺ (*Sunnah Mua'kkadah*), to be performed by both men and women.



The time for performing this prayer lasts from the moment of the eclipse *(Kusoof)* until the point of clarity, when the light is fully restored to the sun or the moon. That is to say, the period begins when the sun is eclipsed, or when the moon is eclipsed. In other words, the time of the ritual prayer extends from the first appearance of blackness, opaqueness or diminished radiance until the disappearance thereof, at which point the time of the prayer expires.

The basic authority concerning this prayer is the traditional account provided by Aai'shah ؓ who is reported to have said, 'An eclipse of the sun occurred in the time of Allah's Messenger ﷺ, so the Prophet ﷺ went to the mosque and the people aligned in rows behind him. He proclaimed the supreme greatness of Allah (or in other words, said *'Allaahu Akbar'*), and the people did likewise. Then he recited from the Qur'an and prolonged the recitation. He then bowed down and maintained the bowing posture *(rukoo)* for a long time. Then he raised his head and said, *'Sami'-Allaahu liman hamidah'* (Allah hears the praise of the one who praises Him). He then did not prostrate, but recited again from the Qur'an and continued his recitation for a long time, but made it a little shorter than the first recitation. He, then, said the *takbeer*, bowed down, and maintained the bowing posture *(rukoo')* for a long time, but he made it a little shorter than the first one. Then he raised



- What is the time for the performance of *Salaat-ul-Kusoof*?
- Is the *adhaan* used to announce the performance of *Salaat-ul-Kusoof*? If not, then how are the people informed?
- Where should *Salaat-ul-Kusoof* be performed?

his head, saying, '*Sami'-Allaahu liman hamidah*' and he prostrated himself (twice). Then he stood up straight and went on to perform the second unit of prayer in a similar fashion. At the end of the prayer, he said, "The sun and the moon are two of the signs of Allah. They do not become eclipsed because of someone's death, nor because of someone's birth. So, if you see them (becoming eclipsed), take refuge at once in the prayer ."' (al-Bukhaaree)

A another narration reads, 'The sun eclipsed in the lifetime of Allah's Messenger ﷺ on the day when [his son] Ibraaheem died.' (al-Bukhaaree)

Announcement of the Eclipse Prayer

'Abdullaah ibn Amr رضي الله عنه narrates, 'When the sun eclipsed in the lifetime of Allah's Messenger ﷺ , a loud announcement was made (saying) '*As-Salaatu Jaa'mi'ah*!' (the prayer is to be performed in congregation)'.

This brief announcement takes the place of the usual call to prayer (*adhaan*).

The Eclipse Prayer Consists of Two *Rak'ahs*

According to the *Sunnah* of the Prophet ﷺ , this prayer should be performed in the congregational mosque (*jaami'*), the site of the Friday prayer, although the congregation is not a condition for it. The summons to it is the loud announcement: '*As-Salaatu Jaa'mi'ah*!' (the prayer is to be performed in congregation).

The prayer leader (*Imaam*) should lead the congregation in the performance of two units of prayer (*rak'atayn*). In the first unit, he should proceed as follows:

1) Pronounce the consecratory affirmation of Allah's supreme greatness (*Takbeerat-ul-Ihraam*): *Allaahu Akbar* – Allah is Supremely Great.
2) Pronounce the introductory invocation: (*Du'aa al-Istiftaah*). It is uttered softly.
3) Seek refuge with Allah from Satan: (*Ta'awwudh*).
4) Recite the opening soorah of the Qur'an (*al-Faatihah*).

5) Recite (commendably) *Soorat Al-Baqarah* or any other *soorah*.
6) Perform the act of bowing (*rukoo'*) and maintain this posture for a considerable period of time, while repeating the glorification of Allah (*tasbeeh*).
7) Raise his head, saying as he does: *Sami'allaahu liman hamidah* – Allah hears the praises of the one who praised Him.
8) Recite the opening *soorah* (*al-Faatihah*); followed by further recitation of the Qur'an (commendably *Soorah Aal-'Imraan*).
9) Perform the second act of bowing.
10) Raise his head, in the same manner as before.
11) Perform two prolonged acts of prostration (*sajdatayn*), repeating the glorification of Allah (*tasbeeh*).
12) Stand erect, in readiness to perform the second unit, in a similar way.

In the second unit, the *Imaam* should recite the opening *soorah* (*al-Faatihah*), followed by further recitation of the Qur'an (commendably *Soorat An-Nisaa'*). Then he should perform the act of bowing for a considerable period of time. He should then straighten up and recite the Opening *soorah* (*al-Faatihah*), followed by further recitation of the Qur'an (commendably *Soorat Al-Maa'idah*). If one is not proficient in the recitation of these long soorahs, one may recite any other *soorahs* of the Qur'an instead. Once he has completed it, he should adopt the bowing posture. Then, after the two final prostrations, he concludes the prayer by pronouncing the salutation. Thus (in the complete prayer), there are four acts of bowing and four acts of prostration as the bowing posture is adopted twice in each cycle.

It is the Prophet's practice (*Sunnah*) to perform long prostrations during the eclipse prayer. Aai'shah ﵂ says, 'I had never performed such a long prostration.' (al-Bukhaaree). If the eclipse departs while the people are still engaged in the prayer, the recommended practice is to complete a simplified version of its performance rather than discontinue it abruptly.

If a person wishes to perform this prayer at home, either by himself or with his family, it is permissible for him to do so. The preferable course, however, is the one we have described. Many scholars are of the opinion that although it is permissible to observe the *kusoof* prayer like an ordinary one, it is more excellent to perform it with two *qiyaams* and two *rukoo's*, in each unit.

Giving Charity during the Eclipse

Aai'shah ﵂ relates that the Prophet ﷺ said, 'The sun and the moon are two signs amongst the signs of Allah. They do not eclipse because of the death or

birth of anyone. So if you see them, remember Allah and say the *takbeer*, perform *salaah* and give *sadaqah*.' (al-Bukhaaree)

The eclipse prayer is an emphasized *Sunnah* of the Prophet ﷺ, both for men and women. The prayer for the eclipse of the moon is similar to the prayer for the eclipse of the sun. Allah's Messenger ﷺ said, 'If you see them, resort to the prayer.' (Muslim)

It is recommended, at the time of the eclipse, to resort to sincere remembrance of Allah in the form of *takbeer*, supplication, giving charity, acts of righteousness and showing kindness to one's relatives.



- What should one do if the eclipse finishes before one's *Salaat-ul-Kusoof*?
- What superstitions surrounded eclipses during the Prophet's time, which he cleared?
- What other acts of goodness must one engage in during an eclipse?

Exercise

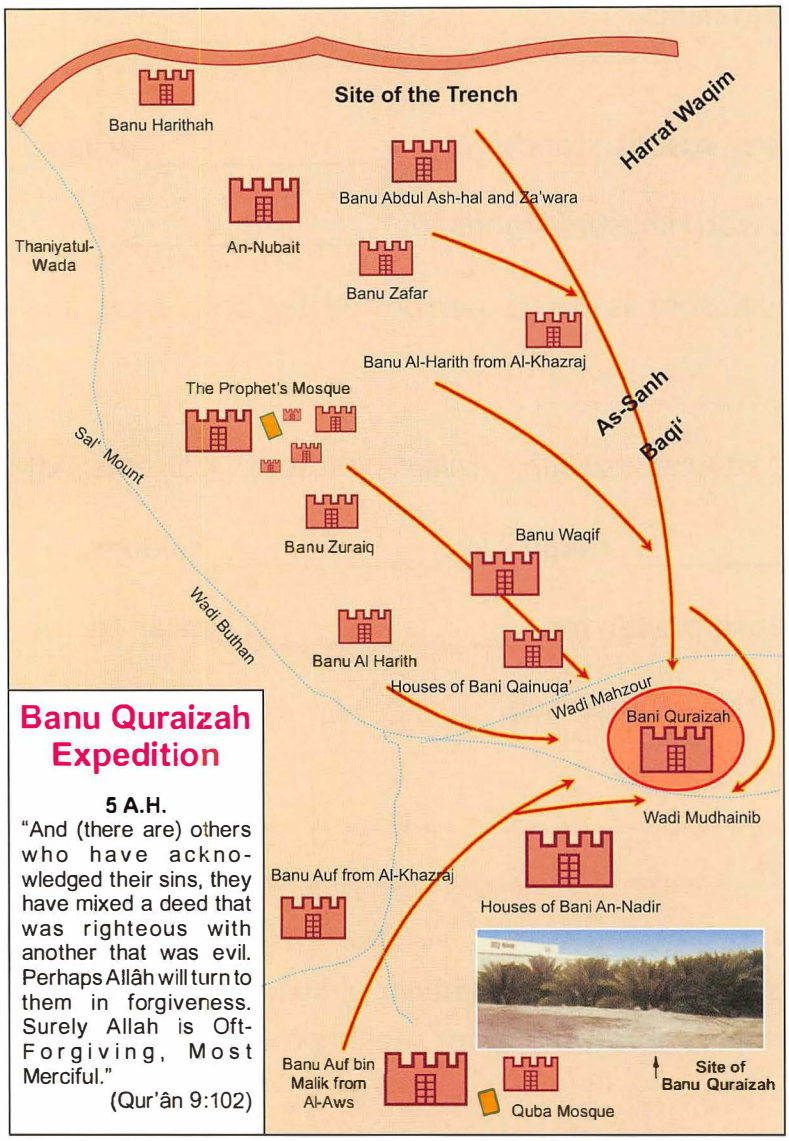
A. Fill in the blanks.

1. The word *kusoof* stands for _____ eclipse, and the word *khusoof* stands for _____.
2. *Salaat-ul-Kusoof* is to be performed by both men and _____.
3. Unlike regular *salaah*, *salaat-ul-Kusoof* consists of _____ *rukoo's* and _____ *sujoods*.
4. The eclipse prayer for _____ is similar to the eclipse prayer for the sun.

B. Think-up

1- Where should women offer *Salaat-ul-Kusoof*?
2- What is the Arabic formula for seeking refuge with Allah?

11 Prophet Muhammad ﷺ (3)



Banu Quraizah Expedition

5 A.H.

"And (there are) others who have acknowledged their sins, they have mixed a deed that was righteous with another that was evil. Perhaps Allâh will turn to them in forgiveness. Surely Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful."

(Qur'ân 9:102)

The March against Banu Quraydhah

Once the confederate forces had left, Allah's Messenger ﷺ declared that every man had permission to return home, whereupon most of them set off for the city. Allah's Messenger ﷺ also set out for the town himself with those of his companions who had waited to escort him.

They had only a few hours to rest. At noon, Jibreel عليه السلام descended to the Prophet ﷺ. 'Have you laid down your arms already? he asked. The angels have not laid their arms. Truly, Allah in His Might and Majesty commands you that you should go against the Banu Quraydhah. I am going to them now that I may cause their souls to quake.'

Allah's Messenger ﷺ gave orders that none should pray the mid-afternoon (*'Asr*) prayer until he had reached the Quraydhah رضي الله عنهم territory. The banner was given to Ali ibn Abee Taalib . Before sunset, all the fortresses had been besieged by the same army, three thousand strong, which had opposed the Quraysh and their allied forces at the trench.

This expedition took place towards the end of the month of *Dhul Qa'dah* in the fifth year after the *Hijrah*. Banu Quraydhah had retreated within their fortifications, closing the doors behind them. 'Ali رضي الله عنه came close; he overheard the Jews voicing insults about the Prophet ﷺ.

Banu Quraydhah Break their Pact

After his arrival into Madeenah, Allah's Messenger ﷺ made a treaty of mutual obligations between the Helpers, the Emigrants and the Jews of the oasis of Madeenah.

The Muslims of Madeenah had been given the title of *Ansaar* by the Prophet ﷺ, which means Helpers; whereas the Muslims of Quraysh and other tribes who had left their homes and emigrated to Madeenah, he called *Muhaajiroon*, that is the Emigrants. There were altogether eleven Jewish settlements in North Arabia at that time. There were three main groups and eight lesser ones. The main Jewish tribes were Banu Qaynuqaa', Banu an-Nadheer, and Banu Quraydhah.

Banu Qaynuqaa's settlements were close to the city of Madeenah, while Banu an-Nadheer and Banu Quraydhah lived at some distance from it. According to the pact, the Jews were considered full citizens of the Muslim state. They were obligated, under the terms of the agreement, to fight alongside the Muslims should Madeenah be invaded, and to share in the war expenses.

In return they were given the rights of

(1) full religious freedom,

(2) administration of their own law courts unless they referred any case to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ when it would be decided by the Islamic Laws, and

(3) full financial self-rule.

They were, however, required under the terms of the agreement to help Muslims in payment of ransom money, should that become obligatory upon them. Muslims and Jews were to have equal status. If a Jew were wronged, then he must be helped to his rights by both Muslims and Jews.

In case of war against the polytheists, they must fight as one people. Neither Jews nor Muslims were to make a separate peace; peace was to be indivisible. The Jews had accepted this pact for political reasons. Allah's Messenger ﷺ was already the most powerful person in Madeenah. They had no choice but to accept.

The pact strengthened the solidarity of the people of Madeenah against the Quraysh. No one under the terms of the pact was permitted to shelter them or give any help to any person with them. No one was allowed to make a separate peace treaty with them. Waging war or concluding peace was the sole right of the Prophet ﷺ, as supreme ruler and commander of Madeenah,

According to the terms of the pact, the Jews enjoyed a considerable degree of freedom to run their own affairs. They were fully merged into the commercial life of the city with the Muslims, buying from them and selling to them. The Prophet ﷺ reached out to all people – Muslims or otherwise. He was very generous and tolerant, yet very few of the Jews believed that Allah sent a prophet who did not belong to the house of Jacob, that is Ya'qoob or Israa'eel. They were not prepared to see Prophethood departing from the house of Ya'qoob عليه السلام. They were characterized by an infamous arrogance and a strong

feeling of superiority. They viewed the Arabs as ignorant gentiles (persons who are not Jews).

But Islam continued to spread rapidly throughout the oasis of Madeenah, and the Jews became very envious and spiteful of the Prophet ﷺ. It soon became clear that the Jews did not consider the Prophet's pact as binding upon them. Most of them preferred the pagan idolaters to the Muslim worshippers of One God – Allah. The Jewish question is one of the major themes of the Glorious Qur'an.

The Siege and Defeat of Banu Quraydhah

The main reason for this siege was the treachery of Banu Quraydhah. They were persuaded by Huyayy ibn Akhtab to break their pact with the Prophet ﷺ. He had pointed to the greatness of the invading army and promised them a sure defeat of the Muslims in a few days. Banu Quraydhah were impressed by this logic. They were impressed by the great size of the attacking army and they decided to break their pledge with the Prophet ﷺ. Allah's Messenger ﷺ had sent az-Zubayr ibn al-Awwaam رضي الله عنه to find the truth of the matter. Later, he sent Sa'd ibn Mu'aadh and Sa'd ibn Ubaadah for confirmation. They had found that the Banu Quraydhah had indeed broken the pact.

When the Quraysh and their allied forces were defeated, Banu Quraydhah retreated into their fortresses. They were caught there making ready to attack the Muslims from within the gates and trenches of Madeenah. When Allah's Messenger ﷺ arrived at the fortresses of Banu Quraydhah, he had three thousand fighters and thirty-six horsemen with him. Huyayy ibn Akhtab had made his promise good. He had joined the Banu Quraydhah after the departure of the confederates.



- Why did the Prophet ﷺ decide to pursue Banu Quraydhah?
- When did the Expedition of Banu Quraydhah take place?
- What was the pact, and what were its terms?
- Even when the Prophet ﷺ incorporated the Jews, why did the Jews not accept him as a prophet?
- What role did Huyayy play in Banu Quraydhah's treachery?
- When the Muslim forces reached the Banu Quraydhah, what were they busy doing?

Banu Quraydhah Ask the Prophet ﷺ to Let Them Consult Abu Lubaabah

Banu Quraydhah were besieged for twenty-five nights. Then they sent to the Prophet ﷺ to ask him to let them consult Abu Lubaabah رضي الله عنه. Abu Lubaabah was a prominent member of the Aws, and Banu Quraydhah had long been allies of the tribe of the Aws. He had been one of their chief links with his tribe and was on friendly terms with them. The Prophet ﷺ bade him go to them. He was beset on his arrival with weeping women and children and was touched by their ordeal. His sternness against the treacherous Banu Quraydhah was softened. He tried to warn them of the perils of fighting the Prophet ﷺ. In a moment of tenderness, he revealed the thinking of the Muslims concerning them.

When their men asked him whether they should surrender, he said, 'Yes'. But at the same time he pointed to his throat as to caution them that in his opinion surrender meant slaughter. The gesture was in conflict with his assent. No sooner had Abu Lubaabah made it than an overpowering sense of guilt gripped him. He realized that he had betrayed Allah's Messenger ﷺ. His face changed colour. He could not bring himself to go out the way he had come and to face his fellow Muslims, who were waiting eagerly to hear his news, and to escort him to the Prophet ﷺ. He went straight to the Prophet's Mosque and bound himself to one of the pillars, saying, 'I will not stir from this place until Allah forgives me for what I have done.'

Allah's Messenger ﷺ was waiting for his return. When he finally heard what had happened, he said, 'If he had come to me, I would have prayed to Allah to forgive him, but seeing that he has done what he has done, it is not for me to free him until Allah forgives him.'

Ka'b ibn Asad Advises Banu Quraydhah to Embrace Islam

As for Banu Quraydhah, Ka'b ibn Asad, who was their leader, suggested to them that they should enter Islam to save their lives and property. He knew very well what they had done to the Prophet ﷺ and the Muslims. But they said that they would prefer death. They would have nothing but the *Tawrah* (Torah) and the law of Moosaa عليه السلام.

The siege lasted twenty-five nights. Finally, Banu Quraydhah opened the gates of their fortresses and surrendered to the Prophet ﷺ. The men were led out with their hands tied behind their backs. A space was allotted for them on one side of the camp. The women and children were assembled on another side. The arms and armour, the garments and the household goods, were collected from each fortress and gathered together in one place.

The clan of Aws sent a deputation to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ requesting him to show their former allies leniency.

He answered them saying, 'Will it satisfy you, men of Aws, if one of you pronounces judgement upon them?' They agreed.

Therefore, Allah's Messenger sent for their chief Sa'd ibn Mu'aadh whose wound from an arrow that had been shot at him during the Battle of the Trench had not healed and he was being cared for in a tent in the Prophet's Mosque. Some of his clansmen went to him. They mounted him on a donkey and brought him to the camp. 'Do well to your allies,' they said to him on the way, 'for Allah's Messenger ﷺ has set you in judgement upon them for no other objective than that you may treat them leniently.' However, Sa'd was a man of justice. Besides, he had himself been one of the envoys to Banu Quraydhah at the moment of crisis and had seen the evilness of their treachery. It was true if he gave a severe judgement, men and women of the Aws would blame him, but he cut short the appeals of his clansmen, saying, 'The time has come for Sa'd, in the cause of Allah, to pay no heed to the blame of the blamer.'

Sa'd was a man of mighty stature. He was handsome and of majestic appearance. When he came to the camp, the Prophet ﷺ said, 'Stand to go to your chief.' They said, 'Allah's Messenger ﷺ has appointed you to judge the case of your allies.' He remarked, 'Do you swear by Allah and make by Him your pledge, that my judgement shall be the verdict upon them?' They said, 'We do.' Sa'd said, 'And is it binding upon him who is here?' And he glanced in the direction of the Prophet ﷺ, without mentioning him, out of deep reverence. Allah's Messenger ﷺ said, 'It is.' 'Then I judge,' said Sa'd, 'that their men shall be slain, the property divided, and the women and the children taken captive.' The Prophet ﷺ exclaimed, 'You have judged with the judgement of Allah from above the seven heavens.'

Sa'd's judgement was no doubt directed primarily against their treachery, but in reality it coincided exactly with Jewish law as regards the besieged city. It conformed to the law of war laid down for the Children of Israa'eel given in the Torah. The only just reward for their treachery was death; otherwise, they might have done as the people of Banu an-Nadheer did – go to Khaybar, or somewhere else and wage wars from there against the Muslims.

Only four men were saved; three of whom had accepted Islam. The fourth, Aamir ibn Soodaa, did not accept Islam, but he had opposed the violation of the pact with the Prophet ﷺ . He was, therefore, allowed to go free. One other man was also saved. It is narrated that the Prophet ﷺ gifted Az-Zubayr ibn Baa'ta of Banu Quraydhah to Thaabit ibn Qays ibn Shammaas.

When Huyayy ibn Akhtab, the leader of Banu an-Nadheer, was led into the marketplace, he turned to the Prophet ﷺ, who was sitting apart with some of his companions and said to him, 'I blame not myself for having opposed you, but whoever forsakes Allah will be forsaken.' Then he sat beside the trench and his head was cut off. Ka'b ibn Asad, the leader of Banu Quraydhah was also killed. As to the women and children, they were divided, together with the property, amongst the men who had taken part in the siege.

Only one of the Banu Quraydhah's women was killed. Her name was Nabaatah. She was the wife of Al-Hakam al-Quradhee. She was put to death in retribution (severe punishment for something seriously wrong that somebody has done) for the death of Khallaad ibn Suwwayd. She had dropped a millstone upon him, which caused his death. Khallaad was the only believer who was martyred in the Expedition of the Banu Quraydhah.



- Why did Allah's Messenger ﷺ appoint Sa'd to pronounce judgement upon Banu Quraydhah?
- Why was Nabaatah killed?
- Why did Allah's Messenger ﷺ wait for Allah to forgive Abu Lubaabah?

The Spoils of the Battle

The spoils of the Battle of Banu Quraydhah, which were collected from the fortresses, were one thousand five hundred swords, two thousand spears, three hundred pieces of armour, one thousand five hundred shields, many camels and sheep, a large quantity of furniture and cooking pots and cups and many houses and fortresses. All movable goods such as weapons and furniture were distributed among the soldiers from the Emigrants and Helpers, who had participated in the battle. Four-fifths of the spoils were given to them. As for the one-fifth that remained, it belonged to Allah and His Messenger ﷺ. It was distributed according to the principles outlined in the Qur'an. The jars of wine and fermented juices were opened and their contents were poured away. They took nothing from them. They did not even benefit by selling it. They spilled it all. Khallaad ibn Suwwayd's portion was given to his heirs.

As far as the lands, homes and fortresses were concerned, Allah's Messenger ﷺ gave them all to the Emigrants or the *Muhaajiroon*. He bade them return to the Helpers or the *Ansaar* all the date-palms and the lands they had previously taken from them. Since all the

homes and the lands of Banu Quraydhah were given to them, they did not need the property that they had taken from the Helpers. With the surrender of Banu Quraydhah, the third and the last Jewish settlement was erased from the city of Madeenah. The city was emptied of its Jewish population.

Allah Accepts Abu Lubaabah's Repentance and Forgives Him

Abu Lubaabah had tied himself to one of the pillars of the Prophet's Mosque. He remained at the pillar for some six days. Before every prayer, or whenever it was necessary, his wife would come to untie his bonds; then after he had prayed he would bid her bind him once more. It was at the dawn of one of the days that followed when the Prophet ﷺ was in the apartment of Umm Salamah رضي الله عنها that he announced to her, 'Abu Lubaabah is forgiven.' 'She said, 'May I give him the good news?' He replied, 'If you so wish.' So she stood at the door of her apartment which opened into the mosque, not far from the column to which he had tied himself, and called out, 'O Abu Lubaabah, be of good cheer, for Allah has accepted your repentance and has forgiven you.' The men who were in the mosque moved quickly towards him to set him free, but he stopped them saying, 'Not until Allah's Messenger ﷺ sets me free with his own hands.' Then Allah's Messenger ﷺ passed by him on his way to the prayer and untied his bonds.

Martyrdom of Sa'd ibn Mu'aadh رضي الله عنه

When Sa'd had passed judgement on Banu Quraydhah, he returned to the tent in the mosque. He had already prayed that if Allah had any more fighting for him to fight against His enemies, He should let him live. If not, He would let him die. His supplication was answered. His condition began to change rapidly. His wound burst open and he died of it, a martyr. When he was being carried for his funeral, the hypocrites remarked how light he was, so the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, 'Indeed the angels were carrying him.' (Muslim) The Prophet ﷺ also said, 'The Throne of the Merciful shook at the death of Sa'd.' (al-Bukhaaree and Muslim)

Once a robe made of silk was given to the Prophet ﷺ . The companions began to touch it. They were amazed at its softness. Whereupon, the Prophet ﷺ said, 'Are you amazed at the softness of this garment?' The handkerchiefs of Sa'd ibn Mu'aadh in Paradise are indeed much better and softer than this garment! (al-Bukhaaree and Muslim)

Sa'd ibn Mu'aadh was martyred in the prime of his youth. He was only thirty-seven years old when he died. He was the leader of his tribe. He had led his people when he was in his twenties. May Allah be well pleased with him.

A Brief Period of Peace

After the defeat of the allied forces and the surrender of Banu Quraydhah, the Muslims enjoyed a brief period of peace and tranquillity. But unruly and insincere Bedouins around Madeenah began to stir again. Allah's Messenger ﷺ, therefore, had to take up arms and move against them.

The year 6 of the *Hijrah* was an active one. The Prophet ﷺ sent out several military units on missions. He himself participated in two such expeditions. Through these military expeditions, his aims were to intensify his economic blockage against the Quraysh and to deal with those tribes who supported the Quraysh. He also sent expeditions against those tribes who had aided the Quraysh during the Battle of the Trench. He also sent expeditions against those tribes who had betrayed the Muslims in the past or had declared Muslims to be their enemies.

Exercise

A. Fill in the gaps.

1. The main reason for the siege of Banu Quraydhah was their _____.
2. Banu Quraydhah were besieged for _____ nights.
3. _____ of the spoils were given to the participants of the war, while _____ was meant for Allah and His Messenger ﷺ.

B. Think-up

1. Who was Ka'b? What did he advise Banu Quraydhah? Did he practise what he preached?
2. Write briefly on how Sa'd's judgement was just.
3. How did the Prophet ﷺ distribute lands, homes and fortresses? Why?

Prophet Muhammad ﷺ (4)

The Peace Treaty of Hudaybiyah: A Clear Victory

Brief History and Primary Cause:

On Monday, the first of the month of *Dhul-Qa'dah*, of the year 6 after the *Hijrah*, Allah's Messenger ﷺ left Madeenah and along with his companions headed towards Makkah in order to perform *'Umrah* – the lesser pilgrimage.

The reason for the expedition was simple. Shortly before the expedition, which ended at al-Hudaybiyah, the Prophet ﷺ had a dream in which he saw himself and his companions entering Makkah as pilgrims to perform *'Umrah*.

Al-Hudaybiyah is the name of a well which lies twenty-two kilometres to the north-west of Makkah. It is known at the present time as ash-Shumaysee and includes the orchards of al-Hudaybiyah and the Ridwaan Mosque.

Unlike the dreams of ordinary people, the dreams of the prophets are always true. When Allah's Messenger ﷺ informed his companions about his dream, they were immensely delighted. The Ka'bah was the House of Allah. It had been a long time since the companions had last seen it. They longed to visit it and to perform *tawaaf* around it. Especially the Emigrants longed for Makkah the most. They were born there. They were brought up in Makkah. They loved it a great deal. They had left it only because they were compelled to leave it. Immensely delighted with the news, everyone began to make ready for the blessed journey. Between them they purchased seventy camels to be sacrificed in the sacred area. Allah's Messenger ﷺ decided to take one of his wives with him and when lots were cast, the lot fell to Umm Salamah رضي الله عنها. Thus, Allah's Messenger ﷺ set out for Makkah, accompanied by 1400 Muslims.



When they reached Dhul-Hulayfah the Prophet ﷺ and the Muslims put on their pilgrim's dress of two pieces of unsewn cloth, one piece round the waist to cover the lower part of their body, and the other draped round the shoulders. They now were in the state of consecration, or *ihraam*. Thereupon, they prayed two prayer units and began to utter the pilgrim's cry: *Labbayk allaahumma labbayk* (Here I am at your service, O Allah!)

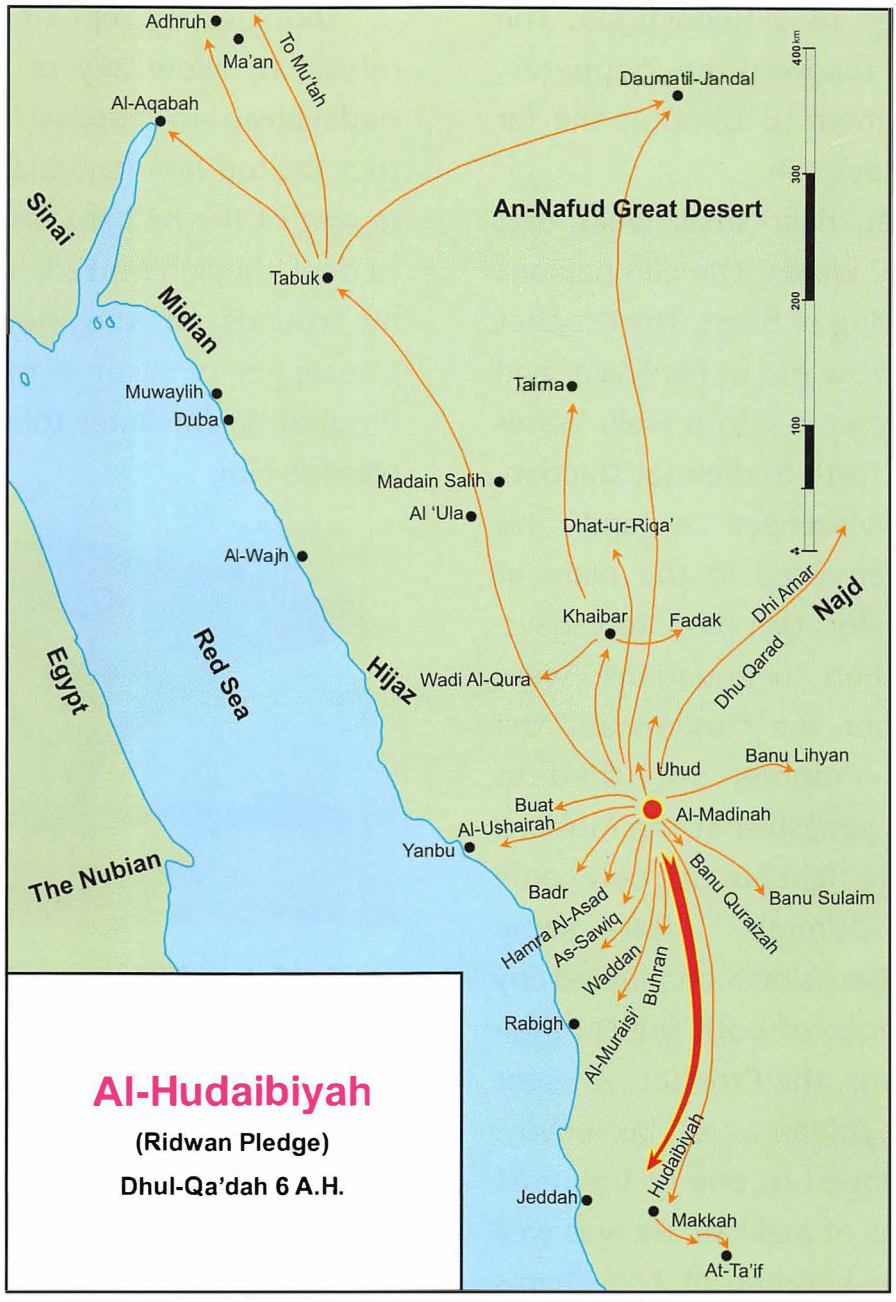
Dhul-Hulayfah is just outside of Madeenah. There, Umar ibn al-Khattaab counselled the Prophet ﷺ. 'Are you going to enter upon a people who are your sworn enemies without carrying arms and armour?' he asked. Allah's Messenger ﷺ immediately acted upon Umar's suggestion and he commanded certain people in Madeenah to load weapons onto camels and send them alongside the pilgrims, for emergencies. It is true that the Muslims had no intention of fighting, but they were travelling into the heart of the enemy territory. The enemy had arms and armour, so Allah's Messenger ﷺ understood and acted on the wisdom of Umar. He immediately sent ahead Busr ibn Sufyaan, a man of Khuzaa'ah, to bring him back word of reactions of the Quraysh. The Prophet ﷺ also sent twenty scouts ahead of the pilgrims to make sure that the road to Makkah was safe. The mission of the scouts was clear. They were to come back with the news of any potential threat. They were to gather as much relevant information as possible about the enemy.

News of the Prophet's departure from Madeenah soon spread among the tribes of Arabia, When the Quraysh heard of the departure of the pilgrims, they decided, against all Arabian tradition, to oppose the entry of the pilgrims by force of arms.

The Pilgrims Reach 'Usfaan

When the pilgrims reached 'Usfaan, about eighty kilometres from Makkah, Busr ibn Sufyaan, the scout who had been sent ahead, rejoined them with the news that the Quraysh had sent Khaalid ibn al-Waleed with a troop of two hundred horses to bar their approach, while several thousand heavily-armed men had taken up positions around Makkah. They had put on leopard skins and vowed that they would not let them come. 'This shall not be, so long as there is a single eye amongst us with a glimmer of life in it,' they said.

Allah's Messenger ﷺ now consulted his companions. He chose not to confront the Quraysh. All things considered, the Prophet ﷺ asked for a guide who could take them on by another way. A man of Aslam led them a little towards the coast, and then through a difficult path until they reached the pass which leads down to al-Hudaybiyah, an open track of land below Makkah at the edge of the sacred territory. Their detour had kept them well out of sight of Khaalid and his cavalry. But soon he realized what had happened. He galloped back to Makkah with his troop to warn the Quraysh of their approach. It is important to note that Allah's Messenger ﷺ did not change his way because he feared the Quraysh army but because they wanted to fulfil their primary objective of performing *'Umrah*. They were not at all afraid of the Quraysh.



The Prophet's She-Camel Al-Qaswaa' Stops at the End of the Pass and Kneels down

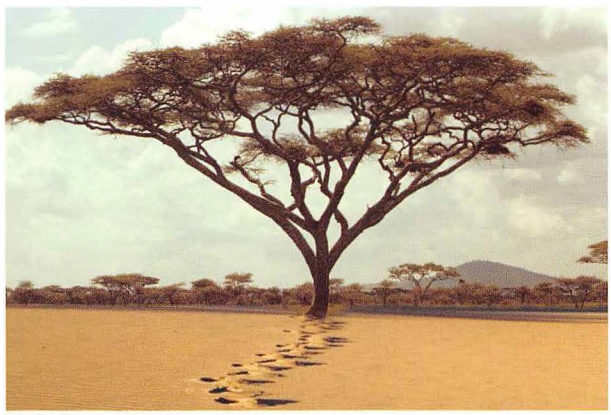
Allah's Messenger ﷺ had chosen his favourite she-camel, Al-Qaswaa', for the pilgrimage. She stopped at the end of the pass and knelt down. The men cried out, *'Hal! Hal,'* which is what is said to make a camel rise. But she remained as if rooted to the earth. They said, 'Al-Qaswaa' is stubborn.' However, Allah's Messenger ﷺ knew well that it was a sign that they should go no further than Hudaybiyah at this point. He said, 'She is not stubborn. It is not in her nature. But He Who held the elephant has held her back.' He added, referring to the Quraysh, 'They will not ask of me this day anything which honours the rights of Allah but I will grant it them.' He then spoke to Al-Qaswaa and she quickly rose to her feet. She bore him

down the edge of al-Hudaybiyah. The other pilgrims followed the Prophet ﷺ. Here he told them to camp at the far edge of al-Hudaybiyah.

They halted near small wells that hardly had any water. The companions were complaining of thirst. The Prophet ﷺ pulled an arrow out of his quiver and told them to cast it into a well. Water began to gush forth to their satisfaction.

Allah's Messenger ﷺ and his companions remained in the plain of al-Hudaybiyah for the next few days. There and then negotiations were opened between the Muslims and the Quraysh. The Prophet ﷺ tried to convince the Quraysh that the Muslims had not come to fight but had only come to perform *'Umrah*. After some preliminary discussions conducted by several emissaries of both the Quraysh and the Muslims, the Prophet ﷺ sent Uthmaan ibn Affaan رضي الله عنه as his envoy. Uthmaan belonged to one of the most influential clans of Makkah. He was well received by his kinsmen of Abd Shams and by others.

Though they repeated to him their refusal to allow any of those now in Hudaybiyah to approach the Ka'bah, they invited him personally to perform *tawaaf* of the Ka'bah, which he refused to do. Uthmaan replied, 'I will not make my rounds of the House until the Messenger of Allah ﷺ makes his.' The Prophet ﷺ was later told of this and it pleased him.



***Bay'at ar-Ridhwaan*: The Pledge of Allah's Goodly Acceptance**

Shortly after Uthmaan's arrival in Makkah, a rumour that he had been murdered reached the Muslim camp at al-Hudaybiyah. The Prophet ﷺ, expecting a treacherous attack by the Makkans, assembled his followers and



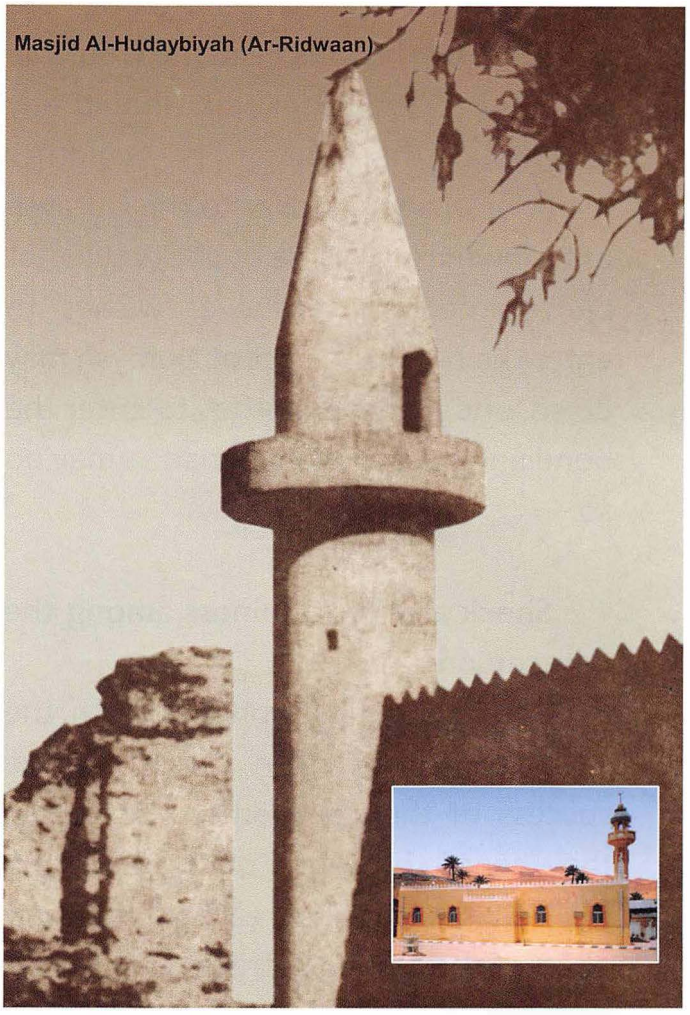
- Among all else, why were the Emigrants longing for Makkah?
- Why did the Prophet ﷺ decide to visit Makkah?
- Although the Muslims were visiting Makkah for *'Umrah*, why did they load their camels with weapons?
- What information did the scouts bring back?
- Why did the Prophet ﷺ take a detour to Makkah?
- What did Uthmaan رضي الله عنه say to the Quraysh that pleased the Prophet ﷺ?

sitting under a wild acacia tree, took, amid scenes of great enthusiasm, a pledge from each one of his companions, that they would remain steadfast and fight to death. This Pledge of the Tree became known as *Bay'at ar-Ridhwaan* - the Pledge of [Allah's] Goodly Acceptance.

One by one, the companions came and pledged allegiance to him. The first man to reach was Abu Sinaan Abdullaah ibn Wahb al-Asadee. He was followed by the multitudes. Allah's Messenger ﷺ appreciated their readiness saying, 'You are the best of people on the face of the earth.' He also added, 'No one who pledged allegiance under this tree will enter the Fire, Allah Willing.' Then he said, 'I pledge the allegiance of Uthmaan,' whereupon he put out his right hand, as the hand of Uthmaan, and grasping it with his left hand, pledged the pact. Salamah ibn al-Akwa' pledged the allegiance three times, once among the early group of people who were taking the pledge; once among the middle group; and once among the last.

The Peace Treaty of al-Hudaybiyah

When the leaders of the Quraysh heard about the Pledge of the Tree, they realized that the Prophet ﷺ and his companions were now determined to fight. Their past experiences at Badr, Uhud and at the Trench had taught them how much the Prophet's companions were anxious to sacrifice for the cause of Islam. It was the time to negotiate a truce with the Prophet ﷺ, the Quryash leaders thought.



Quraysh sent Suhayl ibn Amr to conclude a treaty. Meanwhile, the rumour of Uthmaan's murder proved false and he himself returned to al-Hudaybiyah. It now became clear that the Makkans were prepared to conclude a truce.

A treaty was drawn up. It was laid out, among other provisions, that (1) all warfare between Makkah and Madeenah should be suspended for ten years, and that (2) the Prophet ﷺ and his followers should refrain from entering Makkah that year, but would be free to

do so the following year, (3) the Prophet ﷺ also agreed that if a Makkan should go over to the Muslims without the permission of his guardians, he would be returned to the latter, but should any follower of the Prophet ﷺ, whether minor or of age, go over to the Quraysh of his own free will, he or she would not be returned, (4) whoever wishes to enter the bond and pact of Quraysh may do so, and whoever wishes to enter the bond and pact of Muhammad ﷺ may do so.

Shock and Unhappiness among the Companions

Because of the Prophet's dream, the companions had been certain of the success of their expedition. But when they heard the terms of the pact and realized that having reached the very edge of the Sacred Territory, they must now return home with nothing fulfilled, it was more than they could bear. They felt very distressed. There was a profound sense of disappointment. But worse was to come.

As they sat in gloomy and inflammable silence, a young man staggered into the camp with his feet in chains. It was Abu Jandal, one of the two younger sons of Suhayl ibn Amr, the chief emissary of the Quraysh who had come to the Prophet ﷺ to conclude the treaty. His father had imprisoned him on account of his Islam, fearing that he would escape to Madeenah. His elder brother Abdullaah was among the pilgrims. He was about to welcome him when Suhayl caught hold of the chain that was round the captive's neck and grabbed him by the beard. He turned to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and said, 'Our pact was concluded before this man came to you.' 'That is true,' said Allah's Messenger ﷺ. Suhayl said, 'Return him to us then.' Abu Jandal shouted at the top of his voice, 'O Muslims! Am I to be returned to the idolaters for them to torture me on account of my religion?' The Prophet ﷺ asked Suhayl as a favour to let his son go free, but Suhayl refused. 'Be patient, Abu Jandal,' said Allah's Messenger ﷺ, 'Allah will surely give you and those with you relief and a way out. We have agreed on the terms of a pact with these people. We have given them out solemn pledge. We will not break our word now.'

The situation was very painful, but the Prophet ﷺ always honoured his agreements and pledges regardless of any bad consequences that others feared would happen. The companions watched as their brother in faith was being forced to return to Makkah in chains, but they showed a unique degree of restraint and obedience to Allah's Messenger ﷺ, and Abu Jandal was returned to the Quraysh.

Umar's Anger and Resentment

The companions were terribly displeased with the terms of the treaty.

Umar ؓ could no longer contain himself. He went to the Prophet ﷺ and said, 'Aren't you Allah's Messenger?' He answered, 'Yes.' 'Aren't we right and our enemies in the wrong?' he asked, and again the Messenger of Allah assented. 'Then why should we surrender in such lowly manner against the honour of our faith?' asked Umar ؓ, whereupon the Prophet ﷺ replied, 'I am Allah's Messenger, and I will not disobey Him. He will certainly give me victory.' But Umar continued, 'But did you not tell us that we should go to the House and make our rounds around it?' The Prophet ﷺ answered, 'Yes, but did I tell you that we should go to do it this year?' Umar agreed that he had not. The Prophet ﷺ said, 'You will surely go to the House and will make your rounds around it.'

However, Umar ؓ was still not satisfied and went to Abu Bakr ؓ to pour out his feelings still further. He put to him exactly the same questions he had put to the Prophet ﷺ. Abu Bakr pacified him saying, 'He is Allah's Messenger. He will not disobey his Lord. He is His Helper. So control yourself. By Allah, he is on the right.' These words impressed Umar. Although his feelings had not subsided, he gave no further vent to them. When the Prophet ﷺ summoned him to put his name to the pact, he signed it silently.

Allah's Messenger ﷺ was standing with those who had signed the document. He now turned towards the main body of the pilgrims and said, 'Rise and sacrifice your animals, and shave your heads.' No one moved. He repeated his order a second and a third time, but they simply looked at him in stunned and bewildered silence. It was not a rebellion, but they were genuinely distressed. Their expectations were shattered. They were perplexed by the command to do something unusual. Their sacrifices had to be offered in the Sacred Territory. Allah's Messenger ﷺ looked at them in dismay.

He then withdrew to his tent and told Umm Salamah ؓ what had happened. 'Go forth,' she advised, 'Say no word to anyone until you have offered your sacrifice.' So the Prophet ﷺ went to the camel which he himself had consecrated and sacrificed it, saying, '*Bismillaah, Allaahu Akbar*' in a loud voice, so that the companions could hear.

At these words the men leapt to their feet and raced to perform their sacrifices. When Allah's Messenger ﷺ called for Khiraash ibn Umayyah al-Khuzaa'ee to shave his head, many of the companions set about shaving their heads vigorously. But some of them merely cut locks of their hair, knowing that it was traditionally acceptable as substitute. Meanwhile, Allah's Messenger ﷺ stood at the entrance of his tent with shaven scalp. He said, 'May Allah have mercy on those who have had their heads shaved!' He repeated this

thrice. Then he added, 'And upon those who have had their hair cut short!'

The camel that the Prophet ﷺ had slaughtered once belonged to Abu Jahl. The Prophet ﷺ had received it as his portion of the spoils of war after the Battle of Badr. He slaughtered it there to anger the idolaters.

Everyone rejoiced, taking it as a sign that ﷺ their pilgrimage had been accomplished due to their intentions. They now understood why the Prophet had told them to perform their sacrifices.

The companions now began to prepare themselves for the return journey. They were away for a month and a half. Of these they had spent twenty days at al-Hudaybiyah. During the Hudaybiyah Expedition, Allah's Messenger permitted the companions to perform the prayer inside the tents when it was raining.

On the way back to Madeenah, the Muslims once slept and missed their *Fajr* prayer. They were only awakened by the heat of the sun. Bilaal ibn Rabaah was responsible for guarding them, but he was overcome by sleep. They performed their prayer as soon as they woke up. This is the *Sunnah* or the excellent practice of the Prophet ﷺ when one misses the prayer through sleep or forgetfulness.

During the return journey, miracles once again appeared at the hands of the Prophet ﷺ in matters of food and drink, as it had happened at the time of the Battle of the Trench and in the plain of al-Hudaybiyah. Salamah ibn al-Akwa' ﷺ narrated that once they suffered great hunger, and Allah's Messenger ﷺ commanded that the entire food of the pilgrims be collected together, which amounted to a very small quantity – the size of a seated goat. They all ate until they were satisfied; then they filled their food containers, and they were 1,400 people! Then a companion brought his water-skin to the Prophet ﷺ, which had only some water in it. The Prophet ﷺ emptied it into a large bowl and everyone performed ablution from it!



- What is *Bay'at ar-Ridhwaan*?
- Mention any two clauses of the Treaty of al-Hudaybiyah.
- What wise counsel did Umm Salamah give the Prophet ﷺ?
- What should a Muslim do when he wakes up if he sleeps through the time for a particular prayer?

Revelation of *Soorat al-Fath*

On his return journey, Allah sent good news to His Prophet ﷺ about the consequences of the pact just concluded. The Qur'an called it a magnificent victory. An entire *soorah* was revealed to the Prophet ﷺ, namely *Soorat al-Fath*. The new revelation left no doubt that the expedition from which they were now returning must be considered a victory. It opened with the words 'Verily We have given you a clear victory'. It also spoke of the recent pact of allegiance: 'Allah was well pleased with the believers when they pledged their allegiance to you beneath the tree. He knew what was in their hearts, and sent down tranquillity upon them.' (48: 18)

The Prophet's dream, which had prompted the expedition, it referred to as follows: 'Allah has truly fulfilled for him the vision; Allah Willing, you shall enter the Inviolable Mosque in safety, not fearing, with the hair of your head shaven or cut short.' (48: 27) The significance of the al-Hudaybiyah Peace Pact cannot be overestimated.

During the first two years after the pact, more people embraced Islam than in the whole of its previous history of nineteen years. When the Prophet ﷺ went out to al-Hudaybiyah, he had with him only 1,400 men, but when he went forth to liberate Makkah two years later, he went with 10,000 men. For the first time, the Quraysh were compelled in their history to openly and publicly admit the reality of Islam.

The Bedouin Arabs were quick to realize the shift in the balance of power. They were no longer swayed by the Quraysh. The Quraysh were seen as a declining force. All of these considerations weighed heavily in the direction of the final victory of Islam at home and abroad, and the final downfall of the Quraysh.

Exercise

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

1. The Prophet ﷺ visited Makkah to wage war _____
2. The dreams of prophets are always true. _____
3. When lots were cast, it fell to Aai'shah ؓ. _____
4. The Quraysh let the Muslims perform *Umrah*. _____
5. Al-Qaswaa' stopped at al-Hudaybiyah because she was under the command of Allah. _____

B. Fill in the blanks.

1. Al-Hudaybiyah is actually the name of a _____.
2. The Prophet ﷺ was accompanied by _____ Muslims to al-Hudaybiyah, but two years later, there were_____ Muslims.
3. The Muslims put on the pilgrim dress when they reached _____.
4. _____ of the Glorious Qur'an was revealed on the Muslims return journey to Makkah.

C. Think-up

1. How do you know that the Prophet ﷺ honoured his agreements? What lesson does it teach us?
2. In what way was the treaty of al-Hudaybiyah a 'magnificent victory'?

A Code of Conduct Based on Justice

Soorat al-Israa' 17: 23-39

Playing Fair

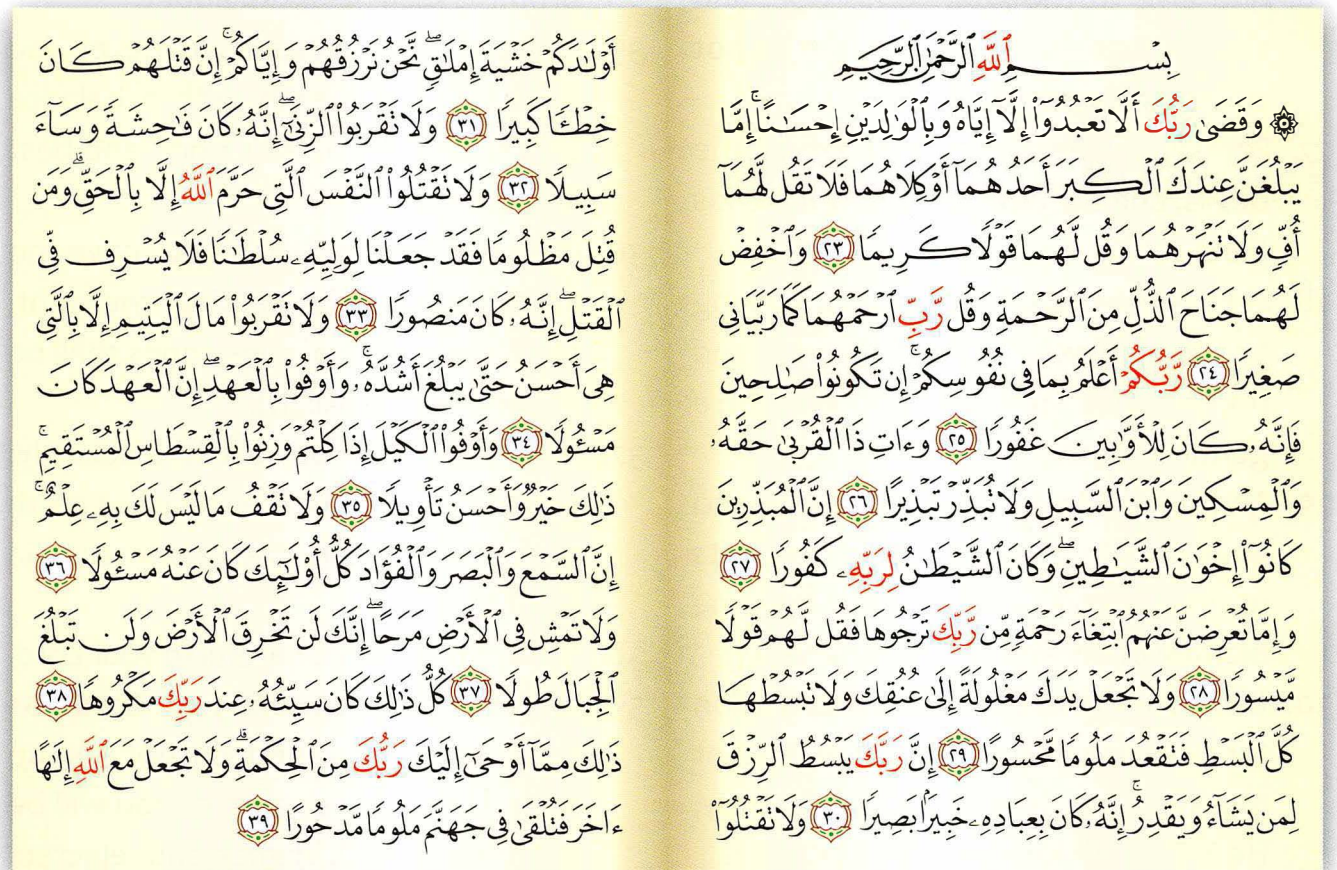
'Be Fair!' You must probably have shouted that out many times in the middle of a heated argument over a game in the playground. 'Play fair!' – So much is contained in that two-word phrase.

To play fair with others is to leave their honour, their reputation and their property in good condition. Do we think of it? Some people cause others great suffering; for instance, they are so careless in the way they talk about others. They are so careless about truthfulness. They are so indifferent to the rights of others – particularly of those who are weaker or less influential than they.

Then again, there are those who refuse to play fair with the property rights of others. They refuse to play fair with their obligations and responsibilities. Your possessions, hard-earned and perhaps badly needed, are not safe with such people. Public funds are not safe with them.

Still there are those who refuse to play fair with their parents.

Let us look, then, at some of the things that are involved in being fair in the light of the Glorious Qur'an.



بِسْمِ ٱللَّهِ ٱلرَّحْمَٰنِ ٱلرَّحِيمِ

۞ وَقَضَىٰ رَبُّكَ أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوٓا۟ إِلَّآ إِيَّاهُ وَبِٱلْوَٰلِدَيْنِ إِحْسَٰنًا ۚ إِمَّا
يَبْلُغَنَّ عِندَكَ ٱلْكِبَرَ أَحَدُهُمَآ أَوْ كِلَاهُمَا فَلَا تَقُل لَّهُمَآ
أُفٍّ وَلَا تَنْهَرْهُمَا وَقُل لَّهُمَا قَوْلًا كَرِيمًا ﴿٢٣﴾ وَٱخْفِضْ
لَهُمَا جَنَاحَ ٱلذُّلِّ مِنَ ٱلرَّحْمَةِ وَقُل رَّبِّ ٱرْحَمْهُمَا كَمَا رَبَّيَانِى
صَغِيرًا ﴿٢٤﴾ رَّبُّكُمْ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا فِى نُفُوسِكُمْ ۚ إِن تَكُونُوا۟ صَٰلِحِينَ
فَإِنَّهُۥ كَانَ لِلْأَوَّٰبِينَ غَفُورًا ﴿٢٥﴾ وَءَاتِ ذَا ٱلْقُرْبَىٰ حَقَّهُۥ
وَٱلْمِسْكِينَ وَٱبْنَ ٱلسَّبِيلِ وَلَا تُبَذِّرْ تَبْذِيرًا ﴿٢٦﴾ إِنَّ ٱلْمُبَذِّرِينَ
كَانُوٓا۟ إِخْوَٰنَ ٱلشَّيَٰطِينِ ۖ وَكَانَ ٱلشَّيْطَٰنُ لِرَبِّهِۦ كَفُورًا ﴿٢٧﴾
وَإِمَّا تُعْرِضَنَّ عَنْهُمُ ٱبْتِغَآءَ رَحْمَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّكَ تَرْجُوهَا فَقُل لَّهُمْ قَوْلًا
مَّيْسُورًا ﴿٢٨﴾ وَلَا تَجْعَلْ يَدَكَ مَغْلُولَةً إِلَىٰ عُنُقِكَ وَلَا تَبْسُطْهَا
كُلَّ ٱلْبَسْطِ فَتَقْعُدَ مَلُومًا مَّحْسُورًا ﴿٢٩﴾ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ يَبْسُطُ ٱلرِّزْقَ
لِمَن يَشَآءُ وَيَقْدِرُ ۚ إِنَّهُۥ كَانَ بِعِبَادِهِۦ خَبِيرًۢا بَصِيرًا ﴿٣٠﴾ وَلَا تَقْتُلُوٓا۟

أَوْلَٰدَكُمْ خَشْيَةَ إِمْلَٰقٍ ۖ نَّحْنُ نَرْزُقُهُمْ وَإِيَّاكُمْ ۚ إِنَّ قَتْلَهُمْ كَانَ
خِطْـًٔا كَبِيرًا ﴿٣١﴾ وَلَا تَقْرَبُوا۟ ٱلزِّنَىٰٓ ۖ إِنَّهُۥ كَانَ فَٰحِشَةً ۖ وَسَآءَ
سَبِيلًا ﴿٣٢﴾ وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا۟ ٱلنَّفْسَ ٱلَّتِى حَرَّمَ ٱللَّهُ إِلَّا بِٱلْحَقِّ ۗ وَمَن
قُتِلَ مَظْلُومًا فَقَدْ جَعَلْنَا لِوَلِيِّهِۦ سُلْطَٰنًا فَلَا يُسْرِف فِّى
ٱلْقَتْلِ ۖ إِنَّهُۥ كَانَ مَنصُورًا ﴿٣٣﴾ وَلَا تَقْرَبُوا۟ مَالَ ٱلْيَتِيمِ إِلَّا بِٱلَّتِى
هِىَ أَحْسَنُ حَتَّىٰ يَبْلُغَ أَشُدَّهُۥ ۚ وَأَوْفُوا۟ بِٱلْعَهْدِ ۖ إِنَّ ٱلْعَهْدَ كَانَ
مَسْـُٔولًا ﴿٣٤﴾ وَأَوْفُوا۟ ٱلْكَيْلَ إِذَا كِلْتُمْ وَزِنُوا۟ بِٱلْقِسْطَاسِ ٱلْمُسْتَقِيمِ ۚ
ذَٰلِكَ خَيْرٌ وَأَحْسَنُ تَأْوِيلًا ﴿٣٥﴾ وَلَا تَقْفُ مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِۦ عِلْمٌ ۚ
إِنَّ ٱلسَّمْعَ وَٱلْبَصَرَ وَٱلْفُؤَادَ كُلُّ أُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ كَانَ عَنْهُ مَسْـُٔولًا ﴿٣٦﴾
وَلَا تَمْشِ فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ مَرَحًا ۖ إِنَّكَ لَن تَخْرِقَ ٱلْأَرْضَ وَلَن تَبْلُغَ
ٱلْجِبَالَ طُولًا ﴿٣٧﴾ كُلُّ ذَٰلِكَ كَانَ سَيِّئُهُۥ عِندَ رَبِّكَ مَكْرُوهًا ﴿٣٨﴾
ذَٰلِكَ مِمَّآ أَوْحَىٰٓ إِلَيْكَ رَبُّكَ مِنَ ٱلْحِكْمَةِ ۗ وَلَا تَجْعَلْ مَعَ ٱللَّهِ إِلَٰهًا
ءَاخَرَ فَتُلْقَىٰ فِى جَهَنَّمَ مَلُومًا مَّدْحُورًا ﴿٣٩﴾

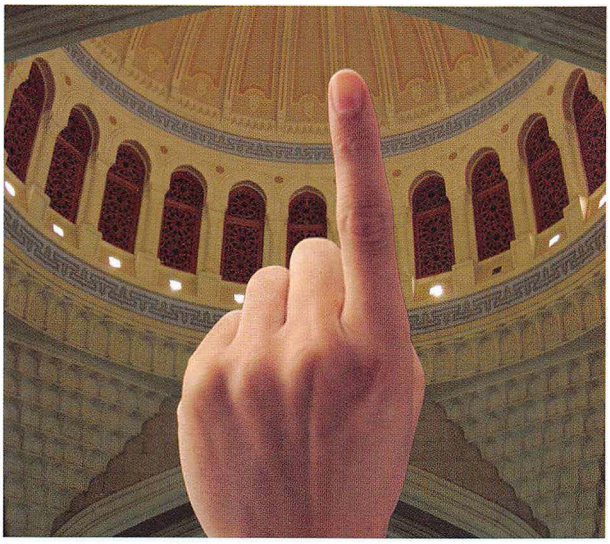
Translation of the Meaning of These Verses

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

23. And your Lord has decreed that you shall worship none but Him and be good to [your] parents. Should one of them, or both, reach old age with you, say not to them a word of disrespect, nor scold them; but speak to them in kindly terms.
24. And lower for them the wing of humility, out of mercy, and say, 'My Lord! Have mercy on them, as they did bring me up when I was a child.'
25. Your Lord knows best what is in your souls. If you are righteous, then, indeed, He is Ever Most Forgiving to those who turn to Him in repentance.
26. And give to the relative his due, and the poor, and the wayfarer, but do not squander wastefully.
27. For squanderers are brothers of the devils; and the devil is ungrateful to his Lord.
28. Even if you [must] avoid them, seeking to obtain your Lord's Mercy and hoping for it, still speak to them with a gentle speech.
29. And do not keep your hand bound to your neck, nor stretch it forth to its utmost limit, lest you become blameworthy and in severe poverty.
30. Truly, your Lord expands the provision for whom He Wills, and gives it in scant measure [for whom He Wills]. Truly, He is Ever All-Knower, All-Seer of His servants.
31. And kill not your children for fear of poverty. We shall provide for them as well as for you. Surely, killing them is a great sin.
32. And do not come near to unlawful sex. It is indeed an indecency and an evil way.
33. And do not take life which Allah has made unlawful, except for a just cause. And if anyone is killed unjustly, we have given his next of kin a certain authority. But let him not exceed limits in the matter of killing. Surely, he is helped.
34. And do not approach the property of an orphan, except with what is better, until he reaches maturity; and fulfil every promise – for, surely, every promise shall be asked about.
35. And give full measure whenever you measure, and weigh with a balance that is straight. That is good and best in the end.
36. And pursue not that you have no knowledge of; the hearing; the sight, the heart – each of those ones shall be questioned [by Allah].
37. And walk not on earth insolently; certainly you will never tear the earth open, nor attain the mountains in height.
38. The evil of all this is hateful to your Lord.
39. This is of the wisdom your Lord has revealed to you; and do not set up with Allah another god, or you will be thrown into Hell, blamed and rejected.

Explanation

'And your Lord has decreed that you shall worship none but Him.' (Verse 23)



Belief in Allah is the cornerstone of Islamic faith. It is called *Tawheed* or singling out Allah. It is essential that a Muslim's beliefs about Allah be correct. If a person's beliefs about Allah are not correct, then all of his faith may be destroyed.

Most of the Glorious Qur'an, rather all of it, refers to *Tawheed*. It discusses Allah's Names and talks about His Attributes and His actions. And this is part of *Tawheed* in knowledge and affirmation.

The Qur'an calls people to worship Allah Alone, without ascribing any partners to Him. It calls them to leave everything that is worshipped other than Him. This is *Tawheed* of intention and action.

The Qur'an commands, prohibits and requires obedience to Allah alone. All this is part of *Tawheed* and its perfection.

The Qur'an states how Allah honours those who believe in *Tawheed*. It makes it clear how He treats them in this world and how He will honour them in the hereafter. All of this is the reward of *Tawheed*. The Qur'an also discusses those who have associated partners with Allah and whom He has punished. It also talks about how He would punish those who abandon *Tawheed*.

The expression *Tawheed* denotes 'making something one'. It means to single out. In essence, this is the belief in the uniqueness of Allah with respect to Him being the Only One *Ilaah* – the Only One God worthy of worship. It is the belief in the uniqueness of Allah with respect to His actions. That means He Alone is the Lord. He is One without partner in His kingdom and His actions. He is the Only Creator. He is the true Owner of the creation. He is also the only One who nourishes and sustains this creation. Everything that occurs in this creation is by His command and will. Provisions are from Allah Alone. Life and death are in His Hand. All blessings come from Him. His Attributes (*as-Sifaat*) are perfect and complete. The Attributes of Allah are unique to Him Alone. No one else can attain any of these attributes. There is nothing similar to Him. He is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing; the All-Knowing.



- What does 'playing fair' entail?
- What is *Tawheed*? Mention the various branches of *Tawheed*.
- Does Allah see and hear things the way we do? If not, then what does Allah's 'seeing' and 'hearing' mean?

It is, however, important to realize that He sees in a way that is totally different from our seeing. He hears in a way that is different from our hearing. He is living in a way that is different from our living. He is Powerful in a way that is unlike our power. His Knowledge is entirely Unique. He knows the number of raindrops. He knows the number of grains of sand in the deserts. He knows the weight of the mountains. He knows the number of the leaves on the trees. He sees the crawling ant in the dark of night. He hears what is whispered in hidden areas within houses whose gates are locked, and so on.

Duty to One's Parents (Verses 23-24)

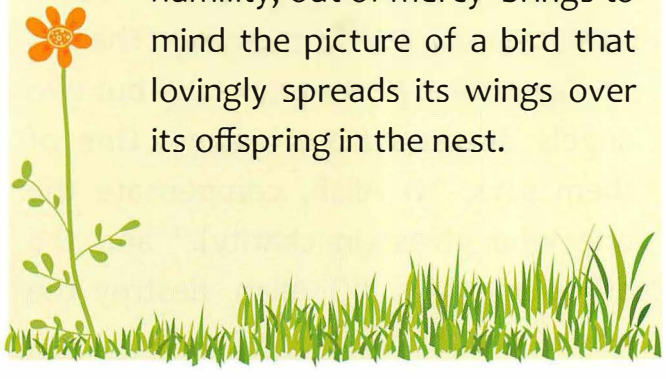
These verses enjoin duty to one's parents. It is important to note that the Qur'an makes mention of this duty immediately after the duty to Allah. Whereas Allah is the real, ultimate cause of man's coming to life, his parents are its outward immediate cause. So the call to Allah is followed by the command to honour and cherish one's parents. Beyond this, the whole of the present passage – up to and including verse 39 – is meant to show that kindness and just dealings between men are an essential part of the concept of 'striving for the good of the life to come'.



After Allah, parents do more for their children, than anyone else. We are the fruit of their love and sacrifice. So we have to love them from our hearts, with esteem and affection. We should pray for them. We should desire to make them happy. As they grow older, we can and must show our love by helping them in their needs, both material and spiritual. We should comfort them and show them understanding. We should assist them in sickness, calling a doctor on time. And this respect must be both internal and external – in thought, word and actions.

Love involves respect. Respect demands obedience. Parents receive authority over their children from Allah. Thus, children must obey them in all things, with the exception of a command to sin. No matter to what positions sons and daughters rise in the world, they always owe their parents respect, precisely because of their position as parents. Hence, children should cultivate feelings of gratitude and an attitude of respect for parents. Children should be taught and encouraged to take good care of their parents, especially when they become old. While doing so, they ought to remember the love and compassion that their parents lavished upon them when they were small.

These verses are not simply a moral exhortation. Rather, they lay down a fundamental principle on the basis of which the legal rights of parents have been described in minute detail in *hadeeth* and *fiqh*, or jurisprudence. In Arabic, the word or sound '*uff*' indicates contempt, dislike or disgust. The phrase 'and lower for them the wing of humility, out of mercy' brings to mind the picture of a bird that lovingly spreads its wings over its offspring in the nest.



Verse 25

This verse adds the final comment that feelings, actions and reactions are related to faith. One should remain aware that Allah knows people's intentions. He knows what lies behind words and actions. This verse serves as guidance for everything we do. It also leaves the door open for anyone who makes a mistake or falls short of expectations. He should turn in repentance and seek forgiveness from Allah. When a person's heart is set on the right track, the door to forgiveness remains open. This verse in particular mentions those who turn back to Allah every time they slip or make a mistake.

The Command to Maintain the Ties of Kinship and the Prohibition of Wastefulness (Verses 26-28)

When Allah mentions honouring one's parents, He follows this with the command to treat one's relatives well and to maintain the ties of relationship. The Prophet ﷺ once said, 'Your mother and your father, then your closest relatives, and then the next closest.' (Ahmad, and it is authentic)

According to another *hadeeth*, 'Whoever would like to get his provision expanded and his life extended, let him maintain the ties of kinship.' (Muslim)

But one should not spend wastefully in the manner of a spendthrift. Allah commands spending, but He forbids wastefulness. Wastefulness or

squandering denotes spending senselessly, to no good purpose. It is to be borne in mind that the word *tabdheer* does not relate to quantity but rather the purpose of one's spending. *Tabdheer* means spending without a righteous purpose, or in a frivolous cause. In other words, if a man spends all that he possesses in a righteous cause, it would not be termed squandering. On the other hand, if he spends even a small amount in a frivolous cause, it is wastefulness. Squandering implies an utter lack of thankfulness for the gift of substance bestowed by Allah upon man. That is why the squanderers are described as the ilk of Satan, or the brothers of Satan. And Satan is ever ungrateful to his Lord.

Extravagance also means spending wealth on sinful and wrongful, corrupt things. The expression *Ibn-us-sabeel* (literally. son of the road) denotes any person far from his home. It denotes especially one who, because of his circumstances, does not have sufficient means of livelihood at his disposal. In its wider sense, it describes a person, who for any reason whatsoever, is unable to return home either temporarily or permanently; for example an exile or refugee.

If a person helps others, he should do so with a feeling that he is merely fulfilling the obligations he owes them. And whenever a person is unable to be of any service to someone who is in need of it, he should seek the needful person's patience at his inability to do so. He should pray to Allah to bless him with the means that will enable him to serve others.

Moderation in Spending (Verse 29)

This verse employs a metaphor signifying miserliness and, in particular, unwillingness to help. This imagery enhances the intended meaning. It paints miserliness as a hand tied to one's neck. On the other hand, a waster is shown as one with hands stretched out completely, unable to hold on to anything. The end of miserliness and the end of wastefulness is drawn as a person sitting down, facing blame and powerless. It implies a position of weakness like that which makes an animal refuse to move. This applies to the miser whose miserliness weakens him to the point of inaction. It applies to the waster who finds himself deprived of all power. Both are blamed in the end; one for miserliness, the other for wastefulness. Allah enjoins moderation in living. He condemns miserliness. He forbids wastefulness.

Al-Bukhaaree and Muslim record Allah's Messenger ﷺ as saying, 'There is no day when a person wakes up but two angels descend from heaven. One of them says, "O Allah, compensate the one who gives (in charity)," and the other one says, "O Allah, destroy the one who withholds."'

Verse 30

This verse tells us that Allah is the One Who provides or withholds. He is the Giver. He runs the affairs of His creation as He wills. He enriches whomever He wills and makes poor whoever He wills by the wisdom that is His. He knows and sees who deserves to be rich. He knows and sees who deserves to remain poor. But He commands all to follow the course of moderation. He prohibits both extremes of miserliness and careless wastefulness.



- After our parents, who deserves our honour and respect?
- What does 'wastefulness' denote?
- Is wastefulness related to quantity? Give examples.
- Who is *Ibn-us-sabeel*?
- What attitude should a person have while helping others?

Prohibition of Killing Children (Verse 31)

Historically, this may be a reference to the pre-Islamic custom of burying unwanted female children alive. Beyond this, the above prohibition has a timeless validity. It also relates to abortions and prevention of conception for fear of poverty, which is to say on purely economic grounds.

This verse warns man that in no way does he control the process of giving sustenance for Allah's creatures. That control rests with Allah Alone Who has created and placed mankind on earth. Now, in the same manner that Allah has provided man with their sustenance in the past, He will also do so in the future. History bears witness to the fact that economic resources in different parts of the world have increased in proportion to the growth of human population. At times, these resources have increased at an even higher pace than growth in population.

Prohibition against Adultery (Verse 32)

The prohibition of killing children is followed by a prohibition of unlawful sex. The word *zinaa* used in the text refers to sexual intercourse between a man and a woman who are not husband and wife, irrespective of whether either of them is married to another partner or not. Hence, it denotes both adultery and fornication. The English expression adultery denotes sexual intercourse with other than one's spouse. On the other hand, fornication signifies sexual intercourse between two unmarried persons.

Once a young man came to the Prophet ﷺ and said, 'Messenger of Allah! Give me permission to commit *zinaa*.' The people surrounded him and rebuked him, but the Prophet ﷺ said, 'Come closer.' The man drew closer to him and the Prophet ﷺ said, 'Sit down.' So he sat down. The Prophet ﷺ asked, 'Would you like it for your mother?' He replied, 'No, by Allah, may my life be ransomed for you.' The Prophet ﷺ said 'Neither do people like it for their mothers.' The Prophet then asked, 'Would you like it for your daughter?' The man replied, 'No, by Allah, may my life be ransomed for you.' The Prophet ﷺ then said, 'Neither do people like it for their daughters.' The Prophet then asked, 'Would you like it for your sister?' The man said, 'No, by Allah, may my life be ransomed for you.' The Prophet ﷺ said, 'Neither do people like it for their sisters.' The Prophet ﷺ then asked, 'Would you like it for your paternal aunt?' The man replied, 'No, by Allah, may my life be ransomed for you.' The Prophet ﷺ said, 'Neither do people like it for their paternal aunts.' The Prophet then asked, 'Would you like it for your maternal aunt?' The man replied, 'No, by Allah, may my life be ransomed for you.' The Prophet ﷺ said, 'Neither do people like it for their maternal aunts.'

Then the Prophet ﷺ gently placed his hand on his chest and prayed, 'O Allah! Forgive his sin, purify his heart and guard his chastity.' After that the young man never paid attention to anything of that nature. (Ahmad, and it is authentic)



A Peaceful Community (Verse 33)

Islam is a religion which preserves life and ensures peace. It considers the killing of any human being to be a crime of the highest order, ranking next to associating partners with Allah (*shirk*). It is Allah Who gives life. Hence, no one can take life away except by Allah's permission, and within the limits which He allows. Every human life has a sanctity which cannot be violated. Al-Bukhaaree and Muslim reported the Prophet ﷺ as saying, 'No Muslim who bears witness that there is no deity other than Allah and that Muhammad ﷺ is Allah's Messenger may be killed except for one of three reasons: a life for a life, a married adulterer, and a rebel who abandons his faith and leaves the [Muslim] community.'

The command 'Do not kill any person' does not merely signify killing someone else, but it also includes oneself. Allah has declared human life to be sacred. Thus, not only killing others, but slaying oneself is also a heinous crime. One of man's major modern-day follies is that he considers himself his own master. He believes that he is entitled to destroy himself if he so wishes. The fact, however, is that our lives belong to Allah. Allah has placed us in this world in order to test us. He has the right to test us as He wishes.

The Glorious Qur'an says further, 'And if anyone is killed unjustly, we have given his next of kin a certain authority.' This refers to the legal punishment for homicide, termed *qisaas,* or just retribution. The authority is over the killer. The heir has the choice. If he wishes, he may have him killed in retribution, or he may forgive him in return for the payment of blood-money or indemnity; or he may forgive him with no payment at all, as is reported in the *Sunnah*. But the Qur'an warns, 'But let him not exceed limits in the matter of killing. Surely, he is helped.' There are many ways in which one can overstep the legitimate bounds of 'slaying', all of which are forbidden; for example, swayed by vengefulness, a wronged person may kill other than the actual culprit. One may subject the culprit to torture or mutilate his corpse. He may even kill him after he has taken the blood-money from him. Hence, the heir should not go to extremes in killing the killer, because the heir is helped against the slayer by the Divine Law. Hence, he is required to remain within the limits of justice so that he receives the help he needs in order to obtain what rightfully belongs to him.

'And do not approach the property of an orphan...' (Verse 34 – A)

Islam makes it very clear that a Muslim's life, honour and property are to be protected and preserved. The Prophet ﷺ said, 'All of the Muslim is unlawful to the Muslim: his blood, his honour and his property.' (al-Bukhaaree and Muslim)

This *soorah*, however, makes a special case concerning the property of an orphan. It ensures its full protection. It forbids using any of it except in the best interests of the orphan. Hence, the Muslim community is required to take proper care of the orphan and his property until he comes of age and is able to take care of his own affairs.

'And fulfil every promise ...' (Verse 34 – B)

Islam attaches great importance to the fulfilment of promises and pledges. Allah will certainly question people about their promises. He will hold to account anyone who is in breach of any trust or pledge. In fact, Islam has set an example for such fulfilment which humanity has never seen except under Islamic rule.

Just Weight and Measure (Verse 35)

'And give full measure whenever you measure...' This command applies not merely to commercial transactions, but to all dealings between people. This is fair, and best in the end.

'And pursue not that you have no knowledge of' (Verse 36)

This would seem to relate to groundless assertions about events or people. It would include slander, false testimony and statements based on guesswork.

The Qur'an makes everyone responsible and accountable for their hearing, seeing, and feeling before Allah, Who has given them their ears, eyes, and hearts. Man is accountable for all these. The organs themselves will be questioned about their actions on the Day of Judgement.

Walk Not Insolently (Verse 37)

This verse teaches us to avoid the ways of the arrogant and the vainglorious. The Prophet ﷺ once said, 'While a man from the people before you was walking arrogantly in his garments, the earth swallowed him up and he is sinking down into it, until the Day of Resurrection.' (Muslim)

'The evil of all this is hateful to your Lord.' (Verse 38)

This serves as a summary and reminder that commandments are issued by Allah Alone. The reason for prohibition is Allah's dislike of such evil.

Verse 39

Thus the ending is similar to the beginning. Both emphasize the basis on which Islam builds its structure for human life, namely, the concept of *tawheed*. It is to Allah that all worship should be directed.



- What right has Allah given to the next of kin of someone killed unjustly? May he abuse these rights?
- How does Islam protect the property of orphans?
- What is included in 'that which you have no knowledge'?

Exercise

A. Fill in the blanks.

1. When the heart is set on the right track, the door to _____ is always open.
2. Allah condemns miserliness and forbids _____.
3. Allah is the One Who _____ and _____ riches.
4. Islam is a religion which preserves _____ and ensures _____.
5. Islam attaches great importance to the fulfilment of _____ and _____.
6. Walk not on earth _____.

B. Give reasons.

1. The call to Allah is followed by the command to honour and cherish one's parents.
2. Do not say '*uff*' to your parents.
3. Squanderers are brothers of Satan.
4. Give just weight and measure.

C. Think-up

1. Write down ways in which you can show your love, respect, and gratitude towards your parents.
2. Even though economic resources have kept pace with the population growth, why are some people and some countries still so poor?
3. Allah has prohibited *zinaa*. Suggest ways in which you can protect yourself from this indecent, evil act?
4- *Soorat al-Israa'* is known by another name. What is it?

14 Prophet Muhammad ﷺ (5)

After Al-Hudaybiyah:

The Marvellous Story of Abu Baseer – Faith in Action

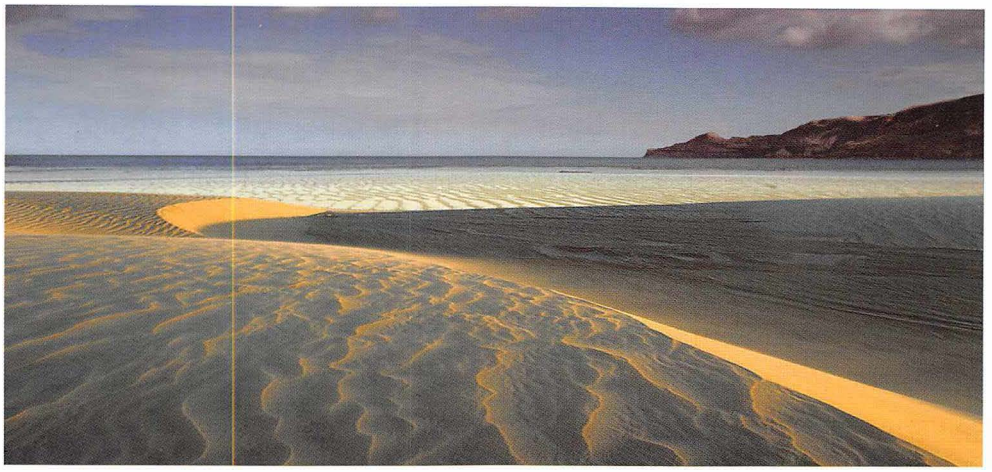
Abu Baseer Utbah ibn Usayd ﷺ was a young man. He had embraced Islam and the Quraysh idolaters had imprisoned him in Makkah. But he escaped and made his way to Madeenah on foot. The journey was long and extremely difficult. He arrived in Madeenah shortly after the Prophet's return from al-Hudaybiyah. He was soon followed by an envoy of Quraysh who demanded his return.

Bound by the pact, Allah's Messenger ﷺ delivered him into the hands of the envoy. Abu Baseer was led off by the envoy of the Quraysh and freed slave he had brought with him for help. Allah's Messenger ﷺ comforted Abu Baseer, saying, 'Allah will surely give you and those with you relief and a way out. We have agreed on the terms of a treaty with those people. We cannot break out word.'

Abu Baseer's Resourcefulness

Despite his youth, Abu Baseer ﷺ was a resourceful man. When they reached Dhul-Hulayfah on their way back to Makkah, Abu Baseer's captors halted to take their meal of dates. Abu Baseer admiringly began to look at the envoy's sword. He asked him, 'Is your sword sharp?' When he said that it was, Abu Baseer said that he would like to look at it. Because of the pact, the envoy felt that he had no reason to be afraid. So he replied, 'Look at it if you want to.' Abu Baseer unsheathed the sword and dealt him a blow that killed him; whereupon the other escort fled headlong back to Madeenah. He ran off to the Prophet ﷺ, who happened to be there and who said as he approached, 'This man has seen some terrible thing.' He gasped out that his fellow had been killed and that he himself was as good as dead.

It was not long when Abu Baseer appeared with the drawn sword in his hand. He said, 'Messenger of Allah! Your obligation has been fulfilled. You did return me to them. Allah has set me free. I refuse to be turned away from my religion; I refuse to be ridiculed on account of my faith.' Allah's Messenger ﷺ said, 'Alas for his mother! What a firebrand for war! Had he but other men with him!' Then he turned to the frightened survivor and said to him, 'The spoil plundered from your man is your concern. Take this man back to those who sent you.' However, the terrified escort refused to take the custody of the prisoner. Thereupon Allah's Messenger ﷺ turned to Abu Baseer and said, 'Go wherever you want!' He made his way to the shores of the sea, with the words 'had he but other men with him' still ringing in his ears.



The Prophet's words soon passed on to the Muslims in Makkah, together with information about Abu Baseer's whereabouts. It was not long before Abu Jandal escaped and made his way to Abu Baseer. Other Muslim prisoners did the same. The Prophet's parting words to Abu Baseer were vague. No one from the Quraysh could find fault with him for saying them. He simply had stated that Abu Baseer was the type of person, who, if he had help from others, could kindle a war. The Muslim captives in Makkah somehow got the impression that Abu Baseer needed men to help him. About seventy men attached themselves to him.

Abu Baseer made a camp with them at a very strategic point on the Makkan caravan route to Syria. They recognized them as their leader. He began to lead them in prayer and counselled them on various issues of the religion. They gladly respected him and obeyed him.

Soon, they embarked upon a plan to hurt Quraysh's interests. They set about gathering as much information as possible about the coming and going of their trade caravans. The Quraysh had been rejoicing in the re-established safety of their trade routes to Syria. But Abu Baseer and his seventy young men intercepted every Makkan caravan that passed them.

The Makkan leaders, therefore, had no choice but to swallow their pride and erase one of the harshest conditions of the treaty of al-Hudaybiyah. They sent a letter to the Prophet ﷺ, asking him to take those men back into the fold of his community. They promised that they would not ask for them to be returned to Makkah. So Allah's Messenger ﷺ wrote to Abu Baseer that he could come now with his men to Madeenah. But meantime, Abu Baseer had fallen seriously ill. When the Prophet's letter arrived, death was near upon him. He read it and died clutching it between his hands. May Allah be well pleased with him and reward him for sacrificing everything he had for the cause of Islam. His companions buried him, and then they came to Madeenah to join the Prophet ﷺ.

Abu Baseer ﷺ and Abu Jandal ﷺ faced many hardships, but they allowed nothing to turn them away from their faith and religion, not even years of captivity and torture. They showed great determination, sincerity and fortitude. They actively struggled until they humiliated the idolaters and made them erase the condition they had imposed on the Muslims at al-Hudaybiyah.

The story of Abu Baseer and his men is a worthy example of adherence to the faith and making great efforts to support it. Their story also embodies the principle that an individual can do what a society cannot do. The attitude of Abu Baseer and his men was very wise. They refused to keep quiet in the face of persecution in Makkah, which sought to turn them away from their religion and stop them from emigrating to Madeenah. Their action was well-planned. It brought no harm upon the Muslims. On the contrary, all the Muslims benefited from their strategy.

One of the most important lessons we learn from this story is that Allah, Most High, takes care of His believing slaves. Allah's help undoubtedly reaches those who deserve it. This is the principle one would do well to understand. Fear of Allah, keeping one's duty to Allah, doing righteous deeds, avoiding things forbidden by Allah and striving hard in His cause makes one worthy of Allah's help, support and guidance.

Only one Muslim woman escaped from Makkah at this time and took shelter in Madeenah. But a revelation now came forbidding the return of any believing woman to the disbelievers. The Prophet ﷺ refused to return the believing woman to the Quraysh, and the Quraysh accepted his refusal without protest. In reality, there had been no mention of women in the treaty.

As the days and months passed, it became more and more clear why the Glorious Qur'an had declared the truce to be a clear victory. The men of Makkah and Madeenah could now meet in peace. They could converse freely together. Consequently, during the next two years, the community of Islam was more than doubled.

Exercise

A. Answer the following questions.

1. Who was Abu Baseer? Why was he captured?
2. How did Abu Baseer manage to free himself?
3. Why did the Muslim captives from Makkah join Abu Baseer?
4. What lesson does the story of Abu Baseer teach us?
5. Why did the Quraysh not contest the return of women?

B. Think-up

What consequences did the interception of Makkan caravan have on the Treaty of Hudaybiyah?

15 Prophet Muhammad ﷺ (6)

The Conquest of Khaybar

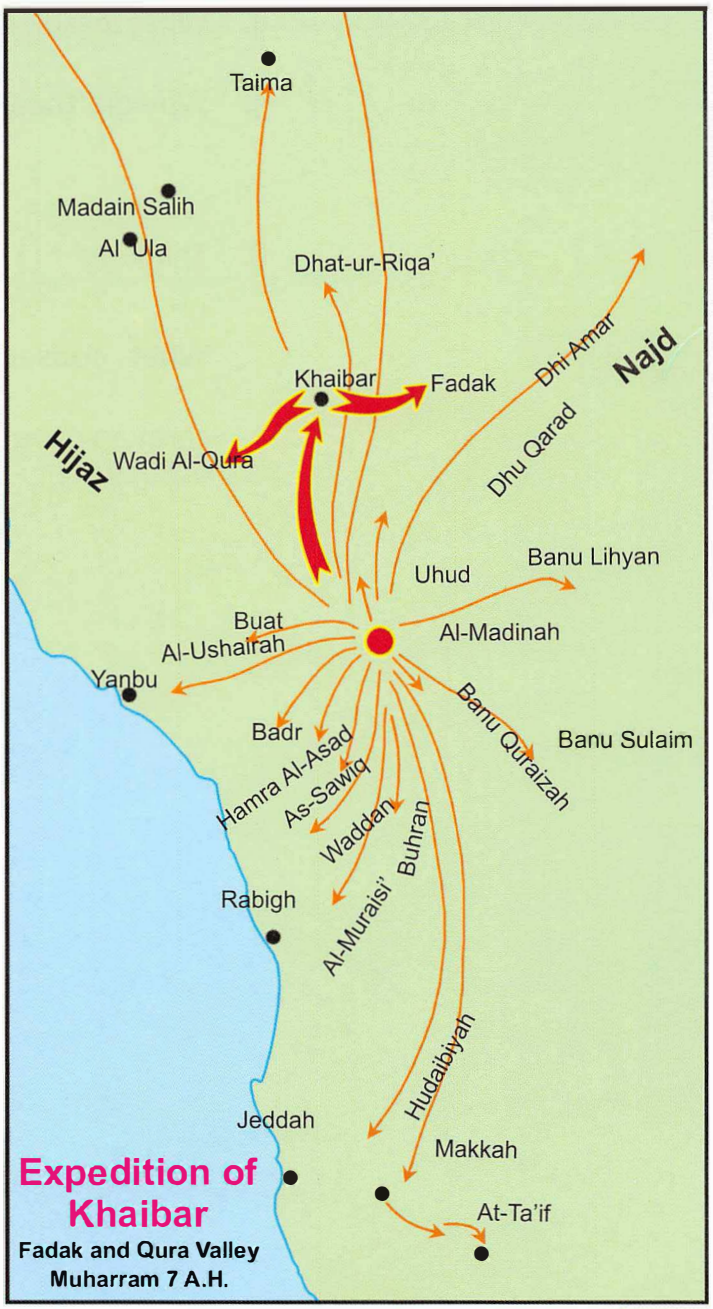
The Prophet's expedition of Khaybar took place in the month of *Muharram* in 7 AH, shortly after the truce of al-Hudaybiyah.

Its Causes

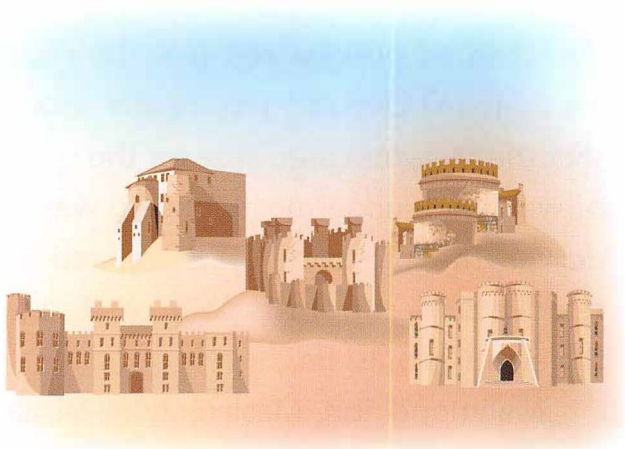
The town of Khaybar was occupied by the Jews who were for the most part relentlessly opposed to Islam. Although they had not directly taken part in the campaign of the Trench, they had given Quraysh every encouragement to attack the Muslims, and it was their influence that had incited their allies of Ghatafaan to side with the Quraysh on that occasion. It was largely because of them that the Ghatafaan had still remained virtually at war with Madeenah. Allah's Messenger ﷺ could never know any fullness of peace as long as Khaybar remained as it was. Moreover, the truce of Hudaybiyah made it possible for the Prophet ﷺ to concentrate on the dangers that lay in the north.

The Oasis of Khaybar

Khaybar was an agricultural oasis. It was situated about 165 kilometres to the north of Madeenah. Khaybar enjoyed fertile land and abundant water. It was famous for the plentifulness of its rich palm-groves, apart from corn and fruits it produced. It was rightfully known as the garden of the Hijaz because of its fertility and livestock. There was a market-place in Khaybar called *Sooq an-Nataat*, which was closely guarded by the tribe of Ghatafaan, who reckoned Khaybar to be within their borders. Many traders and craftsmen lived there. Hence, there was much economic activity.



The Jews of Khaybar were the strongest, the richest and the bravest of the Jews. They were well-known for their elaborate fortifications. Khaybar was not a single fortress. It was a network of elaborate battlements. Its people did not dwell in a single built-up township. They lived in fortified homes in the middle of their farms and orchards. It was difficult to attack them, because any invading force would have to fight in the fields, valleys and over several rocky hills. Even so, the Jews generally were not the sort of people who would fight in open battlegrounds.



They chose to fight in the neighbourhood of their fortresses and citadels. They used to retreat into their battlements in times of danger and were able to withstand a long siege. This was also one of the reasons which prompted Allah's Messenger ﷺ to march against Khaybar.

The Army of the Believers

Allah's Messenger ﷺ was certain that the near victory rich in spoils promised in the recent revelation could be nothing other than the Conquest of Khaybar. The Conquest of Khaybar was to be the first of these victories (48: 18-19). Hence, at the end of *Muharram*, Allah's Messenger ﷺ set out for Khaybar with his army of 1,400 men, which included 200 cavalry. Those who had lagged behind for the Hudaybiyah expedition were refused permission to participate in this campaign. Twenty women also accompanied the army in order to care for the sick and the wounded and to prepare food and supply water during the battle. Allah's Messenger ﷺ led them out of Makkah in the evening. He prayed for the benefits that would come from conquering the Jewish settlement and sought refuge from its evil and the evil of its people.

Within two and a half days, they were only an evening's march from their destination. The army now took up a position that put them as a barrier between Khaybar and her allies of Ghatafaan. Finally, the army reached an open space in front of the walls at night.

It was very dark. Their approach was so quiet that nobody stirred in the township. Only at the crack of dawn was the silence broken. The call to prayer was hushed in the Muslim camp. The Muslims offered the *Fajr* prayer. Thereupon, they looked ahead of them at Khaybar, which the spreading morning light slowly revealed to them. The citadels began to loom up above the

rich palm groves. The farm workers began to come out with their spades and mattocks and baskets. They were taken aback to find themselves face to face with a quiet army. 'Muhammad and his host,' they shouted out and fled back into their battlements. *'Allaahu Akbar!* (Allah is Supremely Great),' said the Prophet ﷺ, adding triumphantly, *'Kharibat Khaybar* (Khaybar is destroyed).' The sun had not yet risen and the army attacked Khaybar.

From the military point of view, Khaybar was divided into three divisions: 'an-Nataat, ash-Shiqq, and al-Kateebah. Each division comprised several fortresses; for instance, an-Nataat consisted of the fortresses of an-Na'eem and as-Sa'b.

Allah's Messenger ﷺ conquered an-Nataat first and its two fortresses. The Jews had retreated into their fortresses. They remained behind their own walls and busied themselves with strengthening their battlements. The men of Khaybar were amongst the most expert marksmen of Arabia. They put the steadfastness of the Muslims to the test. The conquest of an-Na'eem took ten days. Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه carried the flag of the Muslims for the first three days of the siege of an-Na'eem, but it did not fall to him. Stress and exhaustion overtook the Muslim fighters. Every attack made by the Muslims was repulsed.

One night, Allah's Messenger ﷺ said, 'Tomorrow I shall give the standard to a man, through whose hands Allah will grant us victory.' And the people spent the night wondering to which of them it would be given. Then Allah's Messenger summoned Ali رضي الله عنه who was suffering from an ailment in his eyes. When he came, the Prophet ﷺ put some of his spittle into his eyes and prayed for him; and he was cured as if he had never been ill. Then, the Prophet ﷺ gave him the standard. He said to him, 'Advance warily till you reach their dwelling places. Invite them to Islam and inform them what duties towards Allah will be incumbent upon them. For, by Allah, if Allah guides aright through you one single man, this will be better for you than to possess red (i.e. the most precious of) camels.' This clearly shows that the Muslims cared little for the spoils of war. Their uppermost concern was to deliver the message of Islam and to remove barriers from its path, created by the enemies of Islam.

Mahmood ibn Maslamah al-Ansaaree was martyred in the siege of the stronghold of an-Na'eem, when Marhab threw a millstone onto him from the top of the citadel. Marhab was one of the famous heroes of the Jews. He was the one who was responsible for the martyrdom of Aamir ibn al-Akwa'. Aamir's sword was short. When he aimed it at Marhab, the sharp blade swung back and injured his own knee, causing his death. Allah's Messenger ﷺ later said about him, 'He will receive a double reward.'



- Why was Khaybar a constant threat to the Muslims?
- Why was Khaybar called the garden of the Hijaz?
- Why did the women accompany the army to Khaybar?
- Who was carrying the flag first? Why did the Prophet ﷺ change the standard-bearer?
- How do you know whether the Muslims cared little for the spoils of war?

The Fortress of Marhab the Jew ↓



Ali's Bravery

The Jews defended well the citadel of an-Na'eem against the Muslims, but Ali ibn Abee Taalib eventually crushed them. When Ali came near the fortress, Marhab appeared reciting poetic verses about his bravery. They fell upon each other immediately. Ali's sword ran through Marhab's helmet, splitting his head into two. A great victory was gained through his death. The fortress surrendered, but not before many of its men had escaped to other fortresses through the back outlet. 'Where are the Banu Ghatafaan?' was a question that was being asked throughout by every Jew, but not answered. The Jews' morale was then very low. Their Arab allies of the Banu Ghatafaan had in fact set out with an army of four thousand troops as promised. But after a day's march, they had returned, imagining that their families were in danger.

Then the Muslims marched towards the citadel of as-Sa'b ibn Mu'aadh in the region of an-Nataat. Five hundred enemy warriors were encamped there with food and provisions. Al-Hubbaab ibn al-Mundhir carried the standard at the conquest. He fought the Jews bravely. The conquest took three days.

The most unyielding of the strongholds of Khaybar was known as the Fortress of az-Zubayr, which sat on a high mass of rock with a steep approach to the gates. There were cliffs on all the other sides. Most of the warriors who had escaped from the other citadels had joined the fortress's garrison, which remained firmly within its walls. The

Prophet ﷺ besieged them for three days. The Muslims cut off an underground stream of water which flowed beneath the rocks of the citadel. The Jews were soon driven by thirst to come out and fight, and after a savage battle, they were defeated.

Ten Jewish fighters were killed in this battle. The Muslims then set off to conquer ash-Shiqq. This division contained many strongholds. Many of the Jewish warriors were killed in single combats. Then the Muslims stormed the citadel and gained control over its food and provisions.

The last of the battlements to make any resistance was Al-Qaamoos which belonged to the family of Kinaanah, one of the wealthiest and most powerful clans of Banu an-Nadheer. They held out for fourteen days; then Kinaanah sent word that he wished to come to terms with Allah's Messenger ﷺ. The Prophet ﷺ was willing to negotiate, so the chieftain came down from the citadel with others of his family. It was agreed that none of the garrison should be put to death or made captive – on condition that they should leave Khaybar and that all their provisions should become the property of the victors. Allah's Messenger ﷺ added a further condition, namely that his obligation to spare their lives and let them go free would be annulled with respect to anyone who might try to hide any of his possessions. Kinaanah and the others agreed to it, but it soon became clear to both Muslims and the Jews that much wealth was being concealed. Within less than a day the hidden wealth was discovered and Kinaanah was put to death, and his family was made captive.

After the fall of al-Qaamoos, the two remaining strongholds surrendered on the same terms. When the Jews of Fadak heard of the terms that he had imposed on Khaybar, they also surrendered on the same conditions. Fadak thus became the property of the Prophet ﷺ, because it had not been acquired by force of arms.

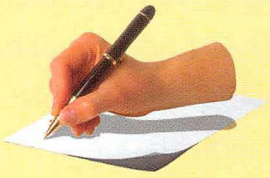
Then the Jews consulted together. They sent a delegation to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, suggesting that they were skilled in the administration of their farms and orchards. He should, therefore, allow them to remain in their homes. They would in return pay him a yearly rent of half of the produce. To this Allah's Messenger agreed, but he added a further clause that if in the future he decided to expel them they must go. Later, each year Allah's Messenger ﷺ used to send Abdullaah ibn Rawaahah to Khaybar, where he divided the produce into two halves and let the Jews choose the half they wanted. 'On this the heavens and the earth rest,' the Jews used to remark on the sense of justice of Abdullaah ibn Rawaahah ﷺ. The number of Jewish fighters killed in the Battle of Khaybar was 93, while 20 believers were martyred.

Safiyyah bint Huyayy

Among the captives was Safiyyah bint Huyayy ibn Akhtab. She was the daughter of Huyayy who had incited Banu Quraydhah to break their treaty with the Prophet ﷺ and he had been killed with them after the siege of the Quraydhah. The Prophet ﷺ freed her and married her at the first pause on his homeward march.

An Attempt to Poison the Messenger of Allah ﷺ

During the Khaybar expedition, an attempt was made to poison the Prophet ﷺ and kill him. A Jewess, Zaynab bint al-Haarith, the wife of Sallaam ibn Mishkam, roasted a lamb and poisoned every part of it. She concentrated the deadly venom especially in the shoulders, for she learnt on inquiry that the Prophet ﷺ preferred the shoulder of the lamb to the other joints. Then she brought it to the Muslim camp and set it before him. Allah's Messenger ﷺ thanked her and invited those of his companions who were present to dine with him. When the Prophet ﷺ took a morsel of the roasted meat, Bishr ibn al-Baraa' ibn Ma'roor, who was sitting next to the Prophet ﷺ also did the same and swallowed it. However, Allah's Messenger ﷺ spat out what was in his mouth, saying, 'Hold off your hands. This joint has informed me that it is poisoned.' He summoned the woman and asked her if she had poisoned the meat. The woman confessed, 'I wanted to kill you because you have slain my husband, my father and my uncle.' Allah's Messenger ﷺ answered, 'Allah would not give you power over me.' His companions asked, 'Shall we kill her?' 'No,' he said, and she was set free. But the face of Bishr was already pale. He died shortly afterwards, and Zaynab was killed in retribution.



- Who was Safiyyah bint Huyayy?
- Why and how was the attempt made to poison the Prophet ﷺ?
- How did the Conquest of Khaybar contribute to the economic growth of the Muslims?
- What made Umar finally expel the Jews from Khaybar?

Distribution of the Spoils of Khaybar

Allah's Messenger ﷺ divided the land of Khaybar into two. One half was to provide food to be stored in case of disaster and for providing hospitality to the delegations which used to come to Madeenah, and the other half was for the believers who had participated in the truce of al-Hudaybiyah. The army consisted of 1,400 troops of which 300 were horsemen. A horseman was given two shares, while a foot-soldier was

given one. It is proven that Allah's Messenger ﷺ gave some of the spoils of Khaybar to the People of the Ship (*Ahl as-Safeenah*). They were some of the Muslims who had immigrated to Ethiopia and had reached Khaybar after the Conquest. They were 52 or 53 men and women under the leadership of Ja'far ibn Abee Taalib. They were the only ones who had not taken part in the Battle of Khaybar, but still received a share of the spoils. They had, in reality, a reason for not having been able to participate in al-Hudaybiyah.

The Prophet ﷺ was very delighted to see Ja'far ibn Abee Taalib ﷺ. Allah's Messenger ﷺ had not seen him for thirteen years, though they had been in constant communication. The Prophet ﷺ clasped him to him and kissed him between his eyes. Then he said, 'I know not for which of the two my delight is greater: for the arrival of Ja'far or for the conquest of Khaybar.' With Ja'far were his wife Asmaa', and their three sons – Abdullaah, Muhammad and 'Awn, who had been born in Ethiopia.

In the same manner, Abu Hurayrah ﷺ and some members of his Daws tribe were given a share of the booty, even though they had not taken part in the battle. This was done with the leave of those who had right over it. Abu Hurayrah ﷺ was not his real name. It was a pet name given him by the Prophet ﷺ because of the tenderness he once showed to a little cat (*hurayrah* – a common diminutive of the word *hirrah* meaning cat). His real name was Abd Shams, before he embraced Islam, and afterwards Abd-ur-Rahmaan. He belonged to the tribe of Daws, and came to Madeenah in 7 AH when the Prophet ﷺ was at Khaybar. He followed him there and embraced Islam. From that time onward, he was a constant companion of the Prophet ﷺ. A whole lesson is devoted to his life elsewhere in this textbook.

Khaybar thus became the property of the Muslims. It became a huge source of revenue for them. Once Abdullaah ibn Umar ﷺ said, 'We never ate our fill until Khaybar was conquered.' The economy of the Muslim state improved considerably after the victory of Khaybar.

The Jews remained in Khaybar until the caliphate of Umar ﷺ. Then, they showed hostility and hatred. First, they killed Abdullaah ibn Sahl ﷺ. Later, they dislocated the hands and feet of Abdullaah ibn Umar while he was sleeping in his place in Khaybar. Thereupon, Umar expelled them from Khaybar and gave them the price of dates, which was due to them in the form of money, camels and other goods, such as palm-saddles and ropes.

Thus the economic and military role of the Jews in Hijaz ended. The Muslims were free to devote themselves to unify Arabia under the banner of Islam.

Exercise

A. Fill in the blanks.

1. Khaybar was known as the _____ of the Hijaz.
2. The fortress of _____ was the most unyielding of the strongholds of Khaybar.
3. Allah's Messenger ﷺ married _____ on the first halt on the way to Madeenah.
4. As far as Abdullaah ibn Rawaahah was concerned, the Jews used to remark on his sense of _____.

B. Think-up

1. What position did the Muslim army take on reaching Khaybar, and why?
2. Why was Fadak not divided among the Muslims as part of the spoils of war?
3. Why do you think the Prophet ﷺ gave a share of the booty to even those who had not taken part in the Conquest of Khaybar?
4. Why were the 'People of the Ship' called as such?

16

Istighfaar: Seeking Forgiveness

The Quality of a Believer

We are humans, and all humans are prone to commit sins. Allah's Messenger ﷺ is reported to have said, 'All humans are sinners, and the best sinners are those who repent much.' (Ahmad, at-Tirmidhee, Ibn Maajah, and it is *hasan*)

Mankind is bound to commit sins. However, Allah is All-Forgiving All-Merciful. Apart from providing guidance, food, clothing, shelter and other countless bounties, He offers mankind yet another great bounty – the forgiveness of one's sins. He says in a sacred *hadeeth*, 'O my servants, you sin by night and by day, and I forgive all sins. Therefore, seek forgiveness from Me and I will forgive you.' (Muslim)

Allah calls out to His servants to seek His forgiveness. He forgives sins. If the sinning humans turn to Him in repentance and seek His forgiveness, He is willing to forgive them. The significant matter, however, is the admission of committing sins. The important thing is the feeling that it was wrong, and that one needs to seek Allah's forgiveness. The door to forgiveness and repentance is always open as long as the person is alive and the throes of death have not reached him. In *Saheeh al-Bukhaaree* and *Saheeh Muslim*, Allah's Messenger ﷺ informs us of a man who had killed one hundred people, yet because of his desire to repent and seek His forgiveness, Allah showed Mercy upon him. Allah says, 'Say: O my servants who have transgressed against themselves (by sinning), despair not of the Mercy of Allah. Indeed, Allah forgives all sins. Truly, He is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful.' (*Az-Zumar*, 39:53)

The Term *Istighfaar*

The word *istighfaar* is derived from *ghafara*, which implies the clothing that one wears to protect oneself from harm, dirt or filth. For instance, a warrior wears a *mighfar*, or helmet, in order to protect himself from the harm of swords, spears, etc.

Forgiveness signifies that Allah covers one's failings and one's faults. He removes one's sins and does not punish the person in the afterlife. One of the most vital things a man can ask of Allah, Most High, after asking to be guided to the Straight Path (*as-Siraat al-Mustaqeem*), is to ask forgiveness for one's sins and shortcomings, being saved from the Fire and being admitted into Paradise.

When one commits a sin and turns to Allah, seeking His forgiveness, one will find Allah ready to accept one's repentance and forgive one. Allah, Most High, says, 'And whoever does a wrong,

or wrongs himself, but then seeks forgiveness from Allah, he will find Allah forgiving and Merciful.' (*An-Nisaa'*, 4:110)



The Prophet ﷺ once said, 'A servant [of Allah] committed a sin and said, "O Allah, forgive me my sin." And Allah, Most High, said, "My servant has committed a sin and knows that he has a Lord Who forgives sins and punishes for them." Then he sinned again and said, "O Allah, forgive me my sin." And Allah, Most High, said, "My servant has committed a sin and knows that he has a Lord Who forgives sins and punishes for them." Then he sinned again and said, "O Lord, forgive me my sin." And Allah, Most High, said, "My servant has committed a sin and knows that he has a Lord Who forgives sins and punishes for sins. Do whatever you wish, for I have forgiven you."' (al-Bukhaaree and Muslim)

This *hadeeth* clearly shows that as long as man commits a sin, feels remorse, and then turns to Allah for forgiveness, without having the intention to continue to commit that sin, Allah will certainly forgive him. Such is the forgiveness of Allah! Such is the pleasure with His slaves when they seek His forgiveness!

Allah's Messenger ﷺ also said, 'Allah, Most High, says, "O son of Adam, so long as you call upon Me and ask of Me, I shall forgive you for what you have done, and I shall not mind. O son of Adam, were your sins to reach the clouds of the sky and were you then to ask forgiveness of Me, I would forgive you. O son of Adam, were you to come to Me with sins as great as the earth, and were you then to face Me, ascribing no partner to Me, I would bring you forgiveness nearly great as it."' (at-Tirmidhee, and it is *hasan*)

In yet another *hadeeth*, Allah's Messenger ﷺ is reported to have said, 'Our Lord, Glorified and Exalted, descends each night to the earth's sky, when there remains the final third of the



- What is the most important thing after one commits a sin?
- Explain the term *istighfaar*.
- What are the most vital things a person must ask Allah?

night, and He says, "Who is saying a prayer to Me that I may answer it? Who is asking something of Me that I may give it to him? Who is asking forgiveness of Me that I may forgive him?'" (al-Bukhaaree) Muslim's narration concludes with the words, 'And thus He continues until dawn.'

The Sin of *Shirk* is Unforgivable, Unless and until the Sinner Repents

Shirk means to associate partners with Allah in one's worship, or with respect to any of His Attributes or characteristics. Allah clearly declares in the Qur'an that whoever ascribes partners to Allah will not be forgiven.

"Certainly, Allah forgives not that partners be set up with Him in worship, but He forgives whatever is less than that for whomever He Wills. And whoever sets up partners with Allah has indeed invented a tremendous sin." (*An-Nisaa'*, 4: 48)

Included in *shirk* is the making of supplications to dead people or seeking aid from the dead people, or sacrificing animals for anyone other than Allah. No act of worship and no supplication may be made to anyone other than Allah. Allah has power over all things. No one can do anything without His permission.

The Qur'anic verses concerning *shirk* are numerous. It is certain that whoever ascribes partners to Allah and dies in such a state is one of Hell's inhabitants. The sin of committing *shirk* is unforgivable.

Hence, it follows that the key to forgiveness is *Tawheed*, and avoiding any form of *shirk*. The one who loses this key will not be able to achieve Allah's forgiveness. *Tawheed* or, singling out Allah, is the cornerstone of Islamic faith. All of the other Islamic beliefs revolve around it. In fact most of the Noble Qur'an, rather all of it, refers to *Tawheed*. It calls people to Allah's worship alone, without ascribing any partners to Him.

Sins melt away only due to the light of *Tawheed*. If one fulfils the demands of *Tawheed*, it will overcome all his sins. He will be admitted into Paradise in the hereafter.

Even if a believer has some shortcomings in fulfilling obligations, and comes to Allah with an earth full of sins, the effect of *Tawheed* is so tremendous that all of these sins may be forgiven by Allah. Due to *Tawheed* and complete avoidance of *shirk*, Allah may forgive him, or He may punish him for other sins and then admit him into Paradise. However, if a person has committed *shirk*, then none of those sins will be forgiven in the hereafter, and he will be in the Hellfire forever, as the verse quoted above clearly indicates.

Different Supplications of Forgiveness-Seeking and the Recommended Times for Them

A. From the Glorious Qur'an



1. رَبَّنَا ظَلَمْنَآ أَنفُسَنَا وَإِن لَّمْ تَغْفِرْ لَنَا وَتَرْحَمْنَا لَنَكُونَنَّ مِنَ ٱلْخَٰسِرِينَ ﴿٢٣﴾

'Our Lord, we have wronged our own selves. If You do not forgive us and have mercy on us, we will certainly be among the lost.' (7: 23)

2. لَّآ إِلَٰهَ إِلَّآ أَنتَ سُبْحَٰنَكَ إِنِّى كُنتُ مِنَ ٱلظَّٰلِمِينَ ﴿٨٧﴾

'There is no god but You. Glory be to You. I was among the wrongdoers.' (21:87)

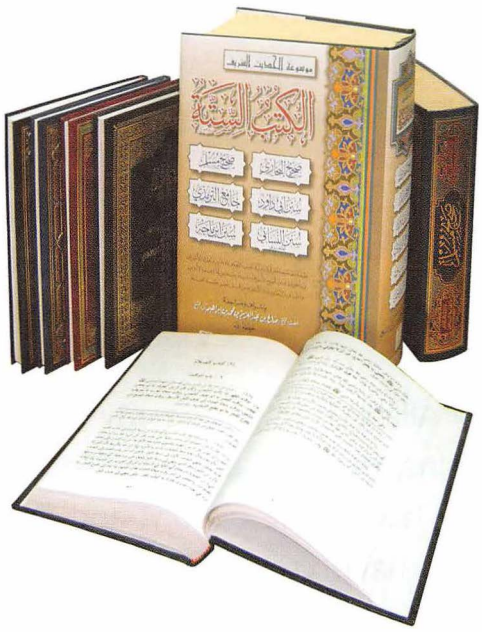
Allah's Messenger ﷺ said, 'The supplication of Dhun-Noon (another name for Prophet Yoonus عليه السلام), which he invoked when he was in the belly of the whale, which was: "There is no god but You. Glory be to You. I was among the wrongdoers." No Muslim man has ever supplicated it in relation to anything without Allah answering it.' (Ahmad; at-Tirmidhee, and it is *saheeh*)

3. رَّبِّ ٱغْفِرْ وَٱرْحَمْ وَأَنتَ خَيْرُ ٱلرَّٰحِمِينَ ﴿١١٨﴾

'My Lord, forgive [me] and have mercy [upon me], for You are the best of the Merciful.' (23: 118)

B. Supplications of forgiveness taught by the Messenger of Allah ﷺ

1. The master prayer for supplication for seeking forgiveness – *sayyidul-istighfaar*



Allah's Messenger ﷺ said, 'The master prayer of supplication for seeking forgiveness is:

«اَللَّهُمَّ أَنْتَ رَبِّي لَا إِلٰهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ، خَلَقْتَنِي وَأَنَا عَبْدُكَ وَأَنَا عَلَى عَهْدِكَ وَوَعْدِكَ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُ. أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ شَرِّ مَا صَنَعْتُ، أَبُوءُ لَكَ بِنِعْمَتِكَ عَلَيَّ وَأَبُوءُ لَكَ بِذَنْبِي، فَاغْفِرْ لِي، فَإِنَّهُ لَا يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ».

O Allah, You are my Lord, there is no god but You. You have created me and I am Your servant; and I am keeping my pledge and promise to You as much as I

am able. I take my refuge in You from the evil that I have done. I acknowledge Your favour on me, and I admit my wrongdoing, so forgive me, and there is no one who forgives sins other than You.

'He who says it in the evening, and then dies that night will enter Paradise; and he who says it in the morning and dies that day will enter Paradise.' (al-Bukhaaree)

2. Muslim reports that 'Allah's Messenger ﷺ used to supplicate to Allah with this supplication:

«اَللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِي مَا قَدَّمْتُ وَمَا أَخَّرْتُ وَمَا أَسْرَرْتُ وَمَا أَعْلَنْتُ وَمَا أَنْتَ أَعْلَمُ بِهِ مِنِّي أَنْتَ الْمُقَدِّمُ وَأَنْتَ الْمُؤَخِّرُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ»

O Allah, forgive me my early and later sins, those I have kept secret and those I have done openly, and those in which I have crossed all bounds, and those You know better than I. you are the One Who brings forward and the One Who postpones. There is no god but You.

«اَللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِي ذَنْبِي كُلَّهُ دِقَّهُ وَجِلَّهُ، وَأَوَّلَهُ وَآخِرَهُ، وَعَلَانِيَتَهُ وَسِرَّهُ».

O Allah, forgive all my sins, the major ones and the minor ones, the old ones and the new ones, the manifest ones and the hidden ones. (al-Bukhaaree and Muslim)

«سُبْحَانَكَ اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّنا وَبِحَمْدِكَ، اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لي»

Glory be to You, O Allah, our Lord! Praise be to You. O Allah, forgive me. (al-Bukhaaree and Muslim)

The Recommended Times for Seeking Forgiveness

Although the doors of forgiveness and repentance are open at all times, there are certain times during which seeking forgiveness and supplicating is more likely to be answered. It is recommended that a Muslim seeks forgiveness and invokes Allah during these times. It is indeed in the great mercy of Allah that He has favoured certain times over others. Had all the times been the same, the believer would not have the enthusiasm and fervour that exists during more blessed times.

Allah's Messenger ﷺ is reported to have said, 'Our Lord descends every night to the lowest heaven when the last third of the night remains.' (al-Bukhaaree)

He also said, 'Human deeds are presented before Allah on Mondays and Thursdays.' (Ahmad, Abu Daawood and at-Tirmidhee, and it is *saheeh*)

In short, there are certain times of the day and night at which Allah's Grace spreads on the earth, and His Mercy flows through it. These times are:

1. The last third of the night
2. When the *adhaan* is called
3. Between the *adhaan* and the *iqaamah*
4. While one is in the posture of prostration
5. Before concluding *salaah* and after one has completed the *tashahhud*
6. After the prayer
7. A special hour on Friday. It is a short period of time, according to the Prophet ﷺ. (al-Bukhaaree)
8. When one wakes up at night
9. After performing *wudhoo'*
10. Before or after drinking *Zamzam* water, as the water of *Zamzam* is for whatever it has been drunk. (Ahmad and Ibn Maajah; and it is authentic)
11. During the month of Ramadhan
12. During the blessed Night of Power *(Laylatul-Qadr)*
13. At the time of rainfall. Two are the supplications that are never rejected: the supplication made when the call for prayer is made, (Abu Daawood) and when rain falls (Imaam ash-Shaafi'ee in *al-Umm*, and he graded it *hasan*).
14. Before *Dhuhr*, after the sun has reached its zenith. This is an hour during which the gates of heaven are opened. (Ahmad and at-Tirmidhee, and it is authentic)



- What varied aspects are included in *shirk*?
- What will happen if a believer has some shortcomings in fulfilling the requirements of *Tawheed*?
- Point out about any seven times when Allah's Grace spreads on the earth.

Exercise

A. Fill in the blanks.

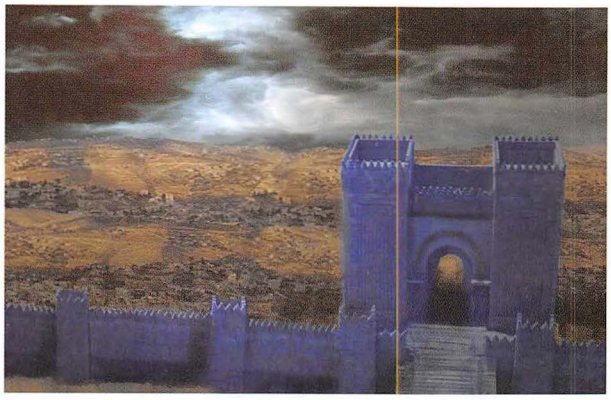
1. The best sinners are those who _____.
2. The door to repentance and forgiveness is open until _____.
3. Whoever does wrong or commits sins will find that Allah is _____.
4. The sin of _____ will not be forgiven.
5. The key to forgiveness is _____ and _____.

B. Learn

1. Learn the supplications given in the lesson and practise them in their appropriate times.
2. Find out what a sacred *hadeeth* is as well as its equivalent in Arabic.

The *Du'aa* of Prophet Yoonus عليه السلام
Relief from Distress

Allah's Messenger ﷺ said, 'The invocation of my brother *Dhun-Noon*: None has the right to be worshipped save You; glory be to You, I have been among the wrongdoers. None who is experiencing difficulty says it except that Allah will relieve him of his difficulty.' (Ahmad and at-Tirmidhee and it is *saheeh*)



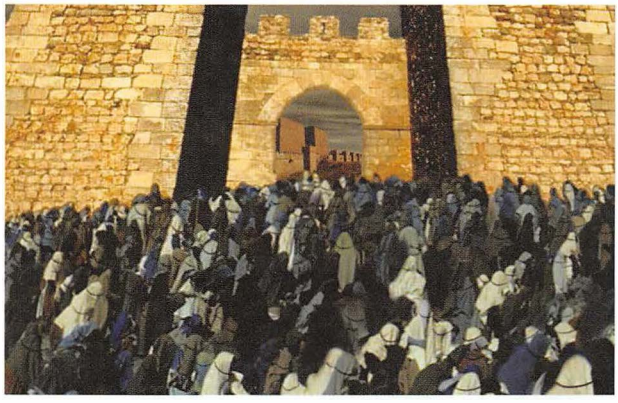
Prophet Yoonus عليه السلام

Yoonus ibn Mattaa was one of the Prophets of Allah. He was born in Ninevah, Mosul, which was the capital of the ancient Assyria, on the bank of the river Tigris. Its ruins can be seen opposite modern Mosul in northern Iraq.

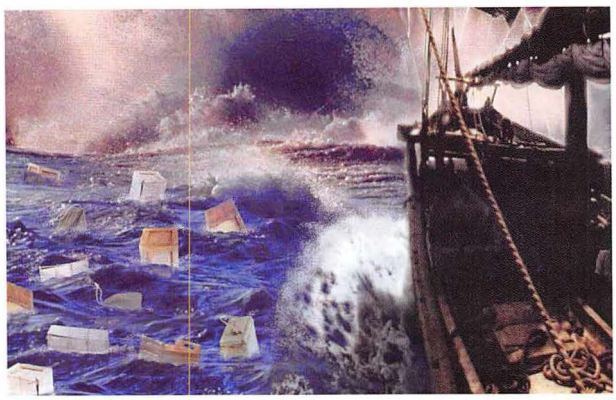
Yoonus عليه السلام was sent to his people as a prophet to call them to the worship of Allah Alone and to abandon their sinful ways. He spent many years of his life in pursuit of this mission. But in all of this time, only a handful of people believed. Prophet Yoonus finally, in despair, supplicated to Allah that His punishment should descend upon his people. In response, he was commanded to preach to his people for a further period of forty days. He summoned them to Allah, but they rejected him and continued in their disbelief.

When three days remained, he proclaimed amongst his people that punishment would befall them in three days, and he declared himself innocent of what they worshipped. The Qur'an says, **'And Dhun-Noon when he went off in anger, thinking We had no power over him.'** (21: 87)

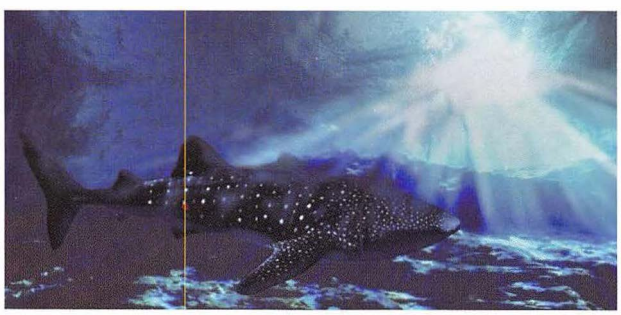
Dhun-Noon means the one with the fish.



His people gathered together and agreed among themselves that Yoonus was an extremely truthful person. He was not known to lie. When they saw that he had indeed departed, they became certain of the imminent punishment and repented. Allah forgave them and showed them mercy.



On the other hand, Prophet Yoonus ﷺ embarked upon a heavily laden ship. But it was not very long before the ship ran into a storm and was about to founder. The mariners said to each other, 'Come let us cast lots that we may know for whose cause this evil is upon us.' And then they cast lots, and he was the one who lost. The mariners were, however, reluctant to throw him overboard, seeing him to be a pious man. They, therefore, repeated the drawing of lots three times. His name came up each time. So they took up Yoonus and cast him forth into the sea, and the sea ceased from its raging.



Upon being thrown into the sea, he was swallowed by a huge whale. The whale allowed him to stay in its belly, by the command of Allah. At this time, it is said that he invoked Allah saying, 'My Lord! I have been granted a place to pray where no one else has ever worshipped you before.'

He soon realized that he had done something wrong in leaving his people before being granted permission by His Lord, and that this was the cause of his trial. Then he cried out in the deep darkness, '*Laa ilaaha illaa anta subhaanaka, innee kuntu minadh-dhaalimeen.* (21: 87)

Allah responded to him and rescued him from his grief. This is how He rescues the believers.



Had Yoonus not been of those who extol Allah's limitless glory, he would indeed have remained in the whale's belly till the day when all shall be raised from the dead.

After having regained health and strength, Prophet Yoonus returned to his people. He informed them that Allah had indeed forgiven them, and they welcomed him with open arms.

Thus the supplication that Yoonus made while he was in the whale's stomach is a special, blessed supplication. Allah accepts the supplication of anyone who makes the supplication of Prophet Yoonus.

Therefore, this supplication was a blessing not only for Yoonus, but also for every single Muslim.

Exercise

A. Fill in the blanks.

1. The supplication of Prophet Yoonus عليه السلام is a relief from _____.
2. Yoonus عليه السلام was sent as a prophet to the people of _____.
3. While casting lots, _____ name came up each time.

B. Answer the following questions.

1. Why did Prophet Yoonus عليه السلام pray against his people?
2. Why did the promised punishment not fall upon the people of Yoonus عليه السلام ?
3. What made Yoonus عليه السلام realize that he had made a mistake by abandoning his people without Allah's leave?
4. How can the supplication of Prophet Yoonus عليه السلام be a blessing for all Muslims?

C. Think-up

Why is Prophet Yoonus referred to as Dhun-Noon in the Qur'an?

D. Learn up

Learn the supplication and use it in your daily life.

18

Salaat-ul-Istisqaa'

The Prayer for Relief from Drought

Its Ruling

The prayer for rain is an emphasized *Sunnah* (*Sunnah Mu'akkadah*). It is recommended to be performed in congregation. Allah's Messenger ﷺ performed it, announcing it to the Muslims.

The Word '*Istisqaa*''

Lexically, the word *istisq*aa' means 'he asked, begged, or prayed for rain'. It denotes prayer for rain or relief from drought.



Its Time

Its time is the same as that of the two *'Eed* prayers. The prayer leader (*imaam*) goes out of town to offer it in the early hour of the day, as he does in the case of the two festivals.

In its characteristic features and the site of its performance, *Salaat-ul-Istisqaa'* closely resembles the two *'Eed* prayers (*Salaat-ul-'Eedayn*). It consists of two *rak'ahs*, with a loud recitation and it is offered without *adhaan* or *iqaamah* and can be offered at any time except the times when the prayer is considered to be disliked.

Various Ways of *Istisqaa'* Ascribed to the Prophet ﷺ

There are various ways of *istisqaa'*, which are ascribed to the Prophet ﷺ. The best method is that the people form a gathering out of town. It is appropriate for those who attend to be humbly dressed. The situation calls for begging, humility and petitioning for relief that is very much needed. What is recommended, therefore, is that people should set out to in a state of submissiveness, earnest appealing, humility, repentance and sorrow.

They should also free themselves from acts of injustice and extricate themselves from every form of misconduct. They should fulfil their obligations to Allah, Most High, and do a great deal of charitable giving and a good deal of fasting. They should renew their repentance and not disobey the Lord, Glory be to Him, with sins, be they major (*kabaa'ir*) or minor (*saghaa'ir*). They should be modestly conscious of Him in their private as well as their public quarters, for no secret can be kept from Him and He is aware of the secret and of all hidden things!

Withholding of Rain is a Chastisement

One must understand that the withholding of rain is a form of chastisement. The sins and excessive acts of disobedience are among the causes of drought.

Description of the Drought Prayer

It is recommended for the *Imaam* to announce its performance before it is to occur.

The leader of the community (*Imaam*), or his deputy, must lead the people in a prayer of two units, without a call to prayer (*adhaan*) and without *iqaamah*.

In the first *rak'ah*, after opening *takbeer* and the introductory invocation (*du'aa' al-istiftaah*), the *Imaam* must pronounce *Allaahu Akbar* six times. He then says it five times in the second unit, in addition to the *takbeer* pronounced when rising from the posture of prostration, before the Qur'anic recitation.

In the first unit, he should recite *Soorat al-A'alaa*, after reciting the Opening Soorah (*al-Faatihah*). In the second unit, he should recite *Soorat al-Ghaashiyah* after reciting *al-Faatihah*. The recitation of other *Soorahs*, instead of those mentioned above is also permissible.

As soon as the *Imaam* finishes leading the people in prayer, he should deliver a sermon (*khutbah*) to the assembled congregation. It is also permissible for him to deliver the sermon before the performance of the prayer. It is reported that the prayer leader is not required to deliver any sermon at all on this occasion, and that he may merely offer a prayer of supplication.

The prayer leader should therefore do whatever is easiest and most convenient for him in this respect.

When he finishes delivering his sermon, he should stand with his face towards the *qiblah*'; then turn his garment (literally *ridaa'*: an upper wrap) around, moving the part that was on his right shoulder over to the left, and the part that was on his left shoulder over to the right. All the people present should

do likewise (if they are wearing such a garment). They should do this as a gesture of change, as a sign of the transformation of their hearts, and because the tradition (*Sunnah*) provides a precedent for it. This we know from the report of Abbaad ibn Tameem ﷺ who narrates, 'I saw the Prophet ﷺ on the day when he went out to perform the *Istisqaa'* prayer. He turned his back towards the people and faced the *qiblah* and supplicated Allah for rain. Then he turned his cloak *(ridaa')* inside out and led us in a two r*ak'ah* prayer with loud recitation.' (al-Bukhaaree)

Then, having reversed his garment, the prayer leader should raise his hands, facing the *qiblah* as he does so, and offer the prayer of supplication.

Supplication for Rain on the Occasion of *Salaat-ul-Jumu'ah*

Anas ﷺ narrates, 'The Prophet ﷺ was delivering the Friday *Khutbah* while standing when a man came into the mosque and said, "Messenger of Allah! The livestock have died and the roads are cut off, so supplicate to Allah to send us rain." Allah's Messenger ﷺ raised his hands and said,

«اَللَّهُمَّ أَغِثْنا ، اَللَّهُمَّ أَغِثْنا اَللَّهُمَّ أَغِثْنا»

'O Allah! Send us rain; O Allah! Send us rain; O Allah, send us rain!' (al-Bukhaaree)

Some of the Supplications Allah's Messenger ﷺ Used for *Istisqaa'*

«اَلْحَمْدُ لله رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ، لَا إِلهَ إِلَّا اللهُ يَفْعَلُ مَا يُرِيدُ، اَللَّهُمَّ أَنْتَ اللهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ الْغَنِيُّ وَنَحْنُ الْفُقَرَاءُ. أَنْزِلْ عَلَيْنَا الْغَيْثَ وَاجْعَلْ مَا أَنْزَلْتَ لَنَا قُوَّةً وَبَلَاغًا إِلَى حِينٍ»

"All the praise is due to Allah, Lord of the worlds. There is no god but Allah, Who does what He Wills. O Allah! You are Allah, there is no god but You, You are the Rich, and we are the poor; send down rain upon us, and make what You send down strength and satisfaction for a time." (Abu Daawood, and it is *hasan*)

Allah's Messenger ﷺ also Used to Supplicate with the following Words:

«اَللَّهُمَّ اسْقِ عِبَادَكَ وَبَهائِمَكَ وَانْشُرْ رَحْمَتَكَ وَأَحْيِ بَلَدَكَ الْمَيِّتَ»

"O Allah! Give water to Your slaves and Your livestock, and spread Your Mercy, and revive Your dead land." (Abu Daawood, and it is *hasan*)

Another Supplication which Allah's Messenger ﷺ Used for *Istisqaa'* is:

«اَللَّهُمَّ اسْقِنَا غَيْثاً مُغِيثاً مَرِيئاً مَرِيعاً نَافِعاً غَيْرَ ضَارٍّ عَاجِلاً غَيْرَ آجِلٍ»

"O Allah! Shower upon us abundant rain that is beneficial, not harmful, swiftly and not delayed." (Abu Daawood, and it is *hasan*)

Exercise

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

1. It is recommended to offer the prayer for rain in congregation. _____
2. The word *istisqaa'* means 'to beg or pray for rain'. _____
3. In its features and site of performance, *Salaat-ul-Istisqaa'* resembles the Friday prayer. _____
4. It is recommended to announce the performance of *Salaat-ul-Istisqaa'* a few days before. _____
5. The performance of *Salaat-ul-Istisqaa'* is announced with an *adhaan* and an *iqaamah*. _____

B. Answer the following questions.

1. When should *Salaat-ul-Istisqaa'* be performed?
2. Mention a precondition for offering *Salaat-ul-Istisqaa'*.
3. Why does a nation generally have drought?
4. What place does a sermon have in *Salaat-ul-Istisqaa'*?
5. How is the garment 'reversed'? What does it signify?

C. Think-up

What do you think is meant by the 'two festivals'?

19 Umar ibn al-Khattaab ﷺ : *al-Faarooq*

He was Umar ibn al-Khattaab Abu Hafs al-Qurashee al-Adawee. It is authentically reported that the Prophet ﷺ once prayed to Allah that He help Islam by causing Umar's reversion. A day later, in *Dhul-Hijjah*, in the sixth year of Prophethood, Umar ﷺ embraced Islam. He was twenty-six years old then. The Quraysh regarded his acceptance of Islam as a severe blow to their prestige.



A Turning Point in the Fortunes of Islam

Umar's acceptance of Islam was a turning point in the fortunes of Islam. It meant power; his emigration to Madeenah victory; and his caliphate grace of Allah. The addition of this strong personality greatly increased the prestige of the small community of Muslims in Makkah. Muslims were not able to pray in front of the Ka'bah until Umar ﷺ embraced Islam. From that day on, the influence of the Muslim community grew without interruption, until it reached its zenith in the majestic empire created by Umar ﷺ.

The Virtues of Umar ibn al-Khattaab

Abu Hurayrah ﷺ reports, 'While we were sitting with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, he said, "While I was asleep, I saw myself in Paradise, and lo, there was a woman performing her ablution by the side of a palace. And I asked, 'Whose is this palace?' They answered, 'Umar's.'" (al-Bukhaaree)

Once Allah's Messenger ﷺ said to Umar ﷺ, 'O Ibn al-Khattaab! By Him in Whose Hand my soul is, if Satan would encounter you on one path, he would certainly take a different path from yours.' (al-Bukhaaree)

Allah's Messenger ﷺ Gave Umar the Title of *al-Faarooq*

Until Umar's conversion, the Muslims could not hold their prayers in public. Now, after the arrival of Umar into the fold of Islam, they held their prayers in the courtyard of the Ka'bah.

Entering Al-Arqam's house once, Umar found the Prophet ﷺ and his companions, including Hamzah and Abu Bakr, still reciting and studying the Qur'an privately, lest the Quraysh would harm them.

But the outspoken and lively Umar did not find secrecy to his liking. He did not rest content until he had persuaded Allah's Messenger ﷺ and his companions to appear in public and declare their faith and its commands before everybody. So the Muslims formed up into two columns: Hamzah headed one and Umar, the newcomer, headed the other. It was the first public presentation of Islam in history. The efforts of this presentation were outstanding. The Quraysh were overawed by the bold attitude of the small company of believers. It was because of the great role he played in the success of Islam that Allah's Messenger ﷺ gave him the title of al-Faarooq, or the one who distinguishes between truth and falsehood.

Umar participated in all of the battles of the Prophet ﷺ. He succeeded Abu Bakr as caliph. He led the defeat of the Persian and the Roman empires, extended the rule of Islam from Iran to Egypt. During his ten-and-a-half-year caliphate, Iraq, Egypt and all the Arabian Peninsula were added to the dominion of Islam, and about twelve thousand mosques were built. He is known for his profound knowledge of the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* and for his insight into the Islamic Law. About 300 *ahaadeeth* of his have been reported from the Prophet ﷺ.

Once, Allah's Messenger ﷺ said of him, 'There were, among the Banee Israa'eel before you, men who were inspired without being prophets; and if there were any one of them in my community, it would be Umar ﷺ.' (al-Bukhaaree) Allah had put truth on the tongue of Umar and into his heart.

He laid the institutions of the new government and society. It was Umar who established the public treasury and offices of accounts. It was Umar who regulated the Islamic calendar. He introduced for this purpose the Islamic year, commencing with the new crescent moon of the first month – *Muharram* – of the year in which the Prophet ﷺ emigrated from Makkah. Hence, the Islamic year was named *al-Hijrah* or the Era of Emigration.

Umar's Character

Umar's life requires but few lines to sketch. Simplicity and duty were his guiding principles. Impartiality and devotion were the leading features of

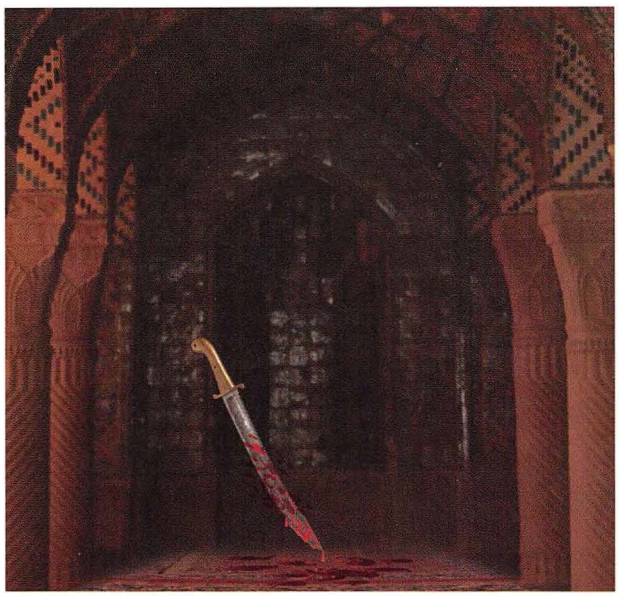


- What did Umar's conversion to Islam signify?
- How did Umar ﷺ earn the title of al-Faarooq?
- Mention briefly Umar's contribution to Islamic society.
- Umar ﷺ was a kind-hearted man. Illustrate your answer with an example.

his administration. He was the caliph of a vast empire, but he never lost the balance of a wise and sober judgement. 'Where is the caliph?' the visitor would ask as he looked around the court of the Madeenah Mosque, and all the while the Commander of the Believers would be sitting in simple attire before him.

Responsibility so weighed upon him that he was heard to exclaim, 'If only my mother had not borne me; would that I had been this blade of grass instead.' His sense of justice was strong. Whip in hand, he would tread the streets and markets of Madeenah, ready to punish offenders on the spot.

But even with all this he was kind-hearted. Countless acts of kindness are recorded of him, such as relieving the wants of widows and orphans; for instance, journeying in Arabia during the famine, he came upon a poor woman and her hungry, weeping children seated round a fire, on which was an empty cooking-pot. Umar hastened on to the next village, obtained bread and meat, filled the pot, and cooked an ample meal, leaving the little ones laughing and playing. Umar was the first to assume the title of *'Ameer-ul Mumineen'* or the Commander of the Believers.



Umar's Martyrdom

The cause of Umar's assassination was as follows. Al-Mugheerah ibn Shu'bah, the governor of Kufah, had a Persian slave whose name was Feroz Abu Lu'lu'ah. A native of Nahawand, he was a highly skilled workman: he was a carpenter, a blacksmith, and a sculptor. Al-Mugheerah wished to let him work in Madeenah and to profit from his earnings. Under the Islamic Law, the owner of a slave was entitled to the latter's gains.

Although Umar ﷺ had previously forbidden any adult non-Muslim foreigner to enter Madeenah, the capital of the Islamic Empire, he consented to Al-Mugheerah's request in the hope that the people of Madeenah would benefit by the Persian slave's skills. Abu Lu'lu'ah set up his trade in Al-Madeenah and prospered. Al-Mugheerah used to take four dirhams (silver coins) from his daily earnings, which was reasonable.

One day, the slave complained to the caliph that his master had charged him too high a tribute. But, on finding that the Persian slave's earnings were far above the small sum demanded from him, Umar held that the tribute was not excessive. Umar, however, intended to speak to Al-Mugheerah on behalf of the slave. But for the present, he advised the latter to behave well. This angered the slave, and when Umar asked him whether he could build for him a windmill, he answered darkly and sarcastically, 'I will make for you such a mill that will be on everyone's lips.' Umar realized that it was a threat, but he ignored it.

Abu Lu'lu'ah fetched a double-bladed dagger and hid it in the mosque. On the morning of Wednesday, 27 *Dhul-Hijjah* 23 AH (5 November 644 CE), he stabbed Umar during the dawn prayer. Soon after Umar ﷺ pronounced the *takbeer* (*Allaahu Akbar*), the companions who had assembled for the dawn prayer heard him cry out, 'The dog has killed me'. Umar had received several deep wounds. Thereupon, the foreign infidel – Abu Lu'lu'ah – a sturdy, bulky course man attempted to escape from the mosque. He had a double-bladed dagger in his hand and he did not pass anyone on his right or left without stabbing him, until he stabbed thirteen men, seven of whom died.

Seeing all this, a man of the Muslims threw his *burnus* over him. According to the scholars, this man was an Emigrant (*a muhaajir*), Hittaan al-Tameemee al-Yarboo'ee. *Burnus* is a hooded cloak used to this day by the Arabs in North Africa and in the Sahara. In the early days of Islam, it was widely used in Arabia. When the infidel knew that he was caught, he killed himself.

Now, Umar, in spite of his deep wounds, took the hand of Abdur-Rahmaan ibn Awf and made him advance as *imaam* to lead the prayer. Those who were close to Umar saw what had happened, but those in the remote parts of the mosque perceived nothing except that they missed Umar's voice, and so they started uttering '*Subhaanallaah! Subhaanallaah*! (Glory be to Allah! Glory be to Allah!) Then Abdur-Rahmaan ibn Awf led the prayer, making it short.

It speaks a great deal for the discipline of those early Muslims that the turmoil, caused in the front ranks by the assassination of Umar and several other

companions, did not break up the congregation. Only those who were in the front ranks moved from their places. The rows further down remained standing in prayer as they had been. The expression *Subhaanallaah* (Glory be to Allah) is used when the followers of the congregation think that the *imaam* (the prayer leader) has made a mistake in his recitation or in the prayer. Controlled by their sense of discipline and regard for prayer, the Muslims present in the mosque did not know what had happened in the front. They probably thought that their *imaam* had forgotten the words of the Qur'an text he was reciting and paused too long to remember them.

'See who it was, that has stabbed me to kill me!'

When the congregation had dispersed, Umar ﷺ turned to Ibn Abbaas ﷺ and said, 'O Ibn Abbaas! See who it was that has stabbed me.' So Ibn Abbaas went round, and then came back and said, 'The slave of Al-Mugheerah did it.' Umar ﷺ asked, 'That skilled craftsman?' Ibn Abbaas answered, 'Yes,' and remarked, 'May Allah punish him. I had enjoined the right thing regarding him! Praise be to Allah, Who has not caused me to die at the hand of a man who professes Islam.'

Umar ﷺ was then carried to his home. When he subsequently fainted and the companions thought he was going to die that very moment, one of them suggested that they should recite the call to prayer, for this was the thing which Umar had loved most, and it would revive him. They did it and, sure enough, he regained consciousness, looked around and said, 'The Prayer? There is no place in Islam for a person who gives up prayer!' Although he was profusely bleeding, he performed his ablution and offered the prayer which he had missed.

Some beverage of dates was brought to him and he drank it, but it came out from the belly. Obviously, his stomach was perforated. Then milk was brought to him and he drank it, but it also came out through his wound. Thus they knew that he would die.

The companions came to him and consoled him. Umar saw a young man whose lower garment was touching the ground. He called him and said to him, 'Young man! Lift your garment. For indeed, this is better for your dress and is more respectful towards your Sustainer!' It is typical of Umar that even on his death-bed he did not cease to pay full attention for religious injunctions and to advise his companions in this respect.

In fact, our teenage young Muslim men who like to wear jeans and drag their trousers on the ground should pause here for a few moments to ponder over this valuable counsel of Umar ibn al-Khattaab, may Allah be well-pleased with him.

Umar ﷺ then said to his son, 'Abdullah! Find out how much debt there is upon me.' They counted it and found that it was eighty-six thousand dirhams or so. Umar had, in reality, spent it on several pilgrimages he had performed with a large following of poor people and for some emergencies of the state. He commanded that it should be repaid on his behalf. It is clear that it was a personal expenditure. Umar could have rightly and well regarded it as spent in the interest of the community of which he was the head, but his uncommonly keen sense of responsibility demanded that the above expenditure, which did not come under any of the conventional budgetary headings, should be paid at his expense.

Umar ibn al-Khattaab ﷺ then said, 'Go to Aa'ishah ﷺ, Mother of the Faithful, give her my regards, but do not say the Commander of the Faithful, for I am no longer Commander of the Faithful, and say to her that I am seeking her permission to be buried beside his two companions'. This meant the Prophet ﷺ and Abu Bakr, whose graves were within Aa'ishah's chamber. Aa'ishah ﷺ replied, 'I have always desired it for myself, but today, I will give him preference over myself.'

Umar ﷺ died, and he was laid to rest beside his two companions. Umar ﷺ was one of the ten companions to whom the Prophet ﷺ had announced in their lifetime the news of being admitted into Paradise. The caliphate of Umar ﷺ lasted for ten and a half years.



- Although Umar ﷺ did not allow any adult non-Muslim foreigner to enter Madeenah, why did he make an exception for Abu Lu'lu'ah?
- Why did Umar ﷺ rule that the tribute Al-Mugheerah demanded from Abu Lu'lu'ah was not excessive?
- What did Aa'ishah ﷺ do when Umar ﷺ requested her to be laid next to his two companions?

Exercise

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

1. Allah answered the Prophet's prayer and caused Umar's conversion. _____
2. Umar ﷺ was the first to answer the title of *Ameer-ul Mu'mineen*. ____
3. Abu Lu'lu'ah was a Muslim. _____
4. Umar ﷺ offered the *Fajr* prayer even though he was bleeding profusely. _____

B. Fill in the blanks.

1. Umar's caliphate lasted _____ years.
2. Abu Lu'lu'ah stabbed Umar ﷺ during the _____ prayer.
3. 'There is no place in Islam for one who _____.'

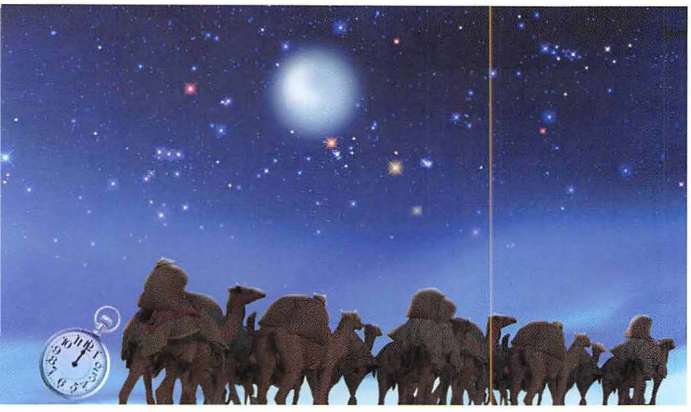
C. Think-up

Why did the rows at the back remained standing, shouting '*Subhaanallaah*'?

The Islamic Calendar

20

Islam has its own calendar. It dates from the *Hijrah,* or emigration, when Allah's Messenger ﷺ and his companion Abu Bakr as-Siddeeq left Makkah for Madeenah. He departed from Makkah on 27 *Safar*, about 12 September 622 CE and arrived in Madeenah on 23 September, 622 CE. (For details, see *The Sealed Nectar*: Safiur Rahmaan al-Mubaarakpuri, pp. 169-174)



Some seventeen years later, the Caliph Umar ibn al-Khattaab رضي الله عنه found it necessary to regulate the calendar. He commanded that the lunar year of twelve months should be held to have begun on the first day of the first month of the Arabian year, in which Allah's Messenger ﷺ left Madeenah, and that the Islamic year should be counted from that year.

Allah's Messenger's emigration is called *Hijrah* in Arabic, and the Islamic calendar is thus known as the *Hijri* Calendar. In English, it is usually abbreviated in a Latin form: AH, i.e. Anno Hegirae, or the Year of the *Hijrah*. In this manner, 16 July 622 CE became officially 1 *Muharram* 1 AH.

As has been pointed out above, the Islamic year is a lunar year. It takes no account of the solar year or of any change of the seasons. Thus, in relation to the solar year, it recedes approximately eleven days each solar year with the result that in each 32½ years, it passes through all the solar seasons. Thus, if in a given lunar year the fasting month of *Ramadhaan* occurs during the heat of the summer, it will occur during the cool season 16¼ year later.

Thus, the Islamic calendar is based upon the cycles of the moon, rather than upon those of the sun. The western or the Christian calendar is based upon the cycles of the sun. The actual beginning of the Islamic month, such as the month of *Ramadhaan*, depends upon the physical sighting of the new crescent of the moon. If the sky is overcast and the new crescent is not visible, the previous month continues up to thirty days. In principle, a month runs from the sighting of one new crescent until the next. The *Hijrah* year consists of twelve lunar months, some of twenty-nine days and some of thirty days.

The Islamic day starts from sunset; each 24 hour day begins at sunset. When you say Friday night, it signifies the night that occurs before Friday. In relation to the western system of reckoning, therefore, the Islamic calendar moves backwards each year, which means Muslim festivals fall at different times of the Western year and bear no fixed relations to various seasons.

The names of the Islamic months are as follows:

1. *Muharram*
2. *Safar*
3. *Rabee' al-Awwal*
4. *Rabee' ath-Thaanee*
5. *Jumaadaa al-Ulaa*
6. *Jumaadaa ath-Thaaniyah*
7. *Rajab*
8. *Sha'baan*
9. *Ramadhaan*
10. *Shawwaal*
11. *Dhul-Qa'dah*
12. *Dhul-Hijjah*

The seven days of the week are named by the ordinal numbers, beginning with the first day, *Al-Ahad*, which is Sunday.

The names of the days of the week are as follows:

Al-Ahad:	Sunday
AL-Ithnayn:	Monday
Ath-Thulathaa':	Tuesday
Al-Arbi'aa':	Wednesday
Al-Khamees:	Thursday
Al-Jumu'ah:	Friday
As-Sabt:	Saturday

There are two Islamic festivals:

1. *'Eed-ul-Fitr*: Feast of Fast-breaking: 1 *Shawwaal*
2. *'Eed-ul-Adh'haa*: Feast of Sacrifice: 10 *Dhul-Hijjah*

To calculate conversions from one calendar to the other, the rule of thumb is that a western (which means Gregorian) century roughly equals 103 years, according to the Islamic calendar. The year 2000 corresponded with 1421 AH. The year 1428 commenced on 20 January, 2007. A more accurate formula is that where G=Gregorian year and H=Hijrah year, then:

$$G = H + 622 - \frac{H}{33} \qquad H = \frac{G - 22}{32}$$

Alternatively, one can look up the dates in G.S.P. Freeman-Greenvilles's *The Islamic and Christian Calendars 622-2222 CE (AH 1-1650)*, published by Garnet Publishing, 1995. This ready calculator provides corresponding dates for 1650 years; that is to say until the year 2222 CE.

In modern times, mathematically calculated Islamic calendars are printed and widely circulated. It must, however, be emphasized that officially the beginning of each month depends upon the sighting of the new crescent. Strictly speaking, the new month does not begin until the new crescent has actually been sighted.

Exercise

A. Fill in the blanks.

1. The Islamic calendar starts from the _____ of the Prophet ﷺ.
2. The Islamic calendar was regulated under the commandment of _____.
3. The *Hijrah* calendar is abbreviated as _____, meaning _____.
4. The Islamic year is a _____ year.
5. The Islamic calendar is based upon the cycles of the _____.
6. The twelve months of the *Hijrah* year are either of _____ or _____ days.

B. Answer the following questions.

1. What does the beginning of a new month in the Islamic calendar depend on?
2. What happens if the crescent moon cannot be sighted to usher in a new month?
3. Write briefly how the *Hijrah* calendar is different from the solar calendar.

The Apartments

Soorat al-Hujuraat 49:1-18

This noble *soorah* was revealed in Madeenah in the year 9 AH. It is brief but it is splendidly plentiful in its moral teachings. It provides guidance after guidance and deals predominantly with social ethics. It contains the eternal facts of education and the ideal principles of civilization. The *soorah* begins with the reverence due to Allah's Messenger ﷺ. Its discourse culminates in the principle of brotherhood of all the believers (verse 10) and, its wider sense, the brotherhood of all mankind (verse 13). The concluding passage points out the difference between true faith and a mere outward observance of religious formalities. The *soorah* contains 18 verses, and here it has been dealt with under various sections.

سُورَةُ الحُجُرَاتِ (٤٩) — ترتيبها ٤٩ — آياتها ١٨

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تُقَدِّمُوا بَيْنَ يَدَيِ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿١﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَرْفَعُوا أَصْوَاتَكُمْ
فَوْقَ صَوْتِ النَّبِيِّ وَلَا تَجْهَرُوا لَهُ بِالْقَوْلِ كَجَهْرِ بَعْضِكُمْ
لِبَعْضٍ أَن تَحْبَطَ أَعْمَالُكُمْ وَأَنتُمْ لَا تَشْعُرُونَ ﴿٢﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ
يَغُضُّونَ أَصْوَاتَهُمْ عِندَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ امْتَحَنَ اللَّهُ
قُلُوبَهُمْ لِلتَّقْوَىٰ لَهُم مَّغْفِرَةٌ وَأَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿٣﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ
يُنَادُونَكَ مِن وَرَاءِ الْحُجُرَاتِ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٤﴾
وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ صَبَرُوا حَتَّىٰ تَخْرُجَ إِلَيْهِمْ لَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَّهُمْ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ
رَّحِيمٌ ﴿٥﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِن جَاءَكُمْ فَاسِقٌ بِنَبَإٍ فَتَبَيَّنُوا
أَن تُصِيبُوا قَوْمًا بِجَهَالَةٍ فَتُصْبِحُوا عَلَىٰ مَا فَعَلْتُمْ نَادِمِينَ ﴿٦﴾
وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ فِيكُمْ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ لَوْ يُطِيعُكُمْ فِي كَثِيرٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْرِ لَعَنِتُّمْ
وَلَٰكِنَّ اللَّهَ حَبَّبَ إِلَيْكُمُ الْإِيمَانَ وَزَيَّنَهُ فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ وَكَرَّهَ إِلَيْكُمُ
الْكُفْرَ وَالْفُسُوقَ وَالْعِصْيَانَ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الرَّاشِدُونَ ﴿٧﴾
فَضْلًا مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَنِعْمَةً وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٨﴾ وَإِن طَائِفَتَانِ
مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ اقْتَتَلُوا فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَهُمَا فَإِن بَغَتْ إِحْدَاهُمَا
عَلَى الْأُخْرَىٰ فَقَاتِلُوا الَّتِي تَبْغِي حَتَّىٰ تَفِيءَ إِلَىٰ أَمْرِ اللَّهِ فَإِن فَاءَتْ
فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَهُمَا بِالْعَدْلِ وَأَقْسِطُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُقْسِطِينَ

﴿٩﴾ إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِخْوَةٌ فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَ أَخَوَيْكُمْ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ
لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ ﴿١٠﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا يَسْخَرْ قَوْمٌ مِّن قَوْمٍ
عَسَىٰ أَن يَكُونُوا خَيْرًا مِّنْهُمْ وَلَا نِسَاءٌ مِّن نِّسَاءٍ عَسَىٰ أَن يَكُنَّ خَيْرًا
مِّنْهُنَّ وَلَا تَلْمِزُوا أَنفُسَكُمْ وَلَا تَنَابَزُوا بِالْأَلْقَابِ بِئْسَ الِاسْمُ
الْفُسُوقُ بَعْدَ الْإِيمَانِ وَمَن لَّمْ يَتُبْ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ ﴿١١﴾
يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اجْتَنِبُوا كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الظَّنِّ إِنَّ بَعْضَ الظَّنِّ إِثْمٌ
وَلَا تَجَسَّسُوا وَلَا يَغْتَب بَّعْضُكُم بَعْضًا أَيُحِبُّ أَحَدُكُمْ أَن
يَأْكُلَ لَحْمَ أَخِيهِ مَيْتًا فَكَرِهْتُمُوهُ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَوَّابٌ
رَّحِيمٌ ﴿١٢﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُم مِّن ذَكَرٍ وَأُنثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ
شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِندَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ
عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ ﴿١٣﴾ ۞ قَالَتِ الْأَعْرَابُ آمَنَّا قُل لَّمْ تُؤْمِنُوا وَلَٰكِن
قُولُوا أَسْلَمْنَا وَلَمَّا يَدْخُلِ الْإِيمَانُ فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ وَإِن تُطِيعُوا اللَّهَ
وَرَسُولَهُ لَا يَلِتْكُم مِّنْ أَعْمَالِكُمْ شَيْئًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿١٤﴾
إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَرْتَابُوا
وَجَاهَدُوا بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنفُسِهِمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ
الصَّادِقُونَ ﴿١٥﴾ قُلْ أَتُعَلِّمُونَ اللَّهَ بِدِينِكُمْ وَاللَّهُ
يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ
﴿١٦﴾ يَمُنُّونَ عَلَيْكَ أَنْ أَسْلَمُوا قُل لَّا تَمُنُّوا عَلَيَّ إِسْلَامَكُم بَلِ اللَّهُ
يَمُنُّ عَلَيْكُمْ أَنْ هَدَاكُمْ لِلْإِيمَانِ إِن كُنتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿١٧﴾ إِنَّ اللَّهَ
يَعْلَمُ غَيْبَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاللَّهُ بَصِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٨﴾

Section One – Verses 1-5

Translation of the Meaning of These Verses

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

1. O you who believe! Do not put yourselves forward before Allah and His Messenger ﷺ, and fear Allah; for Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing!
2. O you who believe! Do not raise your voices above the voice of the Prophet ﷺ, nor speak loudly to him as you would speak to one another, lest your deeds come to naught without your perceiving it.
3. Those who lower their voices in the presence of the Messenger of Allah, it is they whose hearts Allah has tested for piety. Theirs will be forgiveness and immense reward.
4. [O Prophet] Those who call you from without your apartments, most of them do not reason.
5. And if they had patience until you could come out to them, it would have been better for them. Yet Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

Explanation

Verse 1

The noble *soorah* begins with the refined manner in which Allah has taught the believers to conduct themselves with respect of the sacred Law of Allah (*Shar'eeah*) and the authority of His Messenger ﷺ. Some of the traditional *Tafseer* scholars have actually called it the *soorah* of ethical and moral standards (*Soorat al-Akhlaaq*).

'Do not put yourselves forward *(laa tuqaddimoo)*' means 'O you who are distinguished by faith and who have believed in the Book of Allah, you must not take things for granted or act in a forward manner in the presence of Allah and His Messenger ﷺ.' This means that you should not decide a matter which relates to the laws of your religion without consulting Allah and His Messenger ﷺ. This prohibition calls for strict adherence to the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* of the Prophet ﷺ.

The Qur'anic verse also contains an expression of Allah's tender kindness for his servants, since He has called them the believers in spite of their sinful disobedience.

Allah also indicates the necessity of reverence for the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and obedience to his commands. It warns that you are in a state of presence in relation to Allah, and He is watching you. In a situation like this, respect for His Messenger is strictly required. In addition to treating Allah and His Messenger ﷺ with respect, you must be truly devoted to Allah and fearful of offending Him; otherwise, you will not be paying Him the kind of respect that is strictly required. You must, therefore, practise true devotion to Allah in everything you do.

The Qur'an warns that Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing. He hears everything. He hears all the words you utter. He is All-Knowing. He knows everything. He knows your actions and your intentions. Hence, to meet the standard of a true believer, a person must not regard his opinions, ideas and preferences as superior to the view presented by the Book of Allah and the *Sunnah* of the Prophet ﷺ, nor should he say anything that contradicts them.

Verses 2-5

This is the second call from this *soorah* . It deals with another element of good conduct. It commands the believers to lower their voices when they converse with Allah's Messenger ﷺ and commands them to show reverence for his noble worth and respect for his lofty station. Muhammad ﷺ is not like the ordinary mass of people. He is Allah's Messenger ﷺ. It is the duty of the believers to be well-mannered in his presence. They ought to speak to him with respect, exaltation and reverence. Allah, Exalted is He,says,

'O, you who believe! Do not raise your voices above the voice of the Prophet.' In other words, do not let your speech be raised above that of the Prophet ﷺ during the conversation. This is because raising the voice is a sign of insufficient modesty and reverence.

By repeating the call to show respect to the Prophet ﷺ, the Glorious Qur'an invites additional reflection. It intensifies awareness concerning it and indicates the need for increased consideration of the theme of the call. The purpose is to induce the listener to pay very careful attention.

In other words, when you speak to Allah's Messenger ﷺ, lower your voices. Do not raise them above that of the Prophet ﷺ. Do not pitch your voices beyond a level to which the Prophet pitches his voice. The believers must cultivate respect for the position of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, his lofty position and his noble worth.

The expression 'lest your deeds come to naught' is a warning that if you raise your voices and behave in a way that shows a lack of respect for the Messenger of Allah ﷺ your works may be rendered vain, while you do not notice.

'Those who lower their voices in the presence of the Messenger of Allah, it is they whose hearts Allah has tested for piety' means Allah has made them sincere in their duty to Him.

'Theirs will be forgiveness and immense reward.' That is to say, in the hereafter, theirs will be forgiveness for their sins. Theirs will be immense reward in Paradise – the Garden of Bliss.

Allah, Most High, then blames the uncouth Bedouins who behaved improperly when calling the Messenger

of Allah. He says, 'Those who call you from without your apartments, most of them do not reason.' This means that most of these folks are unintelligent, because intelligence insists on good behaviour and on respect for the great when addressing them.

It is narrated that those who called him were 'Uyaynah ibn Hisn and al-Aqra' ibn Haabis. They had come to visit Allah's Messenger ﷺ in a delegation of seventy men from the tribe of Banu Tameem. They arrived at the time of high noon, when the Prophet ﷺ was taking a rest. So they said, 'O Muhammad, come out to meet us!'

'And if they had patience until you could come out to them, it would have been better for them.' In other words, if these callers had not disturbed the Messenger of Allah with their call, it would have been better for them. If they had been patient till he came out to meet them, that patience would have been more meritorious in the sight of Allah. It would have been considered polite respect for the station of the Prophet of Allah ﷺ.

'And Allah is Forgiving, Most Merciful.' Allah is the Forgiver of His servants' sins. He is extremely Merciful in the treatment of the believers. Whatever sins believers have committed in the past, they should not give up hope. If they seek Allah's forgiveness, they will be forgiven. Allah is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful.

Respect and Esteem for the Prophet ﷺ after his Death

It is just as necessary to have esteem and respect for the Prophet ﷺ after his death, as it was when he was alive. This means, to show it whenever the Prophet ﷺ, his *hadeeth* or *Sunnah* are mentioned, or when anyone hears his name or anything about his life, or how his family and relatives behaved. It includes respect for the people of his house *(ahlul-bayt)* and his companions.

Every believer ought to show respect to the Prophet ﷺ when a mention of him is made in his presence. He should be as respectful as he would have been if he had actually been in his presence, taking on the ethic *(adab)* which Allah has taught us. When a *hadeeth* of the Prophet ﷺ is recited, we believers should fall silent. We ought to remember the *aayah*: Do not raise your voices over the voice of the Prophet ﷺ. Scholars interpret this *aayah* to mean that people must be silent when the Prophet's *hadeeth* is recited, just as if they were listening to him speaking.

Al-Qaadhee Iyaadh, in his monumental work on the life of the Prophet ﷺ entitled *Ash-Shifaa'*, writes, "Maalik ibn Anas passed by Abu Haazim when he was teaching *hadeeth* and he gave him permission to listen. He said, 'There is no place to sit and I dislike listening to a *hadeeth* of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ while standing up.'"

A man came to Sa'eed ibn al-Musayyib while he was reclining and asked him about a *hadeeth*. He sat up and gave him the *hadeeth*. The man said to him, 'I wish you hadn't troubled yourself.' Sa'eed ibn al-Musayyib retorted, 'I dislike giving you *hadeeth* from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ while reclining."

Part of respect for the Prophet ﷺ and devotion to him is devotion to his family, his descendants and his wives, the Mothers of the Believers. Part of respect for the Prophet ﷺ includes respecting his companions and recognizing what is due to them. Allah's Messenger ﷺ once said. 'Do not verbally abuse my companions. If any of you were to spend the weight of Mount Uhud in gold, it still would not reach the measure of one of them or even one-half of it.' (Muslim)

While this relates in the first instance to the Prophet ﷺ , it may also be taken to apply to the great scholars of Islam (*ulamaa'*). Some scholars hold that it is impolite to raise voices in the sessions of scholars, as a sign of respect for them, because they are the heirs of the Prophet ﷺ . (See *Tafseer al-Qurtubee*, vol. 16, p. 307)

Review

A. Fill in the blanks.

1. The *soorah* contains the eternal facts of _____.
2. The Bedouins were referred to as being unintelligent, because intelligence insists on _____.
3. Scholars are the _____ of the Prophet ﷺ .

B. Answer the following questions.

1. What does the expression *la Tuqaddimu* mean? Explain briefly.
2. How does Allah want us to show respect to the Prophet ﷺ ?
3. How should one behave in the presence of the Prophet ﷺ ? Why?
4. Who does the verse 'Those who call you from without your apartments' refer to? How had they behaved?
5. How should we show respect to our Prophet ﷺ in our times?

Section Two – Verses 6-10

Translation of the Meaning of These Verses

6. O, you who believe! If a *faasiq* comes to you with news, verify it, lest you should harm people in ignorance, and afterwards be filled with regret for what you have done.
7. And know that among you is the Messenger of Allah. If he were to obey you in much of the matter, you would certainly be in trouble. But Allah has endeared the faith to you and has beautified it in your hearts, and has made disbelief, immortality and disobedience hateful to you. Such are they who are rightly-guided.
8. [This is] a grace from Allah and His favour. And Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise.
9. And if two groups of believers fall to fighting, make peace between them; but then, if one of them goes on acting wrongfully towards the other, fight against the one that acts wrongfully until it complies with Allah's commandment; if it complies, make peace between them with justice, and deal equitably (with them). Indeed, Allah loves those who are equitable.
10. The believers are but a single brotherhood, so set things right between your brothers, and remain conscious of Allah, so that you might receive mercy.

Explanation

Verses 6-8

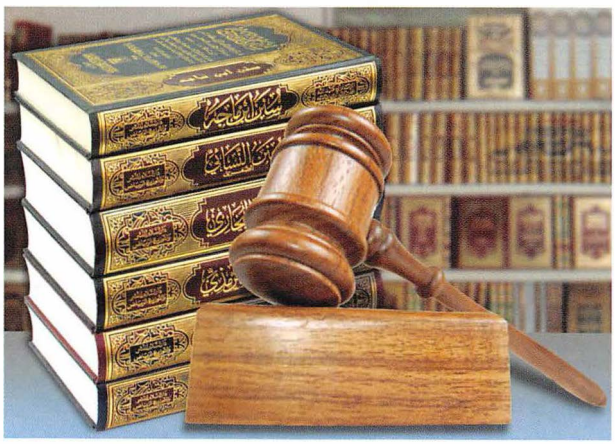
The *soorah* now moves on from proper conduct in private to proper conduct in public. It commands the believers to verify all news and reports, especially if the information comes from a sinful individual (*faasiq*). How many a statement, transmitted by a brazen liar, has been the cause of serious trouble! How many a piece of news, unverified by its listener or reader, has resulted in bad feelings and broken relations!

'O, you who believe! If a *faasiq* comes to you with news, verify it, lest you should harm people in ignorance, and afterwards be filled with regret for what you have done.' In other words, if a man brings you a report of some kind, and that man is an open sinner, corrupt, unreliable and untrustworthy, you must verify the accuracy of his report. The *soorah* contains guidance for the believers. It directs them to cultivate noble virtues, whether in the company of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ or in the company of others among their fellow members of the human race.

The Arabic word *faasiq* means one who goes forth, or departs from the right way, or the way of truth and the limits of the law, or from the bounds of obedience. The word *faasiq* is often applied to someone who adheres to the rule of the Islamic Law (*Sharee'ah*), and affirms it, but then disobeys all or some of its commands. The verse stresses the

need for cautionary verification. It calls for the need for the abandonment of uncritical reliance on what the corrupt person has to say.

'If a *faasiq* brings you news' means some kind of information, you must verify it. In other words, you must investigate; you must check; you must seek an explanation of the matter; you must seek full disclosure of the facts. You should not take the word of the corrupt person at face value, in order to avoid taking action against a group of people, or an individual, while being ignorant of the true condition. Therefore, the golden rule is to conduct a thorough inquiry until it is perfectly clear to you that what the person has brought to you is true or false.



The Prophet's Decision is Superior

'And know that among you is the Messenger of Allah ﷺ .' Therefore, honour and respect him. Be polite with him and obey his commands. He is more knowledgeable about what benefits you and is more concerned about you than you are about yourselves. His opinions and verdicts are more complete than your own. Allah's Messenger ﷺ , therefore, ought to be an example for you in your behaviour towards one another. It is the bounty of Allah that He has made disbelief, immorality and rebelliousness hateful to you. Instead, He has endeared faith to you and has beautified it in your hearts. It is a grace and a favour from Allah. Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise.

Verses 9-10

It is important to realize that Allah calls both opposing groups among Muslims as believers although they are fighting each other. Hence, committing a sin does not nullify faith.

Anas رضي الله عنه narrated that Allah's Messenger ﷺ said, 'Help your brother whether he is an oppressor or is oppressed.' I asked, "Allah's Messenger ﷺ , it is right that I help him if he is oppressed, but how should I help him if he is an oppressor?" He replied, 'By preventing him from oppressing others; this is how you help him in this case.' (Al-Bukhaaree) The word 'fighting' comprises all modes of discord and contention, both in word and deed.

Although verse 9 directly addresses rulers and those in authority who have the means to fight and wage war, all Muslims are addressed in this verse indirectly to assist those in authority in this regard.

'The believers are but a single brotherhood.' Allah's Messenger ﷺ is reported to have said, 'A Muslim is the brother of a Muslim, he is not unjust with him nor does he forsake him.' (al-Bukhaaree) He also said, 'The believers are to one another like parts of a building – each part strengthening the others.' (al-Bukhaaree and Muslim)

Another *hadeeth* reads: 'The believers are like one man. If his eye suffers, his whole body suffers; if his head suffers, his whole body suffers. You will recognize the believers by their mutual compassion, love and sympathy. They are like one body. If one of its parts is ill, the whole body suffers from sleeplessness and fever.' (al-Bukhaaree and Muslim)

The Qur'an does not deny the possibility of dispute and even feud taking place among the Muslims. Human beings are weak and they may be seduced by Satan if they are not on their guard. The Qur'an, therefore, commands Muslims to get reconciled as quickly as possible. They should do so not on the basis of injustice or further injury to the oppressed. They should rather do so on the basis of justice and *taqwaa*, fear of Allah. The repeated reference to *taqwaa* in this *soorah* is highly meaningful.

Review

A. Are these statements true (T) or false (F)?

1. Showing respect to the Prophet ﷺ excludes people of his house (*ahl-al-bayt*). _____
2. Sinning does not make us out of the fold of Islam. _____
3. Believers are like one body. _____

B. Answer the following questions.

1. Who is a *faasiq*?
2. How should we treat any information that we get from an unrighteous person?
3. Explain the verse 'And know that among you is the Prophet'.
4. How can we help the oppressed as well as the oppressor?
5. How should we behave when feuds and arguments take place amongst us?

Section Three – Verses 11-13

Translation of the Meaning of These Verses

11. O you who believe! Let not some men among you laugh at others: it may well be that the latter are better than the former; nor let some women laugh at other women; it may well be that the latter are better than the former. Nor defame, nor call one another by [offensive] nicknames. Evil is the name of wickedness after faith. And whoever does not repent, then such are indeed wrongdoers.
12. O you who believe! Avoid suspicion as much as possible: indeed suspicion in some cases is a sin. And spy not, neither backbite one another. Would one of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? You would hate it. And fear Allah, for Allah is One Who accepts repentance, Most Merciful.
13. O mankind! We have created you from a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, so that you may know one another. Truly, the most honoured of you in the sight of Allah is the one who is the most righteous of you. Allah is indeed All-Knowing, All-Aware.

Verse 11

The *soorah* provides guidance after guidance. It guides attention to what is required of the believers in relation to Allah, then in relation to His Messenger ﷺ, and then in relation to someone who opposes and disobeys Allah and His Messenger ﷺ, meaning the depraved *faasiq* or the offender. After that, it explains what is required of the believer in relation to his fellow believers.

Now this Qur'anic verse refers to three grave offences, namely:
(1) Mockery or scoffing (*sukhriyyah*),
(2) Defamation (*lamz*), and
(3) insulting or taunting with ridiculing nicknames (*nabz*).

(1) *Sukhriyyah*

The first thing mentioned in the verse is *sukhriyyah*. It covers a wide range of meanings. It takes different forms in different situations. *sukhriyyah* means laughing at others. It means scoffing, ridiculing or making fun of others. It means a person disparages his brother, belittles him, undervalues him and counts him among those who are quite unworthy of notice. Mockery or scoffing at others may be for a number of reasons, and many, therefore, take different forms; for instance, mimicking someone's voice, laughing at his words, face, dress or gait. This is regarded as character-assassination in Islam. It is detested in the same way as physical attack and persecution.

Sukhriyyah hurts the ridiculed person and makes him react in the same way. Thus it creates a vicious circle of attacks and counter-attacks. Ultimately it leads to other countless evils.

(2) *Lamz*

The next evil trait mentioned in this verse is *lamz,* or defamation. The expression *lamz* has a wide range of meanings. It means blaming, censuring, criticizing, finding fault, etc. Whether the criticism is done openly or implicitly by postures of the body or by word of mouth, it is all included in *lamz*. These evil habits tear men from one another. It hinders the progress of righteousness and moral values in society. Elsewhere in the Qur'an, Allah curses people who lavishly indulge in these kinds of activities by saying, "Woe to every slanderer, fault-finder" – everyone who maliciously tries to uncover real or imaginary faults in others.

(3) *Nabz*

The third evil characteristic mentioned in this verse is *nabz* (*at-tanaabuz bil-alqaab*). *Nabz,* or taunting, means that a person calls someone by a bad nickname, which may have some ingredients of *sukhriyyah* and *lamz*. To mention or remember someone for his weakness in behaviour, and to talk about someone's physical deformities is tantamount to *nabz*. Like mockery and slander, mentioning someone by offensive names also results in ill-feelings. It produces enmity and disorder. Therefore, Islam wants its followers to avoid all such things, which may drive a wedge into a relationship and damage it. The Qur'an says, 'People should not scoff at (other) people.' The fact of the matter is, while mockery may involve two people, it generally takes place in the presence of a group of people who find it amusing and laugh because of it, instead of observing their duty to forbid and disapprove. They thus become partners of the scoffer in bearing the burden of sin. They are in the legal category of scoffers.

The one who is scoffed at may be better in the sight of Allah than the scoffer. Allah mentions women specifically in the verse. This is because mockery is more frequent where women are concerned. As recorded in the *Saheeh Muslim*, Abu Hurayrah ﷺ narrated that Allah's Messenger ﷺ once said, 'Allah does not look at your outer forms and your possessions, but He looks at your hearts and your deeds.' Islam, therefore, forbids defamation, or *lamz*. Defamation may be with the hand, the eye, the tongue, and also by innuendo (indirect remarks). Part of a man's good fortune, it is said, is that he pays attention to his own faults, to the exclusion of the faults of others.

After warning about the three evil characteristics, Allah, the Most High, draws attention to the sad consequences of these reprehensible acts and declares, 'Evil is the name of wickedness after faith.' In other words, it is not expected of a Muslim that he would indulge in these sorts of activities and come to be known as *faasiq*. The

only option open to those who have committed such mistakes is to turn to Allah and make a firm resolve not to commit them again; otherwise, in the terminology of the Qur'an, they will be *dhaalimoon* (sing. *dhaalim*), doing injustice and harm to themselves and to others.



Why are *sukhriyyah*, *lamz* and *nabz* forbidden in Islam?

Verse 12

The twelfth verse, like the eleventh one, also names three evils, which are not only harmful to the moral climate of a Muslim society, but also devastating in terms of the evil effects they yield. These evils have many aspects and shades. If they root in any individual or society, they destroy all semblances of peace and happiness. They give rise to perpetual hatred. They produce suspicion and sedition. They are more dangerous than the ones mentioned in the preceding verse.

(1) Dhann

The first instruction in this verse is to avoid the habit of too much guesswork or forming opinions about others (*dhann*). This is because some of the guesswork may be plain suspicion which may lead one to sin. If the door of suspicion is kept open or even ajar, there will be no end to it. A man's mind will become a nest of doubt and hatred. It may even lead him to unjustified actions. The wording of the verse does not say that one should not take recourse to guesswork or conjecture at all. One should rather avoid it as much as possible. It means certain forms of conjecture are not bad; some are unavoidable, while others are injurious. Our scholars have divided *dhann* into four categories and have regarded as reprehensible only the fourth, which leads one to the sin referred to in the verse as 'suspicion'. They are:

a. Forming a good opinion about Allah, His Messenger ﷺ, the Prophet's companions and good Muslims. This is not only permitted but also recommended and is known as *husn adh-dhann*.

b. Conditions, at times, compel certain persons in authority like judges, rulers, etc. to form an opinion about suspects and convicts. They have to arrive at certain decisions on the basis of available proofs. Their conjecture, therefore, is not blameworthy. It is rather essential.

c. If the outward appearance of certain people reveals their wicked nature, and their ill fame leads to forming an adverse opinion, it is not a sin. In such cases, however, utmost precautionary measures ought to be taken.

d. To suspect someone without any reason or evidence and to interpret an incident in the worst terms is a clear sin. This is known as suspicion. In the *hadeeth*, it is called the worst type of falsehood. Such sort of *dhann* is also called 'the backbiting of the heart'. Suspicion is the underlying cause from which the hate-filled enemy emerges. In outward appearance, an action may sometimes seem bad, when in actuality it is not so! It is possible that somebody is acting absent-mindedly or the observer is mistaken. Suspicion is appropriate only after complete exercise of judgement and serious conviction. Hence one should keep well away from it.

(2) *Tajassus* (Spying)

The second bad characteristic prohibited is *tajassus*, or spying. Peeping into others' affairs, trying to find fault with others, whether out of bad motive or curiosity. The word *tajassus* also has various shades of meaning. It covers a wide range of activities, like listening secretly to other people's conversation, reading someone's letters or personal computer, peeping into somebody else's house, stalking and investigating someone's financial, private and family affairs, etc. All these things constitute *tajassus* and are forbidden. They all lead to friction, ill-feeling and corruption. Hence, one should not pursue suspicion or endeavour to seek certain knowledge of people's shortcomings. Islam does not permit unnecessary interference in one's activities and hates any invasion of privacy.

There are a few exceptions in which Islam permits investigation and looking into the affairs of others, both by the individual and by the governments. An example of this might be, if someone wants to start a business partnership with somebody or wants to marry into some family, one is entitled to ascertain the worthiness and honesty of the partner and the family. The scholars of *hadeeth* who deal with its science are obliged to look into the private life and traits of *hadeeth* narrators for the purpose of making certain the authenticity of *hadeeth* and not for any personal or hidden motive. This is not *tajassus*. It is a necessity. Similarly, governments are entitled to investigate the affairs of people who are likely to commit crimes, for instance, espionage in a state of war is a necessity and thus does not fall under the category of *tajassus*.

(3) *Gheebah*

The third evil which is far more sickening and dangerous is *gheebah*, commonly known as backbiting. The definition of *gheebah* that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ gave is very enlightening and

thought-provoking. The Prophet ﷺ once asked his companions, 'Do you know what backbiting is?' 'Allah and His Messenger ﷺ know best,' they replied. 'Backbiting is to say anything about your brother [behind his back] that he would not like,' the Prophet ﷺ explained. Someone asked, 'But, what if he is as I say?' The Prophet ﷺ replied, 'If what you say about him is true, you are guilty of backbiting him; but if it is not true, then you have slandered him.' (Muslim)

Backbiting does not only consist of talking ill of a person in his absence. Its implication is very wide. It includes all those acts which go a long way in degrading a person when he is not present. Even the gestures of mockery are included in the category of backbiting.

The hatefulness of backbiting in this verse has been compared to eating the flesh of one's dead brother. It is not only detestable, but even unthinkable. 'Would one of you eat the flesh of his dead brother?' The comparison matches the hideousness and repulsiveness of backbiting with the most disgusting thing imaginable. In other words, just as you would naturally be disgusted by this, you must regard backbiting with equal disgust.

The Qur'anic verse indicates the necessity of preserving the believer's honour in his absence. Backbiting is extremely disgusting, because the victim would suffer pain if he becomes aware of it, just as it would surely hurt the corpse if it could feel its flesh being eaten.

As reported by Anas ﷺ, Allah's Messenger ﷺ said, 'When I was taken on my Heavenly Journey (*mi'raaj*), I passed by a group of people with nails of copper with which they were scratching their faces and chests; so I said, "O Jibreel! Who are these?" He replied, "They are those who were given to backbiting and impugning people's honour."' (Abu Daawood; and it is *saheeh*) We should remember that it is not only the one who backbites who is guilty, but also all those who relish his conversation. If, in a meeting or a place, someone is backbiting someone else, the listeners should protest. If necessary, they should leave the place.

There are, however, exceptions to the general rule. There are some conditions which may look like backbiting, but which do not come under the category of *gheebah*. These may be classified under five headings as follows:

a. To lodge a complaint against an aggressor, or to seek justice from people in authority.
b. Reporting weaknesses for the sake of reform to such people as can manage the situation and can help improve the behaviour of the defaulters; for instance, the senior members of the family, etc.

c. For the purpose of seeking a legal opinion from people of knowledge.
d. To warn people of others' wickedness or to expose the mistakes of writers, reporters of *hadeeth*, etc. This also includes giving frank opinions about persons with whom somebody wants to engage in trade, in the neighbourhood of whom somebody is considering the purchase of a house or with whom someone wants to marry – these things are not reckoned as backbiting.
e. To speak against those who are publicly breaking Islamic norms and inviting people to disobedience of Allah, etc.

The last sentence 'Allah is One Who accepts repentance, Most Merciful' gives hope to all Muslims who under the promptings of the soul or Satan commit any of these offenses. For people who make sincere repentance, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful and accepts repentance. His mercy is immense for those who practise true devotion to Him and who repent. This contains an incentive to repentance. It contains an urge to make haste in showing remorse and admitting sinful error, so that we will not despair of Allah's mercy.

The Qur'an denounces racism* and sentiments of ethnic superiority. (Verse 13)

'O mankind! We have created you from a male and a female…' In this verse, the address shifts from the believers to all of mankind. The discussion turns from the brotherhood of believers to the universal brotherhood of men. All humans share one common ancestry. In reality, there is nothing naturally inborn that separates one human being from another. There are no differences, other than superficial ones, between a white man and a black man, an Arab or a non-Arab. The only thing that

*The unfair treatment of people who belong to a different race. The belief that some races of people are better than others.



- What evil effects do suspicion, spying and backbiting have on society?
- Mention a type of suspicion that is forbidden in Islam.
- What is included in *tajassus*?
- Give the meaning of backbiting.
- How should a Muslim behave if backbiting takes place in his presence?
- Write down at least three conditions which are not included in backbiting.

distinguishes them is their *taqwaa* – heedfulness of Allah. It is in their hearts and it is manifested in their deeds.

Furthermore, all humans will stand in front of Allah alone on the Day of Judgement. On that day, all of the worldly blood ties and relations will be forgotten and will mean nothing. Everyone will care just about himself and be worried about himself. The following *hadeeth* from *Saheeh al-Bukhaaree* would be enough to drive home the message contained in this verse.

On the authority of Sahl ibn Sa'd who said, 'A man passed by the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and he asked someone sitting next to him, "What do you think of this man?" He replied, "He is from the noblest class of people. By Allah! If he were to ask for a woman's hand in marriage, his proposal would be accepted. If he were to intercede on behalf of another, his intercession would be accepted." Allah's Messenger ﷺ kept quiet. Then another man passed by and the Messenger of Allah ﷺ asked the same man, "What do you think of this man?" He replied, "This man is from the poor Muslims. If he were to ask a woman's hand in marriage, it would not be accepted. If he were to intercede on behalf of someone, his intercession would not be accepted." The Messenger of Allah ﷺ then said, "This [poor] man is better than an earth full of the other [type of man]." (al-Bukhaaree)

A person may look contemptible from the worldly point of view, but he may be very beloved to Allah due to his *taqwaa,* or consciousness of Allah. *Taqwaa* resides in hearts. It is not something that someone can wear on his chest. It is, in fact, known to Allah only. Therefore, how can anyone look down upon anyone else, when he has no way of knowing whether or not he is better than that other person? The characteristic which is most deserving of respect to Allah is *taqwaa.* The most important issue is not what part of the world one is from, the colour of one's skin or the amount of money one possesses; rather the most important issue is something that is in the heart – it is *taqwaa.*



Write down some pointers that will help ensure that you have *taqwaa* in your heart.

The Word *Taqwaa*

The *taqwaa* comes from the root *wiqaayah*, which means 'protection'. When the word *taqwaa* (consciousness of Allah) is used with respect to Allah, it means one must fear Allah or protect himself from Allah's anger and punishment. He could do this by being sincere to Allah, performing what Allah has commanded and avoiding what He has forbidden.

The Key to *Taqwaa*

If a Muslim takes these matters seriously, he will certainly attain *taqwaa*:

1. Fear of Allah's punishment in this world and in the hereafter.
2. Hope for His reward in this world and in the hereafter.
3. Being grateful to Allah for all His bounties.
4. Having true knowledge of the *tawheed* of Allah, His Attributes and His Names.
5. Being sincere and truthful in one's love of Allah.

Review

A. Explain these Arabic terms.

1. *Sukhriyyah*
2. *Lamz*
3. *Nabz*
4. *Taqwaa*

B. Think-up

1. What should a Muslim do if he is involved in the forbidden offences of mocking and ridiculing others?
2. What is backbiting compared to in the Qur'an, and why?
3. People should rise above racism and ethical superiority. Why?
4. Are offering *salaah* and doing righteous deeds a favour to Allah? If not, why?

Section Four – Verses 14-18

Translation of the Meaning of these Verses

14. The Bedouins say, 'We believe.' Say, 'You do not believe. But say, "We have submitted." For faith has not entered your hearts. But if you obey Allah and His Messenger, He will not decrease anything in reward for your deeds. Indeed, Allah is Forgiving, Most Merciful.'
15. The true believers are only those who have believed in Allah and His Messenger and thereafter have no doubt, but strive with their wealth, and their lives in the cause of Allah. Such are the truthful.
16. Say: 'Will you inform Allah of your religion while Allah knows all that is in the heavens and all that is on the earth, and Allah is Aware of everything.'
17. They regard as a favour to you that they have embraced Islam. Say: Do not count your Islam as a favour to me. Nay, but Allah has conferred a favour upon you that He has guided you to the faith if you indeed are true.
18. Verily, Allah Knows the Unseen of the heavens and the earth. And Allah is the All-Seer of what you do.

Verse 14

In this verse, Allah distinguishes between *eemaan* and Islam. It is clear that the Bedouins were not hypocrites, void of any belief in their hearts whatsoever. If that were the case, the remainder of the verse would not make any sense, because people who are completely void of faith will not be rewarded for their obedience to Allah and His Messenger ﷺ. What is described here is a condition where the true and complete *eemaan* is not yet present in their hearts. They are not outside the fold of Islam although they do not deserve to be called true believers.

It is important to realize that a Muslim is one who performs the outward deeds of Islam. However, a Muslim may not perform all the required aspects of *eemaan,* or faith, especially those deeds of the heart, to be called a believer in an absolute sense *(mu'min*). A believer, in the fullest sense of the word, on the other hand, is one who surrenders completely and fulfils the requirements of Islam as well as all the characteristics and requirements of a true believer. He is, therefore, termed a believer. Therefore, every true believer must first be a Muslim, or one who submits. However, not every Muslim is necessarily a true and complete believer

in an absolute sense. There is one more level that goes beyond belief, or *eemaan,* namely *ihsaan* – excellence in worship of Allah. Every Muslim must meet all the conditions of a Muslim and a believer. Hence, every *muhsin* is a Muslim and a believer. However, not every believer is a *muhsin*. Being a *muhsin* is a station higher than that of being either a *mu'min* or a Muslim.

It is significant to note that certainty or *yaqeen* is one of the conditions of *eemaan,* or faith. This is the opposite of doubt and uncertainty. One's heart must not be wavering in any way when one testifies to the truth of the testimony of faith: There is none worthy of worship except Allah. In verse 15, Allah describes the true believers as those who have belief in Allah and then their hearts do not waver.

On the other hand, Allah describes the hypocrites as those people whose hearts feel doubt and so in their doubt they waver (9:45). Doubts and suspicions are the diseases of the heart. They are very dangerous. One of the greatest cures for these diseases is knowledge. Sound knowledge of the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* would provide a cure! As one's study and learning deepens, one's certainty will certainly grow stronger and stronger.

Man Is not Guided unless Allah Guides him (Verse 17)

The greatest blessing that Allah bestows upon mankind is the blessing of guidance. Faith or following guidance is not a favour that mankind does toward Allah or His Messenger ﷺ. It is a favour bestowed by Allah upon humans.

Review

A. Fill in the blanks.

The greatest blessing that Allah bestows upon mankind is that of _____.

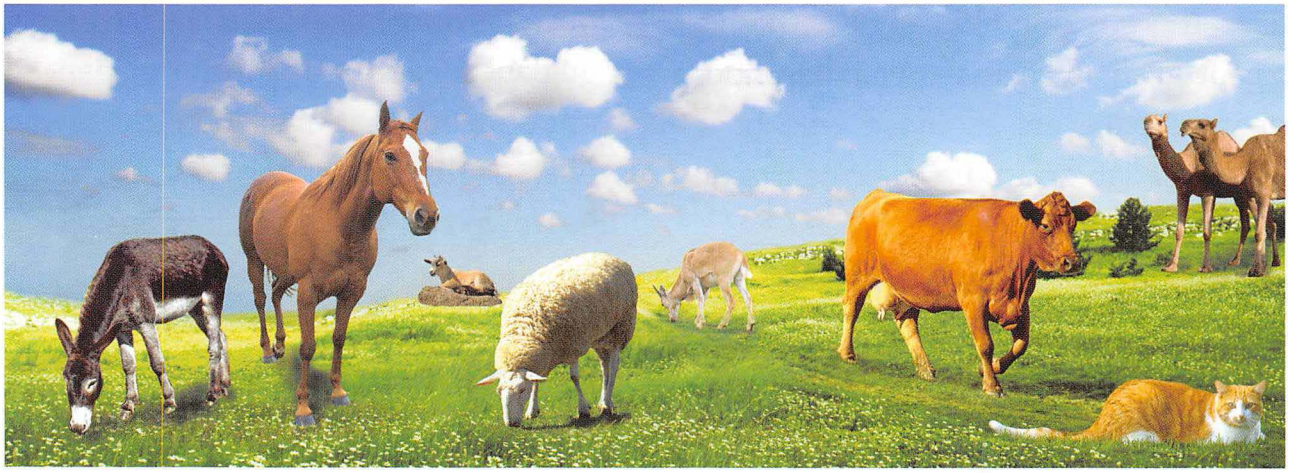
B. Answer the following questions.

1. What is included in being a *mu'min*?
2. What solution has Allah provided for those having doubts and suspicion?

22 Islam Forbids Cruelty to Animals

Allah, Most High, says in the Glorious Qur'an, **'There is not an animal that walks on earth and no bird that flies on its two wings, but they are communities like your own.'** (6: 38)

Human beings are not the only residents of this earth. There are countless creatures which live in this world. They all have their lives regulated in a way that shows careful planning and perfect design. They all confirm Oneness of their Creator. There is a huge variety of life on earth. Nobody knows exactly how many different birds, animals, and fish there are, but scientists have estimated that there are between five and thirty million species. Animals come in all shapes and sizes. They live in many varied habitats, from deserts to rainforests. They all belong to a particular community which share certain characteristics and a particular way of life, just as human beings do.



How should we Treat Animals?

Should animals be seen as friends or as products and slaves for our use? Do animals have a right to be treated in a particular way? Do humans have any duty or responsibility to care for them?

These questions were answered by Allah's Messenger ﷺ centuries before the establishment of modern-day animal welfare organizations. The world considers the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, the world's oldest animal welfare group, but this is not true. It is actually Islam that gave mankind the principle of kindness and prohibited cruelty to animals. People who are ignorant of Islam think that westerners were the first to establish the principle of kindness to animals, but this is not true, for it was Islam that did this. The details which follow will prove the point.

Hadeeth and the Treatment of Animals

There are several authentic *ahaadeeth* (sing. *Hadeeth*) of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ that instruct Muslims to treat animals in a kind and merciful way. This is because one is held responsible for the manner he treats animals. A person's treatment of animals could be a source of reward from Allah, the Most High, or a source of punishment.



A *hadeeth* in *Saheeh al-Bukhaaree* and *Saheeh Muslim* demonstrates how much Allah is pleased with kind treatment of animals. The *hadeeth* says, 'While a man was walking on the road, he grew extremely thirsty. He came across a well and went down into it and drank some water. He then came out and found a dog panting. The dog was licking mud due to its extreme thirst. The man said, "This dog is experiencing the same kind of thirst that I was experiencing." So he went down the well again and filled his shoe with water. He held it in his mouth and gave water to the dog. Allah appreciated his action and forgave him.'

The people said, "Messenger of Allah! Is there any reward for us in the treatment of animals?" The Prophet ﷺ answered, "There is reward for serving everything with a moist liver (i.e. every living being)."

On another occasion, Allah's Messenger ﷺ said, 'While a dog was going around a well and was about to die of thirst, a prostitute from the children of Israa'eel saw it. She took off her shoe filled it with water and gave it to drink. So Allah forgave her on account of that good deed.' (al-Bukhaaree)

One another *hadeeth* shows a person can be sent to Hell because of the mistreatment of an animal. Allah's Messenger ﷺ said, 'A woman entered the Hellfire because of a cat that she had confined until it died. She did not give it to eat or drink nor let it free to eat the vermin of the earth.' (al-Bukhaaree)

On one occasion, Allah's Messenger ﷺ entered into one of the gardens of the *Ansaar*. A camel saw him and began to weep with a yearning sound. Allah's Messenger ﷺ went to it. He rubbed its head until it became silent and then went out to find the owner of the camel. The owner came and Allah's Messenger ﷺ said to him, 'Don't you fear Allah with respect to this animal which Allah has placed into your possession? It has complained to me that you keep it hungry and load it with heavy burdens, which tire it out.' (Abu Daawood, and it is *saheeh*)



- Who originated kindness to animals?
- When is a person guilty of ill-treating an animal?

One day Allah's Messenger ﷺ saw a camel, which had been tied to a certain location all day long without a break. He said, 'Fear Allah with respect to these dumb beasts. Ride them when they are in good condition, and feed them nicely.' (Ahmad and Ibn Hibbaan, and it is *saheeh*)

The Prophet ﷺ once passed by a donkey whose face had been branded. He said, 'Haven't you heard that I have cursed whoever brands or strikes the faces of livestock?' – And he forbade it. (Abu Daawood; and it is *saheeh*)

Another *hadeeth* states, 'whoever does not show mercy will not be shown mercy.' (al-Bukhaaree)

Thus, a person is guilty of an offence of cruelty if he or she cruelly beats, ill-treats, overloads, tortures, or terrifies an animal. Sometimes human ignorance causes animals the most suffering. So many people buy or are given animals as pets and they do not take the trouble to learn how to care for them.

Slaughtering Animals for Food

Throughout history and throughout the world, humans have killed animals for food. Animals have been created for the benefit of man. Allah the Most High has permitted mankind to eat of the vast store of good things which He has prepared for them.

Islam teaches and requires that the instrument used to perform *dhabh,* or slaughtering, must be extremely sharp to facilitate the quick cutting of the skin and the severing of the windpipe and the blood-vessels so as to enable the blood to flow out immediately and quickly. Allah's Messenger ﷺ is reported to have said, 'Indeed, Allah has prescribed excellence in all things. Thus, if you kill, kill well; and if you perform *dhabh*, perform it well. Let each one of you sharpen his knife, and let him spare suffering to the animal he slays.' (Muslim)

'Thus, if you kill, kill well': This part of the *hadeeth* refers to the legal execution of human beings who deserve this punishment. When a person is to be executed for a crime, even then, one should carry out the deed in the most humane way possible. Allah's Messenger has forbidden any kind of torture and mutilation. Likewise, Allah's Messenger ﷺ stated that even when slaughtering an animal, one should do so in the best possible way. The person should sharpen his knife before slaughtering an animal. In the same way, it is considered improper to slaughter an animal in view of other animals about to be slaughtered.

Once a man laid down an animal on the ground to slaughter it and then started sharpening his knife in front of it. Allah's Messenger ﷺ saw him and said, 'Do you want it to die two deaths? Why didn't you sharpen your knife before you laid the animal down?' (al-Haakim, and it is *saheeh*)

In short, one ought to be merciful to all creatures, humans as well as animals. If a person longs for Allah's Mercy, he should also show mercy to His creatures.

Showing Mercy to Animals

Abu Umaamah reports that Allah's Messenger ﷺ said, 'Whoever shows mercy even to an animal he is slaughtering will be shown mercy on the Day of Judgement.' (al-Bukhaaree in *al-Adab al-Mufrad*)



Taking Eggs from a Bird's Nest

Once Allah's Messenger ﷺ stopped at a resting place. A man took an egg from a bird's nest; and this act caused the mother-bird to begin circling about the Prophet's head. The Prophet ﷺ asked, 'Who has hurt her by taking her egg?' The man said, 'O Messenger of Allah, I have taken her egg.' The Prophet told him, 'Put it back out of mercy to the bird.' (*Al-Adab al-Mufrad*, and it is *saheeh*)

Now consider the following acts of cruelties in the light of the above *ahaadeeth* of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ:



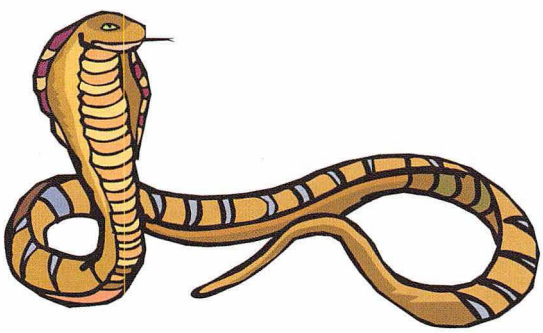
Cockfighting remains a popular tradition in a country where almost every town has a fighting pit. Gamecocks' breeders painstakingly train their feathered fighters (i.e. cocks). They inject the birds with vitamins and spare them to increase endurance. When the fighting day arrives, the cocks are equipped with curved plastic spurs attached to the back of their legs that serve to slash the opponent bird. The cocks circle as they look for advantage. They then, neck-feathers erect, lunge at each other and gouge, sometimes fighting to death. It is important to realize that cockfighting is forbidden in Islam.



Bullfighting – is it an art, tradition or torture? Thousands of bulls are killed in bullfights in Spain each year. Promoters describe bullfighting as a cultural tradition, which combines skill, courage

and art. But the fact is that bulls are cruelly handicapped by beatings, confined in darkness, and have a part of their horns sawn off, and have petroleum jelly rubbed into their eyes, so that they cannot see well.

During the fight, the bull is attacked with barbed spikes. The matador tries to kill the bull with one blow to the heart, but this he frequently misses and several thrusts are needed before the bull dies. The horses used in the game are frequently gored to death or so badly hurt that they have to be put to death. Again, it is significant to note that bullfighting is forbidden in Islam.



Permissibility of Killing Harmful Animals

It is, however, permissible to kill harmful animals. It is permissible to kill animals that cause harm and destruction as part of their nature, such as rabid dogs, wolves, poisonous snakes, scorpions and mice.

Even so, one should kill the harmful animals or insects in the best possible way. The life of such creatures should be taken immediately without causing them undue suffering.

A Muslim must therefore adhere to the following manners with respect to animals:

1. He feeds or gives water to an animal if he finds it hungry or thirsty.

2. A Muslim shows compassion and mercy to animals.

3. He puts the animal at ease when he is about to slaughter it.

4. A Muslim never tortures an animal by any means of torture, such as striking it, beating it, making it carry burdens more than it can handle. He does not mutilate it or burn it with fire.



What is the etiquette for slaughtering animals for food?

Exercise

A. Fill in the blanks.

1. The act of mistreating of an animal can send a person to _____.
2. In Islam, it is permissible to kill _____ animals.
3. Bullfights take place in _____ each year.

B. Refer to context

1. 'There is a reward for serving everything with a moist liver.'
2. 'Do you want it to die two deaths?'
3. 'Put it back out of mercy to the bird.'

C. Think-up

Although the world widely enjoys cockfighting and bullfighting, why is it forbidden in Islam?

23 Oaths (*Al-Yameen*), Vows (*Nadhr*) and Expiation (*Kaffaarah*)



The Oath (*Al-Yameen*)

An oath is a solemn statement to do or to refrain from something; or it is said to emphasise that something is true, such that if things turn out otherwise, the one who has made the oath must make expiation.

Permissible and Forbidden Forms of Taking Oaths

It is permissible to swear by the Name of Allah, the Most High, and His Attributes. An oath only validly comes into effect if sworn by one of the Names of Allah, Most High, or by one of His Attributes.

There are various names of Allah that are applied to no one but Him, such as Allah, the All-Merciful and the Knower of the Unseen. An oath sworn by any of these is valid without restriction.

Hence, the oath, or *al-yameen,* is swearing by the Names of Allah, the Most High, or His Attributes; for example, saying, 'By Allah, I will do such-and-such a thing.' or saying, 'I swear by Him in whose Hand my soul is', or 'I swear by the Turner of the hearts', etc.

The word used for oath is *al-yameen*, which literally means right hand, and the basis for it is that the Arabs, when they made a contract or pledge, they would shake each other's right hands. An oath, therefore, became termed '*yameen*'.

An oath is only valid from a person who makes the oath voluntarily and intends an oath thereby. It is forbidden to swear by other than any of the Names of Allah and His Attributes. This is due to the statement of Allah's Messenger ﷺ, 'Whoever swears, then let him swear by Allah or let him remain silent.' (al-Bukhaaree and Muslim)

He also said, 'Do not swear except by Allah, and do not swear unless you are telling the truth.' (Abu Daawood and an-Nasaa'ee, and it is *saheeh*) The Prophet ﷺ also warned, 'Whoever swears by other than Allah has committed an act of *shirk* (polytheism: setting partners with Allah).' (Ahmad, Abu Daawood and At-Tirmidhee, and it is *saheeh*)

Three Types of Oaths

There are three categories of oaths. They are:

1) ***Al-Yameen al-Ghamoos:*** the Engulfing Oath:

An engulfing oath is one in which there is pre-meditated (well-thought in advance) lying. It is termed engulfing, because it overwhelms or drowns the one who has made it in sin. Allah's Messenger ﷺ is reported to have said, 'The major sins (*al-kabaa'ir*) are *shirk*, showing disrespect to parents, killing a human being, and the engulfing oath.' (al-Bukhaaree)

A man once said, 'By Allah, Allah will not forgive so-and-so.' Allah said, 'Who is it that swears I must not forgive so-and-so? I forgive him and erase all your works.' (Muslim)

Allah's Messenger ﷺ said, 'Lying leads one to wickedness and wickedness leads one to Hell. A man keeps lying until Allah records that he is a liar.' (al-Bukhaaree)

The Prophet ﷺ also once said, 'The signs of a hypocrite are three: when he speaks, he lies; when he makes a promise, he breaks it; and when he is entrusted with something, he betrays the trust.' (al-Bukhaaree)

For instance someone says, 'By Allah, truly I purchased such-and-such a thing for fifty dollars.' He, however, did not buy it for fifty. Or he says, 'By Allah, I did such-and-such,' while he did not do it. This type of swearing is called *al-yameen al-ghamoos* – the engulfing oath, because it 'drowns' or 'overwhelms' the one who has made it in sin. This is the swearing that is meant by the statement of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, 'Whoever swears an oath and he is sinful in it in order to cut off the wealth of a Muslim individual will meet Allah while Allah is angry with him.' (al-Bukhaaree and Muslim)

The Ruling Concerning *Al-Yameen al-Ghamoos*: the Engulfing Oath

The ruling concerning this type of oath is that it cannot expiate for it. The only thing obligatory concerning it is sincere repentance and seeking Allah's forgiveness. This is because it is such a tremendous sin as it is connected with taking the right of a Muslim through falsehood. *Imaam* Ash-Shaafi'ee, however, maintained that it is obligatory to expiate for *al-yameen al-ghamoos*.



- What are the two conditions required to make an oath a valid one?
- What is an engulfing oath? Can one expiate for it?
- Who will Allah record as a liar?
- Why is the engulfing oath so called?

2) *Laghw Al-Yameen*: An Unintentional Oath

This is the oath of someone whose tongue runs away with him and who unthinkably swears an oath, or someone who intends a particular oath but unintentionally swears something else. This does not count and it is considered an unintentional oath; for instance, a person who utters in his speech, 'No, by Allah,' or 'of course, by Allah,' etc.

The ruling concerning such oaths is that there is no sin in them. There is no obligation due upon the one who utters them. This is due to Allah's statement in the Qur'an, **'Allah will not call you to account for oaths which you may have uttered without thought, but He will take you to task for oaths which you have sworn in earnest.'** (5: 89)

The Word '*Laghw*'

The word '*laghw*' means unnecessary words or things which are not profitable or good, or which do not involve wrongdoing. The term *laghw* is used in a *hadeeth* to describe someone else speaking while the *imaam* is delivering the sermon on the pulpit on Friday.

According to some scholars, a careless oath (*laghw al-yameen*) refers to those that people make while speaking or arguing when they say, 'No, by Allah,' and 'yes, by Allah,' without really intending to make an oath. Hence, an unintentional oath is man's language at home. It is an off-hand or casual oath made out of habit or in the heat of the moment.

3) *Al-Yameen al-Mun'aqidah*: Deliberate or Binding Oath

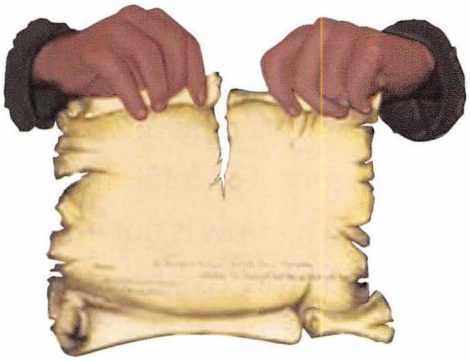
This denotes an oath that is intended to be fulfilled concerning some future matter. For instance, if a Muslim says, 'by Allah, I will certainly do such-and-such a thing,' or 'By Allah, I will not do such-and-such a thing.' This is the oath regarding which the person who breaks it is held accountable. This is due to Allah's statement, **'But He will take you to task for oaths which you have sworn in earnest.'** (5: 89)

The ruling concerning *Al-Yameen al-Mun'aqidah*: Deliberate or Binding Oath

Whoever breaks this type of oath is considered sinful, and it is obligatory upon him to expiate for it. If he carries out its expiation, the sin is removed from him.

Example of not Breaking One's Oath

If one swears, 'I will not enter this house,' but then does so absent-mindedly, in ignorance of its being the house, under compulsion or by being carried in, then one's oath is not broken.



The Expiation for a Broken Oath: *Kaffaarah*

Expiation is obligatory for someone who swears and breaks an oath.

The expiation for a broken oath consists of a choice of any of the following:

1. Feeding ten people who are poor, by giving them each a *mudd* of grain (a *mudd* is two cupped handfuls), or gathering them all for lunch or dinner so that they may eat until they are satisfied, or giving each one of them enough to eat.
2. Provide clothing for ten such persons that they can wear during prayer. If one provides a garment to a poor woman, he must give her a long shirt and a head scarf, because it is the minimum requirement that suffices her in prayer.
3. Set free a Muslim slave.
4. If one is unable to do any of the above, one must fast for three days. It is better to fast them consecutively, though it is permitted to do so non-consecutively.

This is all due to the statement of Allah, the Most High, **'The breaking of an oath must be atoned for by the feeding of ten poor persons with more or less the same food as you normally give to your own families, or by clothing them, or by freeing of one slave. He who cannot afford any of these shall fast for three days instead.'** (5: 89)

The Vow: *Nadhr*

Lexically, the term vow means any promise. It is legally defined as making obligatory some act of worship that was not originally obligatory in the *Sharee'ah*, such as optional fast or prayer and the like. This is for example like a person saying, 'I owe Allah a day of fasting, or two *rak'ahs* of prayer if such-and-such a thing happens.'

The Condition for the Legal Validity of a Vow or *Nadhr*

A vow to perform some pious act is only valid if:

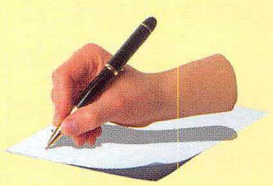
1. It is made by a Muslim who is legally responsible *(mukallaf)*, has reached the age of puberty and is sane.
2. It concerns some act of worship, which means acts that are voluntary or optional and not obligatory. This is because to take an oath to undertake an obligatory act is not valid whether it involves performance of an obligatory prayer or fast, or keeping away from something such as vowing to

abstain from wine or adultery and the like. Such vows are not valid, because Allah has made them obligatory and making it obligatory on oneself to do them is meaningless. A vow to do something, such as standing, sitting, eating or sleeping, is not legally valid, because these are not acts of worship. The reason for it is the *hadeeth* related by Al-Bukhaaree that Allah's Messenger ﷺ passed by a man standing in the sun without seeking shade. When he inquired about it and was told that it was Abu Israa'eel who had vowed to stand while fasting, without sitting, taking shade or speaking he replied, 'Pass by him and have him sit in the shade and speak, but let him complete his fast.'

General Provisions Regarding Vows

1. A valid vow (*nadhr*) to do an act of worship makes the act obligatory.
2. One must fulfil a vow that one has made conditional upon the occurrence of some event, such as by saying, 'If Allah heals my sick friend, I vow to fast for three days, or give in charity.' In fact, this becomes obligatory if the sick person regains his health. The ruling concerning this type of vow is that it is obligatory to fulfil it, although making such a vow is not encouraged by Islam. This is based upon a *hadeeth* related on the authority of Abdullaah ibn Umar رضي الله عنه who said, 'Allah's Messenger ﷺ singled out one day forbidding us to take vows and said, "It would not avert anything, it is by which something is extracted from the miserly person."' (Muslim)

This means by taking a vow, the calamity is not necessarily averted; its aversion depends upon the Will of Allah. If Allah so wills, it is averted, but if He does not so desire, it is not averted. What this means is that there is no direct link between a vow and aversion of calamity. It is Allah Who is the Final Disposer of things. And the miser does not open the strings of his purse unless threatened by unforeseen calamities, and thus the vows become the means whereby he spends something on poor people. For this reason, many pious, learned and intelligent Muslims avoid making vows.



- What is the intentional oath? Will it be accounted for by Allah?
- What is the deliberate oath?
- How can one expiate an oath?
- What are the two conditions for a valid *nadhr*?

Exercise

A. Give one-line definition for the following Arabic terms.

1. *Yameen*
2. *Nadhr*
3. *Kaffaarah*
4. *Shirk*
5. *Laghw*

B. Fill in the blanks.

1. The word *yameen* literally means _____.
2. A _____ is one who has reached the age of maturity and is sane.
3. There is no direct link between a vow and _____.
4. Making _____ is not encouraged by Islam.

Prophet Sulaymaan عليه السلام

Sulaymaan عليه السلام was the son of Prophet Daawood عليه السلام . He was Prophet Daawood's heir in Prophethood and kingship.

Allah's Blessings upon Prophet Sulaymaan عليه السلام

Allah, the Most High, gave Sulaymaan عليه السلام the gifts of fine understanding and deep knowledge. His deep sense of justice was shown in cases which were presented before his noble father.



Sulaymaan عليه السلام Knew the Language of Birds and Animals

The Qur'an tells a marvellous story which demonstrates Sulaymaan's wisdom in the management of his kingdom and his astonishing favours. It shows how Allah coupled for him the happiness of this world and the bliss of the world to come. Allah had given him everything. (27: 16). This means all of the needs of a kingdom had come to him: armies, equipment, groups of *jinn*, people, birds, wild animals, sciences, understanding and language of creatures.

Sulaymaan عليه السلام knew the language of birds and animals. Once he gathered his armies of *jinn*, men and birds, and rode among them in splendour and might. They were perfectly organized and aligned under the command of their leaders.



Prophet Sulaymaan عليه السلام and the Ants

The *Jinn* and men were once going along with Prophet Sulaymaan عليه السلام and the birds flew overhead, providing shade from the heat with their wings. None of the ranks would proceed until the ones behind caught up with them. Sulaymaan passed by the valley of the ants. One of the ants, afraid that the hooves of the horses would crush her tribe without Sulaymaan and his forces being aware of it, ordered her fellow ants to retreat into their dwelling-places.

Sulaymaan overheard the ant and understood what it had said. Sulaymaan ﷺ was a prophet of Allah, and his response was not ruled by pride and arrogance. He was rather moved to praise Allah and to be grateful for His bounties. He smiled joyously at her words and began to supplicate, **'O my Lord! Inspire me so that I may forever be grateful for those blessings of Yours with which You have graced me and my parents, and that I may do righteous deeds as may please You; and admit me by Your Grace, among Your righteous servants.'** (27: 19)

The Story of the Hoopoe

The hoopoe was Sulaymaan's scout. He would seek out for him watering places and the camp sites for the army when they needed water in the deserts; when they were travelling, the hoopoe would go and look for them, whether a specific spot had water or not. Allah had given him this ability to see water under the surface of the earth. He would indicate the spot to the others and they would dig there.

On one occasion, Sulaymaan could not find the bird, and this annoyed him. The hoopoe had been away for quite some time. Finally, he returned with this news for the Prophet Sulaymaan ﷺ, 'I have discovered something which you do not know. I have brought true information about the kingdom of Saba' (Sheba). I found a woman ruling over them. Some of everything has come to her, and she has a great throne. I found her and her people worshipping the sun, instead of Allah. Satan has made their works look good for them and has blocked them from the right way. They are not rightly-guided.'



- Who was Sulaymaan ﷺ ?
- What does 'Allah had given him everything' mean?
- How did Sulaymaan ﷺ behave when he understood the ant's speech? Why?
- What was the hoopoe's job?
- What news did the hoopoe bring about the people of Saba'?

Prophet Sulaymaan ﷺ Does not Judge the Matter Hastily

Prophet Sulaymaan ﷺ did not judge the matter hastily. He was not too thrilled with the news brought by the hoopoe. He wanted to be sure before taking any action. This is the appropriate course to follow by a prophet and a wise king.

He said to the hoopoe, **'We shall see whether you have told the truth or you are a liar. Go with this letter and deliver it to them, and then draw back**

from them, and see what answer they return.' (27: 27-28)

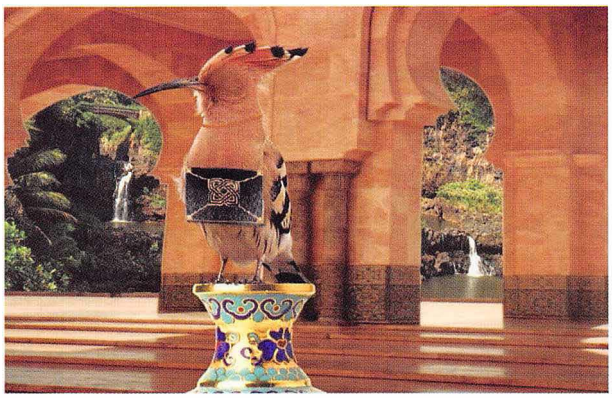
Here, a very important question arises: Do birds and animals also lie? The answer is that we do not know the language of the birds to be able to say yes or no. But zoologists, bird-watchers and bird-scientists report quite incredible things about birds. Their finding is that the birds do deceive each other; in fact, they even commit theft.

Anyway, the news brought by the hoopoe made Sulaymaan عليه السلام sad.

Prophet Sulaymaan عليه السلام Invites the Queen of Saba' to Islam

It grieved the Prophet of Allah to learn of such a kingdom with a people he had not known. He had not been able to invite these people to Islam – the true religion of Allah. The zeal of Prophethood inspired him to write to their idol-worshipping queen, calling her to Islam before he marched forth with his powerful armies to conquer her land. He wrote to her an eloquent letter in which he called upon her to embrace Islam and submit to him. The letter was polite but firm. It was clear, simple and powerful. It also expressed his Prophetic humbleness and his kingly majesty. It began with the Name of Allah, the Most Merciful. It made a single demand. The queen and her people must not take a hostile or rebellious attitude towards its sender; rather, they should go to him declaring their submission to Allah, in Whose Name he had addressed them.

Some have said that her name was Bilqees, and she was the daughter of Sayrah,who was a great king.



The Hoopoe Drops the Letter to the Queen

Obeying the command of Prophet Sulaymaan عليه السلام, the hoopoe carried the letter, came to the Queen's castle and dropped it to her when she was alone. Then he waited to one side watching to see what her response to the letter would be.

The Queen Consults the Leaders of her Kingdom

The queen of Saba' was very intelligent. She was not given to hasty judgements. She had great experience of the conduct of kings and had the knowledge of the history of conquerors. Her intelligence had, however, deceived her, for she had failed to recognize Allah and worship Him. She told her most intelligent counsellors that she had received a letter, different from all other letters. It was from the mightiest king of that time,

who was also a Prophet, calling people to Allah. She asked for their advice, declaring that she would not make any decision without their consent. Thus she appears to be a very wise queen.

It is clear at the outset that she was greatly impressed by the letter. She also appeared serious and decisive. The courtiers declared their readiness to do whatever was demanded of them, but they left the final decision to the queen. They said, **'We are endowed with power and great fighting skill in war. But the command is yours. Consider, then, what you would command.'** (27: 33)

Now here we see a woman, rather than a queen, expressing her feelings. A woman instinctively dislikes war and the destruction it brings in its wake. Besides, the queen was fully aware that when kings occupy a city or a country, they wreck havoc, destroying everything so as to break all resistance. In particular, they target its chiefs, seeking to humiliate them as they are the ones who put up resistance. This is clearly the habit of all kings.

The Queen Sends a Delegation to Sulaymaan

The queen sent a delegation with gifts of immense value as befits a king. When the emissaries presented her gifts to Sulaymaan, he refused to take them. He took them to task. He said, 'Is it gold that you would give me? Are you mocking me with such a trivial offer? What Allah has given me is much better than all that He has given you.' He rebuked them for thinking that they could buy his peace with wealth, seeking to turn him away from calling on them to believe in Allah. He announced his final judgement in clear and final terms, 'Go back to them, for we shall certainly come to them with forces they cannot match, and we shall certainly drive them from the land, in disgrace, and they will be utterly humble.'

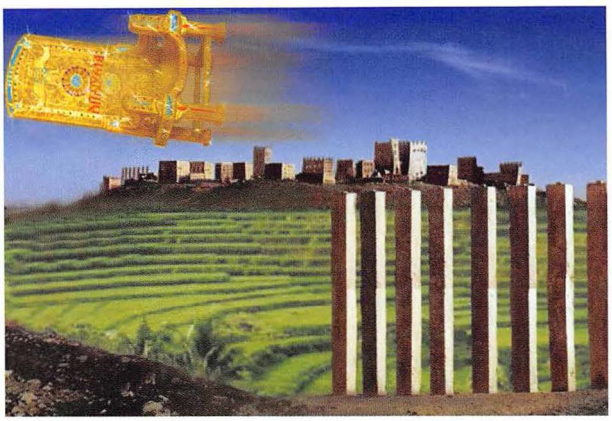


- How did Sulaymaan عليه السلام react to the news brought by the hoopoe?
- What did Sulaymaan's letter reflect?
- How can you tell that the queen was a wise queen?
- Why did she send a delegation with gifts to Sulaymaan عليه السلام ?

The Queen Arrives in Submission

When the delegation returned to the kingdom of Saba' and gave the queen Prophet Sulaymaan's message, she set out in submission to meet Sulaymaan. When Sulaymaan learnt of her decision, he was delighted.

He praised Allah. decided to show her a sign to illustrate the power of Allah and His blessings upon him. He decided to present her with her own throne, which was guarded by her strong and trustworthy soldiers. Her throne was encrusted with gold and all types of gems.



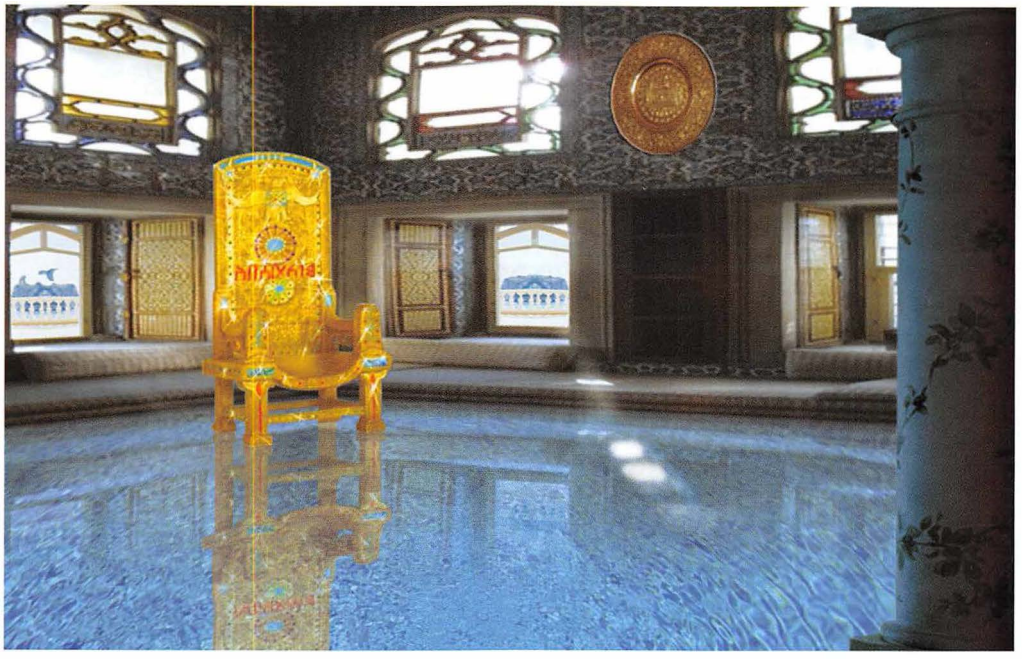
The Throne of the Queen

Prophet Sulaymaan عليه السلام now discussed with his commanders how to bring him her throne, which she left well-guarded in her palace. A mighty *jinn* offered to bring the throne to him before he had finished the session he was attending. It is reported that he sat from morning till noon to judge in disputes that were put to him. But some other person who was deeply versed in the Book offered to bring it in the twinkling of an eye. The Qur'an does not mention the name of that person, nor does it say which Book was known to him. We understand, however, that he was a believer who had a strong bond with Allah, the Most High. Allah had given him something of the great power that surpassed barriers and distances. This is something that at times occurs to some people with very strong faith, by Allah's Leave. No explanation is offered for it, because it goes beyond what is known to people. The man brought the throne in the twinkling of an eye.

His knowledge of the Book had established a bond between him and His Lord that enabled him to do what was required. Sulaymaan was clearly in awe of Allah's Majesty as He fulfilled his request in such a miraculous way. When Sulaymaan عليه السلام saw the throne firmly placed before him, he cried out, 'This is but by the Grace of my Lord, so that He may test me whether I give thanks or act with ingratitude.' Thanks to His Limitless Power, Allah can cause anything – be it the sun or any other planet immensely greater than the sun – to travel at the speed of millions of miles in a couple of seconds. No sooner had the person in the court of Sulaymaan made his claim than he actually brought the throne. When we talk of Allah with such Limitless Power, what difficulty is there in believing that a throne was carried to a distance of a few thousand miles within the twinkling of an eye?

Some Finer Details of the Throne are altered

Then Sulaymaan عليه السلام commanded that some of the finer details of the throne be altered so that he could test whether the queen would recognize it when she saw it. He wanted to test her presence of mind, her intelligence and alertness.



So when she arrived, she was asked, 'Is your throne like this one?' She answered, 'It looks as though it were the same.' It was a shock for the queen. She could never have imagined it possible that the throne she was looking at was her own! Who could have brought it to Jerusalem, and how? Yet she could see it was hers in spite of alterations. Should she deny it or should she admit that it was hers? Her answer was thoughtful and clever, **'It looks as though it were the same.'** (27: 42) She neither denied it nor confirmed it. In fact, her answer is indicative of her sharp intelligence and her quick presence of mind.

Sulaymaan عليه السلام had Prepared another Surprise for her

Sulaymaan عليه السلام had already prepared another surprise for the queen. It had thus far been kept a secret from her. The surprise was a palace made of glass. Its floor was placed above water so that it should appear like a lake. She was taken to the palace and asked to enter it. When she came close to it, she thought she was being asked to wade through the water of the lake. She, therefore, lifted the hem of her dress, uncovering her legs. The surprise was then complete. Thereupon Sulaymaan told her, 'It is but a court smoothly paved with glass.' The queen stood there, mouth agape. She was amazed at such wonderful achievement that defied human capabilities. This was the final convincing evidence which served as an eye-opener for the queen. She cried out, 'I have wronged myself. I surrender with Sulaymaan to Allah, the Lord of the worlds.'

She soon realized that she was short-sighted. She had been deceived by outer appearances. She and her people were worshipping the sun because it

was the clearest source of light and life, which are but two of Allah's signs. The veil had fallen from her eyes. She realized that just as she had made a mistake in considering the glass to be water when she raised the hem of her garment, so too she had been mistaken when she treated the sun as the creator by prostrating to it and worshipping it.

Verse 43 of the *Soorat an-Naml* explains what had prevented her from believing in Allah up to that moment and what had turned her away from submitting herself when Sulaymaan's letter was delivered to her. She had grown up in the midst of an unbelieving people. Her worship of creatures such as the sun, actually had prevented her from worshipping Allah Alone. The true message of Islam had not reached her.

This was what Sulaymaan, the Prophet of Allah, was like. He stood firm in his call for the Oneness of Allah. He had wisdom, understanding and strong zeal for the Truth and its purity.



- What two signs did Sulaymaan عليه السلام show to the queen of Saba' to illustrate the Power of Allah?
- What do you know about the man who brought the queen of Saba"s throne?
- Why did the queen of Saba' refuse to submit to Allah until His signs were shown to her?

Exercise

A. Complete the following sentences.

1. The hoopoe was Sulaymaan's _____.
2. The country of Saba' owed its prosperity to _____.
3. The name of the queen of Saba' was _____.
4. Prophet Sulaymaan عليه السلام had understanding and strong zeal for the _____ and its _____.

B. Think-up

1. After reading the entire lesson, list the blessings that Allah had bestowed upon Sulaymaan عليه السلام .
2. What reason did Sulaymaan عليه السلام give to the delegation for not accepting the gifts?
3. What is the English for Saba'?

25 Major and Minor Sins

Allah, the Most High, calls His servants to repentance (*tawbah*), but there does exist a distinction between major sins (*kabaa'ir*) and minor sins (*saghaa'ir*).

Allah, the Most High, says in the Qur'an, **'If you avoid the major sins which you have been forbidden, We shall efface your wrongdoings, and admit you to a Noble Entrance (in Paradise).'** (4: 31)

The Word '*Kabeerah*'

The word '*kabeerah*' (of which *Kabaa'ir* is the plural) signifies the worst sins, crimes, or offences of great magnitude, which are forbidden by the Islamic Law, such as *shirk*, murder and adultery. The term adultery or *zinaa* signifies unlawful sexual intercourse between a man and a woman.

What are the Major Sins?

A major sin is something severely threatened against in a clear text from the Glorious Qur'an or *hadeeth*. A minor sin is one that has not been severely threatened against in a clear text.

A Sin is the Disturber of Hearts

A sin is that which causes a feeling of irritation within one's breast, and which you do not like other people to notice. Sin is the disturber of hearts. It creates a bad effect upon one's heart. In other words, sin is that which cuts into your breast and causes a feeling of irritation. It causes a feeling so troublesome that the heart recoils from it.

Sin is that thing that makes an impression upon the heart in much the same way as cutting makes an impression on a solid object, and the heart feels uneasiness. It comes in a *hadeeth*, 'And sin is that which wavers in your soul and which you dislike people finding out about.' (Muslim)

Sin or wrongdoing, therefore, is that which wavers in the soul. It moves to and fro in the breast, even though people might have given you their legal opinion in its favour. We should always remember Allah's Messenger's words, 'Leave whatever causes you to feel doubts in favour of that which does not make you feel doubts.' (at-Tirmidhee and an-Nasaa'ee, and it is *saheeh*)

The Number and Nature of Major Sins

Among the religious scholars (*Ulamaa'*), there is considerable disagreement concerning the number and nature of the major sins. Several *ahaadeeth* (sing. *hadeeth*) speak of certain types of major sins. However,

we do not have a full list of them all in any single *hadeeth*. Each *hadeeth* mentions some, which suggests that these *ahaadeeth* mention the major sins relevant to each situation. It is, however, not difficult for a Muslim to identify these major sins, although they differ in number and gravity, according to situations. We mention below some of these *ahaadeeth* which make a mention of these sins.

A *Hadeeth* about Disobedience to Parents

Al-Bukhaaree and Muslim have recorded that Abdur-Rahmaan ibn Abee Bakarah said that his father said, 'The Prophet ﷺ said, "Should I inform you about the greatest of the great sins?" We said, "Yes, Messenger of Allah!" He said, "To join others in worship with Allah and to be undutiful to one's parents." He was reclining; then he sat up and said, "I warn you against false testimony and false speech.'"

Major Sins Mentioned in *Ahaadeeth*

Certain scholars maintain that there are no more than seven major sins, while others set the number at nine, or even at eleven. Ibn Umar ﷺ once said, 'The major sins are seven in number.' But whenever this was mentioned to Ibn Abbas ﷺ, he would say, 'Their true number is much closer to seventy than seven.' Then he would go on to say, 'Anything that Allah has forbidden constitutes a major sin.'

Al-Bukhaaree and Muslim have recorded on the authority of Abu Hurayrah ﷺ who narrated that Allah's Messenger ﷺ said, 'Avoid the seven great destructive sins.' The people inquired, 'Messenger of Allah! What are they?' He said, 'To join others in worship with Allah, to take the life which Allah has forbidden, except for a just cause, sorcery, to consume usury (*ribaa*), to consume an orphan's wealth, to turn away from the enemy and flee from the battlefields when the battle begins, and to accuse chaste women who never even think of anything that would spoil their chastity and are good believers.'

Other *ahaadeeth* that Speak of some Other Major Sins

Here are seventeen of the major sins:

1. Ascribing partners to Allah (*Shirk*)
2. Stubbornly disobeying Allah
3. Despairing of Allah's Mercy
4. Considering oneself safe from the planning of Allah, Most High
5. Bearing false testimony
6. An unfounded accusation of adultery against a believing woman of unblemished reputation
7. The engulfing oath *al-yameen al-ghamoos*
8. Sorcery and witchcraft (*sihr*: magic)
9. The drinking of wine (*khamr*) and consuming any other substance or beverage that causes intoxication
10. Wrongfully consuming the property of an orphan
11. Knowingly consuming usury (*ribaa*: interest)
12. Adultery and fornication
13. Homosexuality (*liwaat*). The expression *Liwaatah* refers to the homosexual vices of the people of Prophet Lut عليه السلام
14. Murder
15. Theft
16. Running away from a Muslim army on the march against an army of the enemy, no matter what the odds may be (*firaar min-az-zahf*).
17. Undutiful treatment of one's parents (*'uqooq* al-*waalidayn*), which may mean any or a combination of all of the following: refusing to show respect for their sincere advice; hitting them when they scold you; refusing to give them something when they ask for it; refusing to feed them when they are hungry and imploring you to give them something to eat.

Imaam Adh-Dhahabee has written a special book on the topic of major sins called *Kitaab al-Kabaa'ir*. Imaam Adh-Dhahabee was born in Damascus in 673 AH/ 1274 AD. He wrote nearly a hundred books. He was a great *hadeeth* master (*haafidh*) and historian of Islam. His book *The Lives of Noble Figures* contains twenty-three volumes. He died in Damascus in the year 748 AH/ 1348 AD.



- Define the word *kabeerah*.
- What effect does sinning have on our hearts?
- What did Ibn Umar رضي الله عنه mean by saying 'their true number is closer to seventy than seven'?
- List a few of the major sins mentioned in this lesson.

Minor Sins

As far as the minor sins (*saghaa'ir*) are concerned, they are far too many. It is not possible to identify them all with absolute accuracy. Moreover, no list of them can ever be considered fully comprehensive. Nevertheless, it is easy to recognize them through the indication provided by the Islamic law (*Sharee'ah*) and by the light of our inner faculties.

It is important to realize that a sin which is defined as minor does not mean that one could go about indulging in it neglectfully or ignoreing it as something ordinary. On the contrary, the fact is that a minor sin, if committed with nerve and heedlessness, does not remain minor, it becomes a major sin. A minor sin is like a snake; while a major sin is a cobra; or a tiny spark, versus a large ember.

When the believer turns in repentance from major sins, the minor sins are implicitly covered by his act of repentance. A believer should, however, forsake all kinds of sins, the great and the small alike. He should not rule out a little sin as trivial in itself, because mountains are made of pebbles, which can never be ruled out. Sins are to the heart what wood is to fire. That is why as sins increase, so too does the fire in the heart. Well then, you had better be on your guard!



- How can we recognize the minor sins?
- When do the minor sins become major sins?
- How does Allah forgive minor sins?

Exercise

A. Fill in the blanks.

1. There is a difference between _____ and _____ sins.
2. A major sin is something that is severely warned against in the Qur'an or _____.
3. A sin is the _____ of hearts.

Said the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ

«اَلْحَيَاءُ شُعْبَةٌ مِنَ الْإِيمَانِ»

Modesty (*al-hayaa'*) is a branch of faith. (Muslim)

«اَلطُّهُورُ شَطْرُ الْإِيمَانِ»

Purity is half of one's faith. (Muslim)

«سَمِّ اللهَ وكُلْ بِيَمِينِكَ»

Begin with *Bismillaah* and eat with your right hand. (al-Bukhaaree)

«إِذَا لَمْ تَسْتَحِي فَاصْنَعْ مَا شِئْتَ»

If you feel no shame, then do as you wish. (al-Bukhaaree)

«أَطْعِمُوا الْجَائِعَ»

Feed the hungry. (al-Bukhaaree)

There are countless people in the world who live below the poverty line and are hungry. It is the duty of all believers to share their food and wealth with the hungry and the poor. We can provide food to the needy people directly, or we may contribute to reliable charities, which help the hungry and the poor.

«إِيَّاكُمْ وَالْحَسَدَ»
Keep away from envy.
(Abu Daawood)

«لَا تَبَاغَضُوا»
Do not hate each other.
(al-Bukhaaree)

«لَا تَغْضَبْ»
Do not become angry.
(al-Bukhaaree)

«سِبَابُ الْمُسْلِمِ فُسُوقٌ، وَقِتَالُهُ كُفْرٌ»
Abusing a Muslim is an evil act and killing him is an act of disbelief. (al-Bukhaaree)

«لَا يَدْخُلُ الْجَنَّةَ قَتَّاتٌ»
A *qattaat*★ will not enter Paradise.
(al-Bukhaaree)

★A *qattaat* is a person who conveys information from one person to another one with the intention of causing harm and enmity between them.

Exercise

Memorize the sayings of the Prophet ﷺ, and practise them in your daily life.

27

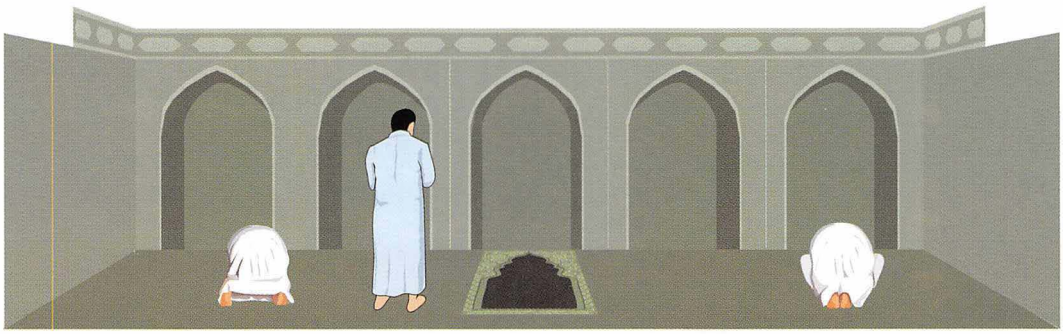
Some *Nawaafil*

Optional Prayers

كَانَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ إِذَا حَزَبَهُ أَمْرٌ صَلَّى

(سنن أبي داود: ٢/ ٣٥ و حسَّنه الشيخ الألباني رحمه الله)

Whenever a calamity befell the Prophet ﷺ he would perform *salaah*.
(Abu Daawood, and Sheikh Al-Albaanee categorised it as *hasan* (good).)



If you seek help, seek Allah's help

Allah Most High says in the Glorious Qur'an, 'And ask Allah of His bounty.' (16: 14) A believer should appeal to Allah and pray to Him to grant him of His grace. To turn to Allah directly and to pray to Him for His grace is to turn to the source of grace. It is in Allah that all hopes should be placed, and to Him Alone one should turn for help.

Words of Advice

On the authority of Abdullaah ibn Abbas ﷺ who said, 'One day I was riding behind the Prophet ﷺ and he said to me, "Young man, I shall teach you some words [of advice]. Be mindful of Allah and Allah will protect you. Be mindful of Allah, and you will find Him in front of you. If you ask, ask of Allah. If you seek help, seek Allah's help. Know that if the nation were to gather together to benefit you with something, they would not benefit you with anything except that which Allah has recorded for you. If they gather to harm you by something, they would not be able to harm you by anything except what Allah has already recorded against you. The pens have been lifted and the pages have dried."' (at-Tirmidhee)

This *hadeeth* is replete with important guidance

'If You ask, ask Allah; if you seek help, seek Allah's help.'

In this piece of advice, the Prophet ﷺ tells us that we should ask only of Allah and not of any of His creation. A Muslim must realize that it is Allah alone who is able to grant his needs.

He should, therefore, turn to Him alone. He should understand that even if Allah uses other humans to meet his needs, the One who truly fulfils his needs is Allah.

It is recorded in *Saheeh Muslim* that Allah's Messenger ﷺ took a pledge from a number of his companions, such as Abu Bakr, Abu Dharr and Thawbaan, that they would never ask for anything from anybody. If any of these companions dropped their stick or their camel reins, they would never ask anyone to pick it up for them. They would do that themselves.

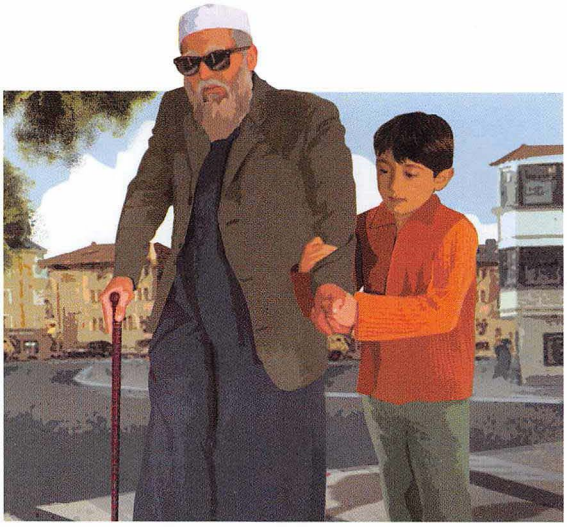
One should, therefore, ask of Allah alone and not of anyone else. It simply does not make any sense for anyone to turn to or ask any creature instead of asking Allah. This is because it makes no sense for one to ignore the Rich and the All-Powerful for one who is himself in need of Allah's help and bounty. Imaam Ahmad ibn Hanbal used to say, 'O Allah! In the same way that you have kept my face from prostrating to other than You, save me from asking of anyone other than You.' This is because a person must degrade himself in front of the person from whom he asks something.

Moreover, when someone asks anyone else to meet his needs he actually shows his dependence on that individual. A believer should always remember the *hadeeth* which says, 'Allah descends each night to the earth's sky when there remains the final third of the night, and He says, "Is there anyone asking something of Me that I may give it to him? Is there anyone supplicating to Me that I may respond to him?"' (al-Bukhaaree and Muslim)

Allah is close to each one of us. If we turn to Him and sincerely ask of Him, He will surely respond to us. Do not, therefore, seek the response to your needs from one who shuts the door in front of you and places a barrier between you and him. Instead, you must turn to the One Whose door is open until the Day of Judgement and Who has commanded you to ask of Him and promised to respond to you. The Houses of the All-Merciful are open, so you should go to the mosque and pray two *rak'ahs* and supplicate to Him to fulfil your needs. One may even pray at home or in any other pure place.



- Why should one ask Allah alone for help?
- What does 'when you ask, ask of Allah' mean?



Mutual Help and Assistance among Humans

There is a kind of mutual help and assistance that takes place all the time among humans. A believer can also abstain from this type of requests, as was the case with those companions who had pledged the Messenger of Allah ﷺ that they would never ask anyone for anything.

However, if one turns to mortals for permissible types of requests, one should realize that such a request will only be fulfilled by them if Allah guides or inspires them to that decision. Everything is in the Hands of Allah. He is the Source of all good. Instead of asking others and relying upon them, a Muslim should work for his own needs, financial or otherwise, even if his work is of a very ordinary menial nature.

The Prophet ﷺ said, 'It is better for one of you to bring a load of firewood on his back and sell it, than to ask of another who might give him or refuse to give him.' (Muslim)

A Muslim should, therefore, work to support himself, and humble himself before Allah Alone, instead of degrading himself and his honour before fellow Muslims or non-Muslim government officials.

Imaam Fakhr ad-Deen ar-Raazee makes an interesting observation while explaining verse 42 of *Soorat Yoosuf* in which Prophet Yoosuf عليه السلام requests his prison-mate to mention him to his lord when he becomes free. *Imaam* ar-Raazee notes that although it is permissible to seek help from an unbeliever to set right a wrong, his own (ar-Raazee's) lifelong experience, then in his fifty-seventh year of his life, was that the more one seeks the help of the creation of Allah, the more complicated things become!

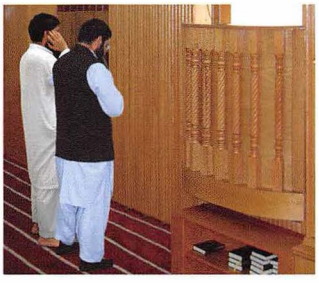
Included in this question of asking of others is begging or seeking financial help from others. The Prophet ﷺ said, 'The upper hand (that gives) is better than the lower hand (that receives)... whoever abstains from asking others for some financial help, Allah will give him and save him from asking others. And whoever is satisfied with what Allah has given him, Allah will make him self-sufficient.' (al-Bukhaaree) Commenting on verse 273 in *Soorat al-Baqarah* in wich Allah says, 'They do not ask from people insistently', Imaam al-Qurtubee records a very interesting and soul-inspiring anecdote about Imaam Ahmad ibn Hanbal. *Imaam* al-Qurtubee says,

'Ahmad ibn Hanbal was once asked, "When does begging become lawful?" He replied, "When a person does not have enough for his lunch and dinner." Ahmad ibn Hanbal was then asked, "And what if he is compelled to ask?" He replied, "It is permitted if he is in pressing need." He was asked, "What if he refrains?" He replied, "That is better for him." Then he added, "I do not think that anyone will die of hunger. Allah will certainly bring him his provision. Whoever abstains, Allah will make him abstinent.'"

Ibraaheem ibn Adham used to say, 'Asking for your needs from people is a veil between you and Allah Most High. Place your need with the One Who controls harm and benefit. Take refuge in Allah, and Allah will surely spare you from others and you will live in happiness.'

If something, however, comes to someone without asking for it, they should accept it and not reject it, for it is provision which Allah has brought.

Hence, if you desire to get closer to Allah, place all your needs before Him and rely upon Him alone. Show your need to Allah by asking and entreating Him for all your worldly and religious needs. Ask Him to guide you to the Straight Path. Perform what He has commanded you to do and keep away from what He has made forbidden to you.



Tahiyyat-ul-Masjid: Greeting the Mosque

Tahiyyat-ul-Masjid is a prayer in which two *nafl* (accretional) *rak'ahs* are performed upon entering the mosque. Abu Qataadah ﷺ narrates that Allah's Messenger ﷺ said, 'If anyone of you enters a mosque, he should pray two *rak'ahs* before sitting.' (al-Bukhaaree)

The Arabic term *nafl,* or *naafilah* (of which *nawaafil* is the plural) means a voluntary offering. The term *salaat an-naafilah* is derived from it, and means voluntary or optional prayer.

Salaat-ut-Tawbah: The Two *Rak'ahs* of Repentance

Allah's Messenger ﷺ is reported to have said, 'There is not a man who, upon committing any sin, purifies himself and performs two *rak'ahs*, then asks the forgiveness of Allah, but Allah forgives him.' (Abu Daawood, at-Tirmidhee, an-Nasaa'ee, and Ibn Majah, and it is *saheeh*)



- When is *tahiyyat-ul-masjid* performed?
- Ibraaheem ibn Adham said that asking from people creates a veil between us and Allah. How?

Abu Hurayrah ﷺ

Abu Hurayrah ﷺ was one of the most famous and most learned of the companions of the Prophet ﷺ. He was a scholar of the Prophet's *hadeeth*.



Abu Hurayrah was not his real name, but a name given to him by the Prophet ﷺ on account of the tenderness he showed to a little cat (*hurayrah*, a diminutive form of the word *hirrah*). His real name is not known for certainty. It is said to have been Abd Shams before he embraced Islam, and afterwards Abdur-Rahmaan, Abdullaah, Umayr or Aamir. He belonged to the tribe of Daws and came to Madeenah in the year 7 AH.

When the Prophet ﷺ was at Khaybar, he followed him there and embraced Islam. From that time onward, he was a constant companion of the Prophet ﷺ. This fact accounts for the great number of traditions attributed to him; the number of those that are supposed to come from him is estimated at over 5,000. Allah's Messenger ﷺ guided him to an act that would keep him from ever forgetting a *hadeeth* again. Abu Hurayrah himself said, 'One day Allah's Messenger ﷺ said, "He who amongst you spreads a cloth and listens to my talk and then press it against his chest would never forget anything heard from me." So I spread my mantle and when he had concluded his talk, I then pressed it against my chest, and so I never forgot after that day anything that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said.' (Muslim)

Abu Hurayrah's mother was an unbeliever. He had asked the Prophet ﷺ to pray for her guidance and she afterwards accepted Islam. Abu Hurayrah returned to the Prophet ﷺ to tell him the good news and then said, 'Allah's Messenger, pray to Allah that He may instil love for me and for my mother in the believing servants, and let our hearts be filled with their love.' Allah's Messenger ﷺ then prayed, 'Let there be love for these two servants of Yours in the hearts of the believers and let their hearts be filled with love for Your believing servants.' Later, Abu Hurayrah said, 'This supplication was answered by Allah, such that no believer was ever born who heard of me and who saw me

except that he had love for me.' (Muslim) This incident shows that the true believer will have love in his heart for Abu Hurayrah ﷺ.

Abu Hurayrah was a poor man. He devoted all his time to serving the Prophet ﷺ. The Prophet ﷺ admired his devotion and knowledge. He sent him with al-Alaa' al-Hadhramee to Bahrayn (the present-day al-Hasa in Saudi Arabia and not the state of Bahrain) to teach the people about Islam. During Umar's caliphate, he acted for a short time as the Governor of Bahrayn. Later, Umar asked him again to be a governor, but he refused. He presented himself at the house of Uthmaan ibn Affaan when he was under siege and tried to convince him to fight, but was excused before Uthmaan was martyred. He tried to prevent the confederates from murdering him. Uthmaan ibn Affaan was the third of the four rightly-guided caliphs.

Abu Hurayrah ﷺ died in Madeenah in 59 AH., at the age of seventy-eight. He was well-known for his piety.

Abu Hurayrah's knowledge was well-known among the companions of the Prophet ﷺ, and he was one of the most learned of them. Some Followers (*taabi'oon*), that is to say the generation after that of the Prophet's companions, wondered how he knew so many traditions of the Prophet ﷺ. He replied, 'You people say that Abu Hurayrah relates too many traditions on the authority of the Prophet ﷺ, and you also say how come the Emigrants do not relate such traditions? My companions from among the Emigrants were busy taking care of their trade while I was poor and stayed with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and was satisfied with whatever filled my stomach. I was in more gatherings with Allah's Messenger ﷺ, and I was present when they were absent, and I remembered when they forgot.' (Muslim)

Exercise

A. Fill in the blanks.

1. During Umar's caliphate, he acted for a short time as the _____ of Bahrayn.
2. Abu Hurayrah ﷺ died in the city of _____.

B. Answer the following questions.

1. How did Abu Hurayrah get his name?
2. When did he accept Islam?
3. What did Abu Hurayrah do so he would not forget anything he had heard from the Prophet ﷺ?

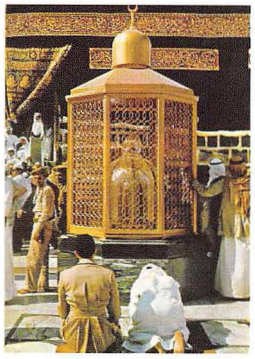
C. Think-up

1. How does the supplication of the Prophet ﷺ to instil love for Abu Hurayrah hold true even to this day?
2. How did Abu Hurayrah manage to stay with the Prophet ﷺ so often?

29 The Day of Sacrifice (*Yawm an-Nahr*) and the Sacrificial Animal

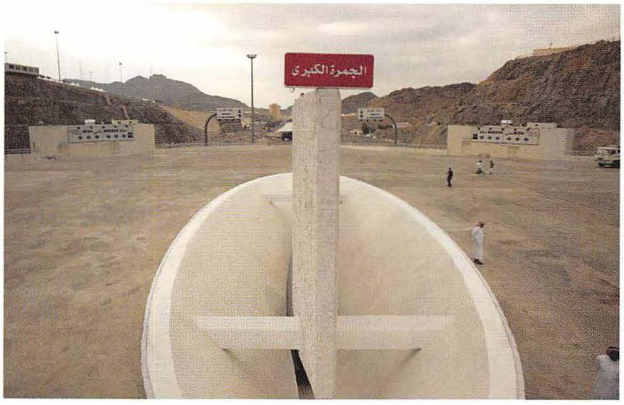
Concerning the Practice or Rite of Animal Sacrifice

Animal sacrifice (*nahr*) is referred to in the words of Allah: **'So pray to your Lord and sacrifice.'** (108: 2)



The origin of the rite of sacrifice is the commandment given by Allah to His Beloved Slave (*Khaleel*), Ibraaheem عليه السلام. One night, Prophet Ibraaheem عليه السلام had a dream; he dreamt that he sacrificed his son Ismaa'eel. Ibraaheem was a truthful Prophet. His dream was a true dream. He decided to do what Allah had commanded him to do in his dream. But first he said to Ismaa'eel, **'My dear son, I have seen in a dream that I must sacrifice you. So look, what do you think?'** He replied, **'My father, you must do what you are commanded. You will find me, if Allah wills, to be one of those who are patient.'** (37: 102)

It is important to note that Ismaa'eel عليه السلام did not say to his father, 'You must do what you saw in your dream.' He rather said, 'You must do what you are commanded.'



Ibraaheem عليه السلام took Ismaa'eel with him and a knife. When Ibraaheem reached Mina, he made ready to sacrifice his son. Mina is a valley in Makkah, about five miles on the road to Arafaat, where the three stone pillars stand. It is part of the *Hajj*, or pilgrimage, to spend three or possibly four nights in Mina during the days of *tashreeq*. We will talk about *tashreeq* shortly, *inshaa Allaah*.

When Ibraaheem عليه السلام laid Ismaa'eel prostrate on his forehead and he seized him by his forelock in order to sacrifice him for Allah, Allah acknowledged their truthfulness (*sidq*), and He called out, **'O Ibraaheem, you have now confirmed the vision.'** (37: 104-105)

Allah wanted to test Ibraaheem's resolve to do what he was commanded. It was not Allah's will that Ismaa'eel should be sacrificed. In fact, Prophet Ibraaheem's vision was a test of his readiness to sacrifice all that was dearest to him in his life. When Ibraaheem عليه السلام passed the test, Allah sent Jibreel عليه السلام

with a ram from Paradise, as Allah, the Most High, says, **'And We ransomed him with a mighty sacrifice.'** (37: 107)

Ibraaheem ﷺ subsequently sacrificed the ram instead of Ismaa'eel. Allah was pleased with what Ibraheem had done, so He commanded the Muslims to sacrifice in remembrance of it, on *Eed-ul- Adh-haa*. The sacrifice spoken of here is the one repeated every year by countless believers in connection with the pilgrimage to Makkah *(Hajj)*, which, itself, commemorates the experience of Prophets Ibraaheem and Ismaa'eel and constitutes one of the pillars of Islam.

Animal sacrifice *(Udh-hiyyah)* on *Eed-ul-Adh-haa*

The animal sacrifice is a confirmed practice *(Sunnah mu'akkadah)*, the omission of which is not recommended for anyone who is capable of performing it. According to some other authorities, however, it is strictly necessary *(waajib)* upon every Muslim family that is able to afford it.

The Wisdom behind Animal Sacrifice

The wisdom behind animal sacrifice is to attain nearness to Allah, the Most High, revive the *Sunnah* of Prophet Ibraaheem, show generosity to one's dependants on the Day of *Eed-ul-Adh-haa*, spread mercy among the poor and the needy, and express thankfulness to Allah for His subjecting the livestock to us. Moreover, they are a general hospitality from Allah to believers to whom the meat is distributed.

The Animals which are Most Suitable for Sacrifice

The animals most suitable for sacrifice are camels, then cows, and then sheep or goats. In the case of sheep, only a *jadha'* is acceptable, while a *thani* is acceptable in other cases. A *jadha'* is an animal that is six months old or older, while a *thani* is a goat that is one year old, to a cow that is two years old, and to a camel that is five years old.

A sheep or a goat is acceptable as a sacrificial offering from a single



- What was Ismaa'eel's reaction when Ibraaheem ﷺ told him of his dream?
- Why did Allah command Muslims to offer sacrifice on *Eed-ul-Adh-haa*?
- When does animal sacrifice become necessary?
- Write briefly about the wisdom behind animal sacrifice.

individual, and a camel or cow as a collective offering from a group of seven. A sheep or a goat is sufficient for a man and his family. Care must be taken to ensure that the sacrificial animal is not defective. The most serious defects are demonstrated by these following five types:

1. An animal that has a broken horn or a slit ear, meaning one that has lost the greater part of one of its ears or horns.
2. A one-eyed creature whose one-eyed condition is clearly apparent.
3. An emaciated animal with no fat on its bones.
4. A lame animal whose lameness is clearly apparent, since it cannot move about freely; and is too weak to gather its share of fodder.
5. A sick animal whose sickness is clearly apparent, or one that is mangy (i.e. suffering from mange, which is a skin disease), because its mangy condition will spoil its meat.

The Days and the Time of Sacrifice

The time for slaughtering begins on *Eed-ul-Adh-haa*, the tenth day of *Dhul-Hijjah* after the *'eed* prayer, meaning *Salaat-ul-'eed*. It is never acceptable to offer the sacrifice before the *'eed* prayer. The time of sacrifice ends on the last of



the three days following the *'eed*, which are called *ayyaam at-tashreeq*, that is, the t hree days following the Day of the Festival *(yawm al-'eed)*, namely the eleventh twelfth, and thirteenth days of *Dhul-Hijjah*.

Why are these Days Called the Days of *Tashreeq*?

There are differences of opinion among the scholars as to how these days came to be called the Days of *Tashreeq*. According to some, they were so called because on those days, people used to cut the meat of their sacrificial animals into strips and dry them up in the sun. The days are thus called days of eating and drinking and celebrating the praise of Allah.

The Time of Slaughtering the Sacrificial Animal

If someone slaughters his sacrificial animal before the *'eed* prayer it is merely a lump of meat. For that he will not receive the reward of the rite of sacrifice. The Prophet ﷺ said,

'Whoever slaughters his sacrifice before the prayer (*salaat-ul-'eed*), he only slaughters for himself, and whoever slaughters it after the prayer, he certainly perfects his sacrifice (at the prescribed time) and follows the customary, excellent practice (*Sunnah*) of the Muslims'. (al-Bukhaaree)

Once Allah's Messenger ﷺ passed by some people who had slaughtered their sacrificial animals before the *'eed* prayer and he said, 'If someone slaughters [the sacrificial animal] before the *'eed* prayer, let him repeat his sacrifice.' (al-Bukhaaree)

It is recommended for someone who intends to sacrifice not to cut the hair or trim his nails until he slaughters. This recommended restriction is effective from the appearance of the crescent on the first day of *Dhul-Hijjah*. This is due to the Prophet's saying, 'If you see the crescent of the month of *Dhul-Hijjah*, and one of you intends to sacrifice an animal, he should refrain from cutting his hair and nails until he sacrifices his animal.' (Muslim)

Distributing the Meat

The Prophet ﷺ said, 'Eat of it, share some of it, and distribute some of it as charity.' (al-Bukhaaree)

Hence, it is recommended that a portion of the meat of the animal sacrificed be eaten, a portion be given away to relatives and friends, and a portion be given as charity to the poor and the needy.



- When does the time for sacrifice begin and end?
- What is the time for sacrificing on the *'Eed-ul-Adh-haa*?

Exercise

A. Fill in the blanks.

1. The right of sacrifice originated with _____.
2. For a collective offering, a _____ or _____ may be sacrificed.
3. The sacrificial animal must be healthy and free from _____.
4. The three days following the *'eed* are called the Days of _____.
5. The sacrificial meat is divided into _____ parts.

B. Think-up

Why did Allah substitute a ram for Ismaa'eel عليه السلام ?

30

The Resurrection

Soorat al-Qiyaamah 75: 1-40

Soorat al-Qiyaamah is the seventy-fifth *soorah* of the Qur'an. It is devoted almost entirely, with the exception of four verses (16-19), to the concept of resurrection. The *soorah* was revealed in Makkah and consists of forty verses.



The Meaning of the Translation of *Soorat al-Qiyaamah*

In the Name of Allah the Most Gracious the Most Merciful

1. I swear by the Day of Resurrection!
2. And I swear by the reproaching soul (*an-nafs al-lawwaamah*)
3. Does man assume We will not reassemble his bones?
4. Yes indeed, We are able [even] to proportion his fingertips!
5. But man desires to continue in sin.
6. He asks, 'When is the Day of Resurrection?'
7. So when vision is confounded,
8. And the moon darkens,
9. And the sun and the moon are joined,
10. On that Day, man will say, 'Where is the escape?
11. No, there is no refuge!
12. To your Lord will be the place of rest that Day!
13. On that Day man will be informed of what he sent forward and what he left behind.
14. Nay, but man shall against himself be a witness!
15. Even though he may put forth his excuses.
16. Move not your tongue with it [O Muhammad] to hasten with it (i.e. recitation of the Qur'an).

17. Surely its collection and recitation are Our responsibility.
18. So when We have recited it [through Gabriel], then follow its recitation.
19. Then it is for Us to make its meaning clear.
20. But no! Rather you (i.e. mankind) love the present [life of this world],
21. And neglect the hereafter
22. Some faces on that Day will be radiant,
23. Looking at their Lord!
24. And some faces on that Day will be overcast with despair,
25. Knowing that a crushing calamity is about to fall on them.
26. No! when it (the soul) reaches to the collarbones,
27. And it is said, 'Who will cure him?'
28. The while he himself (i.e. the dying person) knows that this is the parting!
29. When the leg is wrapped around the leg [and is enwrapped in the pangs of death],
30. To your Lord that Day will be the procession.
31. He (i.e. the disbeliever) did not accept the truth, nor did he pray,
32. But instead he denied and turned away,
33. And then he went arrogantly back to his people, admiring himself.
34. Woe to you! And then woe to you!
35. Again woe to you! And then woe to you!
36. Does man think that he will be left neglected?
37. Was he not once a mere drop of fluid emitted?
38. Then he became *'alaqah* (clinging clot), then (Allah) created [his form] and fashioned him in due proportion.
39. Then He made of him two sexes, the male and the female.
40. Is not He (i.e. the Creator) able to bring the dead back to life?

Explanation: The Central Theme

The central theme of this *soorah* is the affirmation of the Day of Resurrection. By way of evidence, the Qur'an calls the human conscience – *an-nafs al-lawwaamah* to witness. In reality, the human conscience represents in miniature form the Final Court which Allah would establish on the Day of Judgement. Therefore, doubts about the possibility of the Day of Judgement are doubts about the existence of one's own self-reproaching conscience. These doubts, therefore, have no basis at all.

'I swear by the Day of Resurrection!' (Verse 1)

Allah swears by the Day of Resurrection, speaking of the Day as if it had already occurred. The above phrase, therefore, is meant to convey the certainty of its coming.

***An-Nafs al-Lawwaamah* (Verse 2)**

The self-reproaching soul is man's awareness of his own shortcomings and failings. A true believer is extremely sensitive to errors. As soon as he commits a sin, his conscience begins to prick him. His heart fills with regret and remorse. Self-reproach purifies the soul. It builds one's moral character. Verses 1-4 in this *soorah* revolve around these ideas. Sin causes the soul to be uneasy and troubled. It makes it unhappy and worried about the consequences of the sin.

Other Names of the Day of Resurrection *(Yawm al-Qiyaamah)*

Among the other names of the Day of Resurrection are: the Reality, the Event, the Hour, the Day of Judgement, the Overwhelming and the Last Day. The Last Day is called as such because there will be no new day after it. The people of Paradise will be in their abode, as will be the people of Hell in their abode. This is the most tremendous Day mankind will pass through. It will indeed be the most fearful and awesome day! A person's new life will be decided on that day. It will mark a new beginning for each and every soul.



- Explain *an-nafs al-lawwaamah*.
- Mention the other names of the Day of Resurrection.
- Why is the Last Day called as such?

The Knowledge of When the Hour will be Established

This is Allah's secret. The knowledge of when the Hour will strike is known only to Allah. However, Allah has blessed mankind with the knowledge of some of the Signs of the Day of Resurrection. Allah takes away life. He will give it back. He is capable of reconstructing the most intricate fingerprints in their original distinct form. The day will come when this world will end and man's time of trial will be over. It is the teaching of the Noble Qur'an that all creatures will rise up again. Souls will be reunited with their bodies. The resurrection of the body will come about through the Almighty Power of Allah. He had no difficulty in creating us out of nothing, and he has no difficulty whatsoever in recomposing the elements of our body and giving us life once again. It will be a marvellous spectacle which will astound all of

creation. The resurrection of the body will be the most powerful manifestation of the infinite justice of Allah.

The Resurrection will be in the Same Body

It is important to realize that the Resurrection is going to be in the same body the person possessed in the world. If it were a new creation or body, it would mean that the body that committed the sins in this world would be safe from any punishment. To be resurrected with a new body and have the body punished would be against what it just.



Allah has the ability to recreate the bodies even after they have broken up and have fallen to pieces. Humans can not comprehend how exactly that is possible – like so many aspects that man cannot grasp. But Allah has stated it, and a believer realizes full well that it is true, and well within Allah's power to do so. However, man wishes to continue to go on disobeying His commands as much as he can ahead of him (verse 5). He wishes to persist in denial of the truth. Instead of preparing for the afterlife, man asks, 'When is the Day of Resurrection?'

The Day of Resurrection is True

Humans will be brought back to life after death in order to account for their deeds. The *soorah* confirms: **On that Day man will be informed of what he sent forward and what he left behind.** (Verse 13)

The *soorah* presents a detailed description of the Day of Judgement. It describes the events that precede and follow it. Some of the aspects of the Day of Resurrection mentioned in this *soorah* are: the vision will be confounded by fear. The moon will lose its light. The sun and the moon will be brought together.

Some General Aspects of the Day

Belief in the Last Day means belief in everything that the Qur'an or the Prophet ﷺ has stated about the events of that Day and thereafter.

The *soorah* indicates some of its general aspects, and there are other aspects that the Qur'an or Allah's Messenger ﷺ mentioned in other places. The more knowledge of that Day and its events one has the greater the effect, this belief will have on him. Hence, it is highly recommended for each and every Muslim to learn about the events that will occur before or after the Day of Rising. We will discuss other aspects of the Day in detail in another lesson, *inshaa Allaah*.

Man will be Informed on that Day of what He Sent Forward

Alas! The hustle and bustle of life tends to blind man's vision of this tremendous Day! The Qur'an asks, 'Does man think that he will be left neglected? (Verse 36)



The world has not been created for sport. People will one day be accountable to Allah for their actions. They will realize what preparations they have made for the afterlife. Allah will set up balances of justice on the Day of Resurrection. None will be treated unjustly in anything. If there be the weight of a mustard seed, Allah will bring it forth. Allah has made it clear that all deeds will be weighed on the Day of Judgement. Allah has the ability to weigh them. No human has any conception of the scales themselves that will be used on that Day (*Soorat al-A'raaf*: 8-9). Likewise, no human has any notion of the weight of particular deeds. But it is certain that Allah will weigh them and He is Just. Each deed will weigh exactly what it is truly worth to Allah's Scales. Man will put forward excuses on that Day. He will ask, 'Where is the escape?'

'Move not your tongue with it to hasten with it...' (Verses 16-19)

Here Allah, the Most High, is teaching His Messenger ﷺ how to receive the revelation from the angel. For Allah's Messenger ﷺ would rush in his attempt to grasp it. He would recite with the angel while he was conveying it. Therefore, Allah tells him that when the angel brings some revelation to him, he should just listen. Allah would have it collected in his breast. He would make it easy for him to recite it in the same way it was revealed. So the first phase was gathering it in his breast; the second phase was recitation; and the third phase was the explanation and clarification of its meaning.

Imaam Ahmad records from Abdullaah ibn Abbaas رضي الله عنهما, 'After this [verse was revealed], and Jibreel عليه السلام left, the Prophet ﷺ would recite it as Jibreel had taught him to recite it.' (Ahmad, and it is *saheeh*) This is also recorded by al-Bukhaaree and Muslim. Al-Bukhaaree's version reads, 'So whenever Jibreel came to him, he would be silent. After Jibreel had left, he would recite it just as Allah, the Mighty and Sublime, had promised him.'



- What do you know about the resurrection of the human body? Why will man be resurrected in the same body?
- How will Allah do justice on the Day of Judgement?
- What are the three phases of revelation to the Prophet ﷺ ?

The Qur'an as a Whole

Allah's Messenger ﷺ was repeatedly pestered by the disbelievers with questions and objections about the hereafter. They would sarcastically ask him, 'When will the Day of Judgement be?' (Verse 6) Such questions and objections naturally worried the Prophet ﷺ. He relied upon revelation for the answers. In fact, it was revelation that provided him with the blueprint for action. It aided him in coping with the current problems, prepared him for the task of the future, sustained him intellectually and gave him spiritual support. He, therefore, anxiously awaited the coming of the revelation.

When it came, he would eagerly try to acquire all of it at once. It is this eagerness that the Noble Qur'an is here speaking of! The Qur'an is saying that revelation is being sent to the Prophet in accordance with a certain plan. He should, therefore, not attempt to hasten with it. Allah has taken it upon Himself to preserve and expound the Qur'an for him. After advising Allah's Messenger ﷺ, from verse 20 onwards, the *soorah* again connects with the main theme of the hereafter. It is important to realize that these verses (16 to 19) are not disconnected. They bear an integral, deep relation to the *soorah*.



Give full Thought to every *Verse*, Word and Phrase of the Qur'an. (Verse 18)

These verses have also a wider message for the believers. They apply to every believer who reads, listens to, or studies the Qur'an. The Qur'an here lays stress on the need to take in the Glorious Qur'an slowly, patiently. It commands the believers to give full thought to the meaning of every *aayah*, every word, and every phrase of the Qur'an. It advises them to avoid the kind of haste which would seem mechanical readiness of the tongue, lacking reflection and sincerity, for this might lead the person who reads, recites or listens, to remain satisfied with the beautiful sound of the Qur'anic language without understanding, or even paying adequate attention to its message.

'You love the present [life of this world] and neglect the hereafter.' (Verses 20-21)

These verses generalize the theme of man's love of the here and now (*al'aajilah*). They condemn haste of all kinds. The Qur'an diagnoses the disease of the disbelievers. The only thing that has caused them to reject the Day of Judgement and to oppose the Mighty Qur'an is their love of the present worldly life. They are preoccupied and distracted from the hereafter.

This world can get the person so engrossed that he forgets the hereafter. He gets deceived into believing that the goals of this life are worth living for, even if one neglects one's duties towards Allah, the Most High.

A Thought-Provoking *Hadeeth* Comparing this World and the Other World

Muslim records that Allah's Messenger ﷺ said, 'By Allah! This world [with all its bounties and its length] with respect to the hereafter is not but as if one were to dip his finger into the ocean and see with what it comes out (compared to what it leaves in the ocean).' This world could be very tempting and appealing.

Two Classes of People

With respect to the world, humans are divided into two classes. First are those who reject the idea that there is an abode after this world for reward and punishment. The only concern for these people is to enjoy this world and take advantage of its pleasures as much as they can. They enjoy themselves. They eat as grazing cattle eat. The ultimate abode of such people, if they do not repent, would be the Fire.

The other class of people is those who recognize that there is an abode after death for reward and punishment. These are those who follow the teachings of the Qur'an and the teachings of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

It is important to realize that man in this world is like a slave, sent by his master to another land to fulfil an objective. His aim ought to be to fulfil the task as soon as possible, and then return to his land and owner.

Seeing Allah in the Hereafter (Verses 22-23)

The believer's seeing Allah in the abode of the hereafter is confirmed in the authentic *hadeeth*. Al-Bukhaaree and Muslim recorded that one night Allah's Messenger ﷺ looked at the moon when it was full and said, "Truly, you will see your Lord as you see this moon! So if you are able to avoid missing a prayer before the rising of the sun (*Fajr* prayer) and before its setting [*Asr* prayer], then do so."

The Blackening of the Faces of the Disobedient (Verses 24-25)

The faces of sinners will be overcast with despair on that Day. Their faces will be gloomy. This will be due to their disobedience to Allah. They would become certain that they are going to enter the Hellfire.



- Why do you think the Prophet ﷺ was being hasty in grasping the revelation?
- How should the Qur'an be actually recited?
- What, according to the Qur'an, is the only cause for the disbelievers to reject the Judgement Day?
- How will the disbelievers look on Judgement Day?

The Spectacle of Death

The next five verses (26-30) describe the scene of death. In these verses, man's attention is drawn to his approaching death. He should not neglect it. The heedless person ignores his death until his soul comes to the collarbone. The healers fail to heal him. His people look for enchanters to save him. When he realizes that it is the final moment of his life in this world, he knows for sure that neither his repentance nor any righteous deed is accepted. It is, therefore, necessary for a wise person to make amends before the arrival of this moment.

The statement 'when the leg is wrapped around the leg' may signify the last day of the days of this world, and the first day of the days of the afterlife. One affliction will be joined to another. The agony of leaving this world will be joined to the agony of punishment awaiting the disbelievers in the next world.

The Mention of the Case of the Disbeliever (Verses 31-35)

The verses 31-35 speak of the person who did not accept the truth when he was alive, nor did he offer prayers. On the contrary, he denied the truth, turned away from it and went back arrogantly to his folks. The spectacle presented here is of a man who considers himself self-sufficient. A material man, not in need of any divine guidance!

The Stages of Human Creation (Verses 36-40)

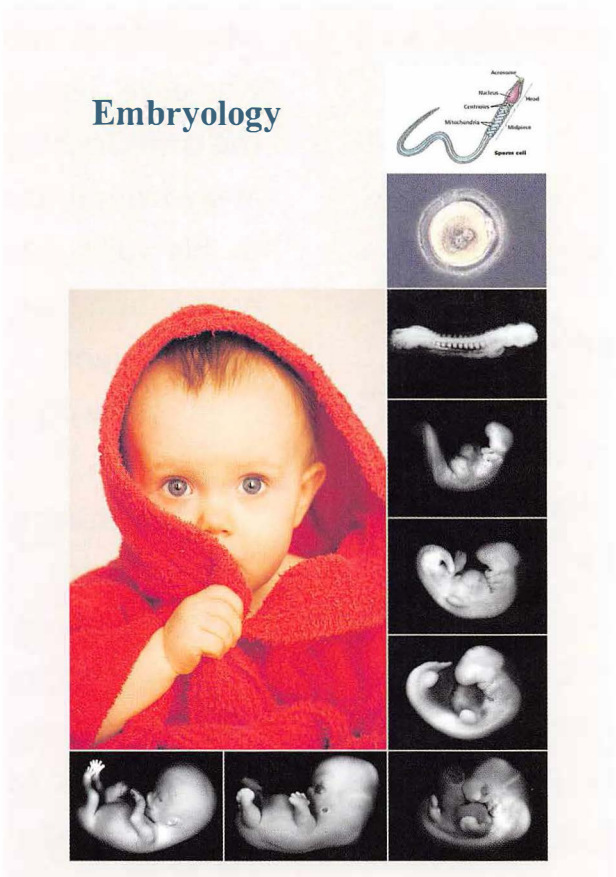
Man will not be left neglected. He is also not being neglected in this worldly life. He is commanded to do certain things and is forbidden to do certain things. He will not be neglected in his grave. He will be resurrected.

The next four verses describe the various stages of the birth of man. It should lead a thinking man to believe in the resurrection and the afterlife. The One, who is able to create a human from a tiny portion of a small amount of fluid, is certainly able to recreate such a human after his death. In fact, creating again should be considered much easier a task than the first creation.



- What does 'when the leg is wrapped around the leg' mean?
- What message does Allah want to give us by describing the stages of creation?

The story of human creation and development is miraculous. It is very fascinating. Elsewhere (*Soorat al-Mu'minoon*, 23:12-14) the Qur'an mentions seven different stages of human creation. We will discuss the fascinating story of man's creation in detail in Grade 10, *Inshaa Allaah*.



Exercise

A. Fill in the blanks.

1. *Soorat al-Qiyaamah* deals with the concept of _____.
2. The human conscience represents the _____ which Allah would establish on the Day of Resurrection.
3. _____ will be the most powerful manifestation of the infinite justice of Allah.
4. Man in this world is like a _____.
5. 'You will see your Lord as you see this _____.'
6. At the time of death, neither _____ nor _____ is accepted.

B. Think-up

1. Why do you think Allah speaks of the Day of Resurrection as though it had already occurred?
2. With the help of your teacher, read up relevant books on the signs of the Day of Resurrection.

31

Repentance (*Tawbah*)

The Quality of a Believer

The Term *Tawbah*

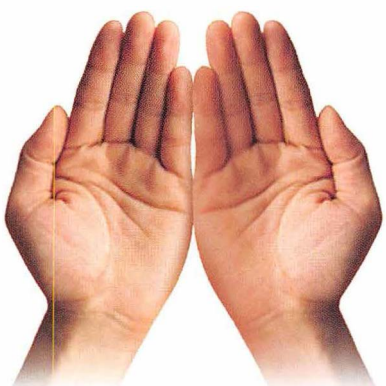
The word *tawbah*, repentance, originally means 'turn,' as in, to turn towards someone or something. It is often used in the Noble Qur'an.

In reference to man, the term *tawbah* means turning in repentance towards his Lord. In reference to Allah, He is *At-Tawwaab* – turning to forgive.

The Noble Qur'an and *Tawbah*

The Qur'an says, 'And repent to Allah, all together, O believers, that you might succeed.' (24:31)

It also says, 'O you, who believe, turn to Allah with sincere repentance. Perhaps your Lord will acquit you of your evil deeds and admit you into Gardens underneath which rivers flow.' (66: 8)



What is *At-Tawbah an-Nasooh*?

What is meant by sincere repentance (*tawbah nasooh*) is the kind of repentance that is wholly and purely for Allah. It is entirely empty of any hidden motive whatsoever. The adjective *nasooh* comes from the same root as the noun *nisaah*, which is the Arabic word for a plain thread used in sewing. It is as if sins tear one's religion apart and it is then mended and put back together again by sincere repentance. This kind of repentance is simple. It is sincere and straightforward. It is without complications. It is free from attachments and contains no sly tricks of a fox.

Tawbah and *Rujoo'*

Rujoo' is sometimes used as a synonym (a word that has the same or nearly the same meaning) for *tawbah*. *Rujoo'* means returning, going back or coming back. Hence, *tawbah* indicates returning (*rujoo'*) from that which is blameworthy to that which is praiseworthy according to the Islamic Law (*Sharee'ah*), in awareness of the fact that sins and acts of disobedience distance those who commit them from Allah, while abandonment of such offences brings one near to Allah.

It is important to realize that when repentance is *nasooh*, it advises or prompts the repentant to refrain from going back to that from which he has repented. This is because it is genuine. In other words, when repentance is *nasooh*, it means that one repents and then does not return to the sin. It means that the penitent seeks forgiveness, feels remorse in his heart and keeps his lower self *(nafs)* under control.

Repentance of Every Kind of Sin is a Necessary Duty

Repentance (*tawbah*) of every kind of sin is a necessary duty *(waajib)*. According to Muslim scholars, it is strictly necessary to repent from every sin. Repentance should not be delayed, whether the offence is major or minor.

Conditions for the Validity of *Tawbah* – Sincere Repentance

1. The act of repentance must be done purely for the sake of Allah. It should not, for instance, be for the sake of reputation, to be seen by others, or to please them. The repentant person's sole intent must be a return to the proper submission to Allah. This condition of sincerity in one's intention is a condition for every action.
2. Remorse: The repentant must feel remorse for the sin that he has committed. Allah's Messenger ﷺ is reported to have said, 'Remorse is (the main element of) repentance.' (Ahmad, and it is *saheeh*) The repentant must feel that the deed which he has done was wrong. He must feel sorry about it. He should wish in his heart that he had never committed that sin.
3. The repentant must stop committing the sin. The Qur'an speaks of those who truly repent in the following words:

وَٱلَّذِينَ إِذَا فَعَلُوا۟ فَٰحِشَةً أَوْ ظَلَمُوٓا۟ أَنفُسَهُمْ ذَكَرُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ فَٱسْتَغْفَرُوا۟ لِذُنُوبِهِمْ وَمَن يَغْفِرُ ٱلذُّنُوبَ إِلَّا ٱللَّهُ وَلَمْ يُصِرُّوا۟ عَلَىٰ مَا فَعَلُوا۟ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٣٥﴾

"And those who, when they commit a gross indecency *(faahishah)* or wrong themselves, remember Allah and pray for the forgiveness of their sins – for who but Allah can forgive sins? – and who do not knowingly persist in doing the wrong they may have done." (3: 135)

Thus, it follows that he who says he repents and continues to commit the same sin is lying. Moreover, if the offence involves a human right, part of repentance then would be to undo the wrong that someone has committed towards the victim. He must release himself of what he owes to the victim; for instance, if a person has stolen something from someone, he must return the stolen property to its rightful owner. If it is

not possible, then the person who has committed the theft should give the article or a similar amount of wealth in charity with the intention that its reward should go to the one from whom he has stolen it.

4. Firm determination to abstain from sin in the future. He must be determined not to repeat that sin again. If a person claims to repent but knows deep in his heart that if he gets an opportunity to commit that sin again he would do so, then such a person has not repented adequately. If, however, he slips in the future and commits that sin again, against his desire, this would not affect the act of his repentance. His repentance would stay valid. But he should renew his repentance and determine not to repeat it.
5. The sinner must repent before it gets too late. He must repent before the pangs of death overtake him. Allah, Most High, says in the Glorious Qur'an,

'And of no effect is the repentance of those who continue to do evil deeds until death faces one of them and he says, "Now, I repent," nor for those who die while they are unbelievers. For them We have prepared a painful torment.' (*an-Nisaa'*, 4: 18)

Hence, every sinner should do his best to turn to Allah and seek His forgiveness. Allah, Most High, is pleased with the repentance of His slaves. He is always willing to forgive them. The door of repentance is open.

Istighfaar (Seeking Forgiveness) and _Tawbah_ (Repentance)

The Noble Qur'an mentions *istighfaar* by itself and sometimes along with *tawbah*. It is important to realize that when it is mentioned alone, it implies *tawbah*, just as when *tawbah* is mentioned alone, it implies *istighfaar*. Each one is included in the other.

It is essential for the servant to repent from all the sins he may have committed. If he repents from one of them, his repentance for that particular sin is valid, but he would remain accountable for those sins he has not repented from. The necessity of repentance is proven by evidence from the Book and the *Sunnah*.

Repentance in _Hadeeth_

As reported by Muslim, Allah's Messenger ﷺ once said, 'O people, repent to Allah, for I repent a hundred times each day.' Al-Bukhaaree records on the authority of Abu Hurayrah رضي الله عنه who said, 'I once heard Allah's Messenger ﷺ say, "By Allah, I seek Allah's forgiveness and I repent to Him more than seventy times each day."'



- What is meant by sincere repentance?
- What example is used to describe the term 'sincere repentance'?
- When repentance is *nasooh*, what does it mean?
- Under what conditions will *tawbah* be considered valid?
- How should one repent if one has violated another person's rights?

Allah's Messenger ﷺ also said, 'Allah's happiness will the repentance of His servant is far greater than the joy experienced by one of you when he comes across his camel after losing it in a desert land.' (al-Bukhaaree)

He also said, 'Allah extends His Hand by night to invite the evil-doer of the day to repent; and He extends His Hand by day to invite the evil-doer of the night to repent, until the sun rises from its setting place (i.e. from the west, before the Day of Judgement). (Muslim)

One Must not Despair, no Matter how Great One's Sins are

Allah says, 'Say, "O my servants who have transgressed against themselves (by committing sins) despair not of the Mercy of Allah. Certainly, Allah forgives all sins. Truly, He is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful.'" (39: 53)

No matter how great one's sins might have been, one need not despair. The door of repentance is always open. It is open as long as one lives, and the throes of death have not overtaken him. In *saheeh al-Bukhaaree* and *saheeh Muslim*, Allah's Messenger ﷺ tells of a man who has killed one hundred people, yet because of his sincere desire to repent, Allah showed Mercy to him. Even *shirk*, the most tremendous sin a man could commit, is forgiven by Allah once the person sincerely repents and abandons it. It is, however, very important to realize that dying upon *shirk* is not forgiven.

The Word *Faahishah*

The word *Faahishah* as well as its derivative *fahshaa'*, is often used in the Qur'an (2: 168-169; 4:22; 7:80; 12:24; 17:32, etc.) We have translated it as 'gross indecency'. The word *faahishah*, however, includes the most ghastly of all sins. It actually means excess or overstepping the limits and proper measures in everything. In this sense, the word implies evil or lewdness. Some scholars have interpreted the word *faahishah* in this verse (3: 135) to mean adultery. Homosexuality is also called *faahishah* in the Qur'an (7: 80).



- What will happen if a Muslim repents of some of the sins but not of others?
- According to a *hadeeth*, Allah is delighted when His slaves repent. Comment.
- Under what circumstances will Allah forgive the unforgivable sin of *shirk*?
- Describe the word *faahishah*. How does Islam deal with Muslims who are deep in sins?

It is important to note that Islam is so tolerant that it neither considers those who sink to lowest depths as outcasts, nor does it deprive them of Allah's Mercy. Never does Islam slam the door in the face of a weak sinner, leaving him lost in the wilderness. Never does it make him feel permanently rejected, afraid to turn back. On the contrary, it shows him the way. It holds his trembling hand. It steadies him and gives him the light he needs to return to the secure refuge. It only requires one thing from him, namely, that his heart does not grow so 'hardened' as to make him turn away from Allah.

When someone's disobedient son, who has run away, knows that nothing awaits him at home except flogging, he will never return. However, if he realizes that there are tender arms to welcome him when he apologizes for his misdeeds and which will forgive him when he asks for pardon, he will certainly come back. But the Gracious Qur'an places one condition. That condition is that the sinner should remember Allah and pray to Him to forgive his sins. He should not persist with his wrongdoing, knowing that it is sinful. By doing so, the wrongdoer would remain entitled to His Forgiveness, Mercy and Bounty. Allah's Messenger ﷺ once said, 'One who repents from sin is like one who has not sinned at all!' (Ibn Maajah, and it is *hasan*)

Exercise

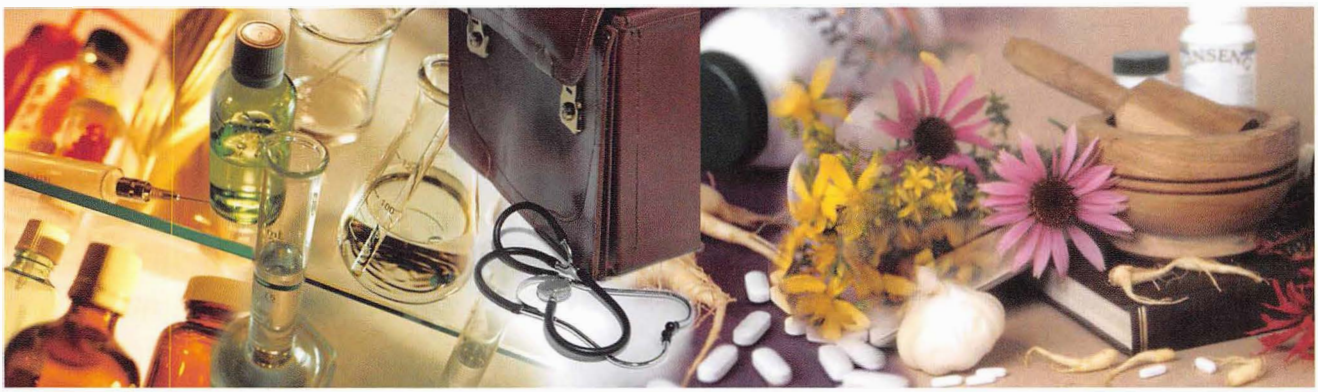
A. Fill in the blanks.

1. *Tawbah* means _____ on the part of man and _____ on the part of Allah.
2. Repentance should not be delayed whether the offence is _____ or _____.
3. A believer must repent before the pangs of _____ overtake him.
4. However great one's sins are, one must not _____.

32 Islam and the World of Sciences

Contributions of Muslims to the Advancement of Medical Science

Islamic science, that is the sciences developed by Muslims from the second Islamic century onward, is certainly one of the great achievements of Islamic civilization. The significance of the work of Muslim scholars in mathematics, astronomy, geography, physics and medicine, is undeniable.



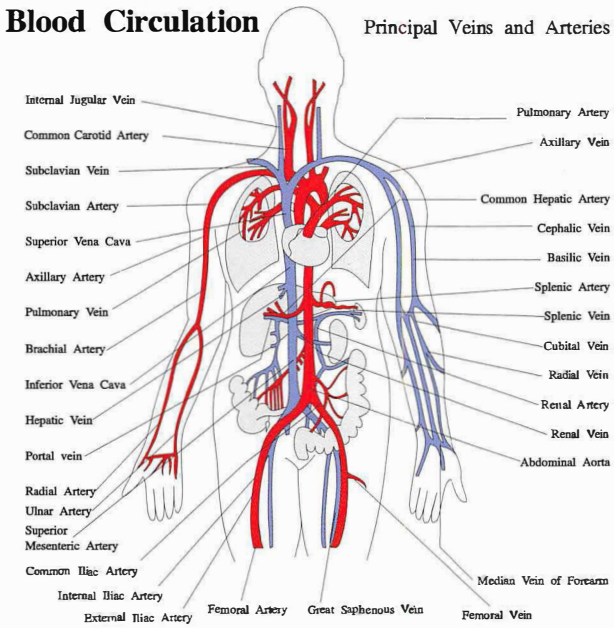
The Field of Medicine

One of the most extensive fields of activity in the Islamic sciences and one which occupied the attention of Muslim scientists is medicine. The early Arabs came in touch with Greek, Iranian, and Indian medical systems. They studied them and preserved them. They wrote on medicine and surgery and laid the foundations of the renaissance in Europe. As early as the tenth century CE, Cordova was the most cultured city in Europe.

In Baghdad, in 1168 CE, there were as many as sixty organized medical institutions. The Mustansiriyyah Medical College at Baghdad had magnificent buildings, luxurious furniture, a library with rare scientific books and a great dining hall to serve food to the students. Female nurses served the sick and the patients.

Abdul-Lateef of Baghdad wrote many books on anatomy. He dissected the human body in the eleventh century in order to obtain more knowledge concerning human anatomy. Muslim anatomists held that the human skull consisted of eight bones while Galen had thought that there were only seven bones.

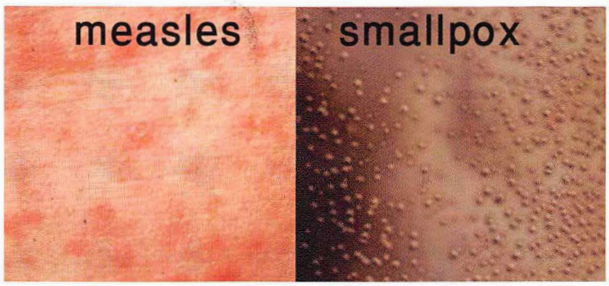
In the field of physiology, Burhaan-ud-deen wrote that blood contained sugar. Ar-Raazee (the famous Rhazes of the European world) discovered a sour matter (acid) in the stomach. He was one of the greatest Muslim physicians who is said to have used alcohol for the first time as a medical antiseptic.

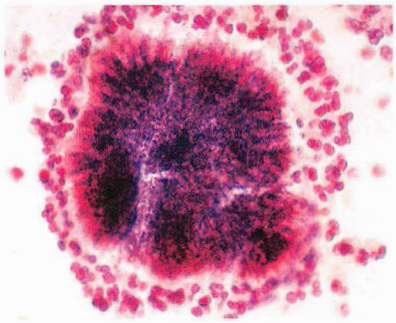


It was three hundred years before Sir William Harvey that Ibn Abi Hazm of Damascus explained the theory of the circulation of blood in detail and proved that food is fuel for the maintenance of the body's heat.

In the Middle Ages, you could buy a very famous ointment in France. It was supposed to cure almost anything, which of course it did not. It was known as Blanc de Rhazes, after the famous doctor and scientist ar-Raazee. The interesting thing is not the ointment itself, but its name. The shopkeepers were aware that with ar-Raazee's name, people would buy it. This is just one of the proofs that show how Western Europe trusted the medicines of the Muslim World.

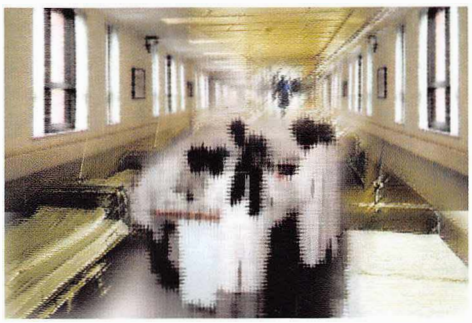
Caliph al-Ma'moon had the books of the Greek medical scientists translated into Arabic. Soon new medical textbooks on these works were being used all over Islamic lands.



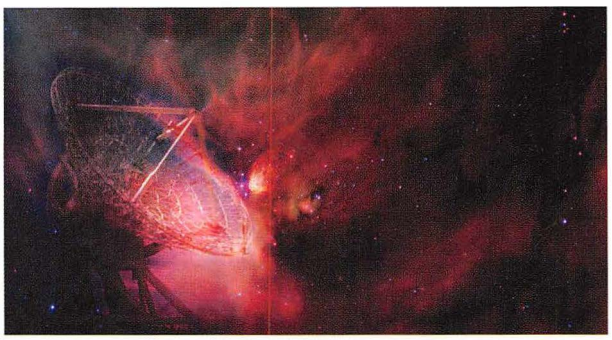


bacterial-infection

Ar-Raazee wrote the earliest book we have about infectious diseases, in which he clearly set out the difference between measles and smallpox. Two of the other books written by ar-Raazee were translated into Latin. These became the main textbooks for Medical students in Western Europe in the Middle Ages.

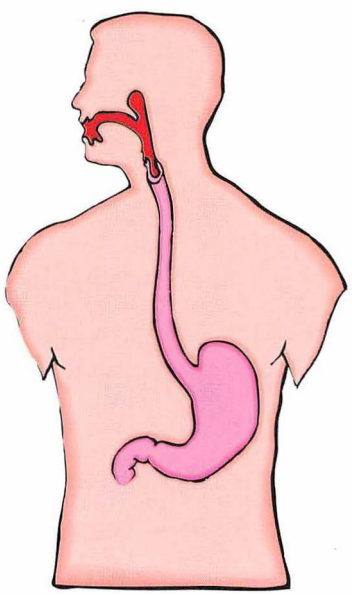


The larger hospitals in the great cities were teaching centres as well. Each hospital had separate sections for male and female patients. The chief pharmacist ran the pharmacy where medicines were made according to the physician's prescription.



Muslim scholars did not always concentrate on just one subject, as many scholars do nowadays. Consider the case of Abu Rayhaan al-Beeroonee. He was born in 362 AH (973 CE) in the land between the Caspian Sea and the Oxus. He was an astronomer, a mathematician and a student of the life sciences. He found time to master the Sanskrit language and was able to write a valuable book about India. He also wrote a biography of ar-Raazee, and compiled a list of his books. Altogether ar-Raazee had written 175 books. Al-Beeroonee himself was still working on a book of pharmacology when he was eighty.

Ibn Seenaa (Avicenna of Europe) explained the process of digestion and discovered that the secretions in the mouth mixed and digested, long before this was known to the West.



Ibn Seenaa excelled in bacteriology the basis of modern-day medical science, which is a product of research on germs. The theory of germs causing disease was thus developed by Arab scientists. Abul-Faraj discovered the canals in the nerves through which sensations flow.

Muslims in Turkey treated smallpox through vaccination in 1679. This system was made popular in Europe in the eighteenth century through Lady Montague, wife of the British Ambassador in Turkey. Bahaa ad-Dawlah described hay fever first in 1507, which was discovered by Europeans centuries later. Abul-Hasan at-Tabaree was the first physician who acquainted the world with scabies.



Abul-Qaasim az-Zahraawee invented several surgical instruments. Anaesthesia (the use of a drug that makes a person or animal unable to feel anything) was applied by the Arab doctors to keep the patient unconscious as long as seven days while conducting major operations.



Eye surgery was highly developed. Ar-Raazee was the first to give an account of the operation for the removal of cataracts. The Arab doctors even prescribed spectacles having lenses of various powers for defective vision. It was Ibn Seenaa who advised for the first time that all the adjoining parts and affected vessels should be removed in the operation for the treatment of cancer. A woman eye-specialist was most renowned in ancient Arabia.



The works of Ibn Seenaa are in a sense the crowning achievement of early Islamic medicine. The western world used to call Ibn Seenaa 'the Prince of Physicians'. His book *The Canon* is without a doubt the most famous of all medical books in the history of medicine. It was taught for several hundred years in the western world and is still taught wherever traditional medicine survives.

What should be our attitude to modern learning?

Islam is not opposed to education, and the allegation that it does is unfounded. It is not necessary to quote here verses of the Qur'an or the sayings of the Prophet ﷺ in defence of the Islamic attitude towards learning. History proves beyond any doubt that no religion has ever given a spark to scientific progress comparable to that of Islam. Islam has never been a barrier to progress and science.



It is important to note that it is the negligence of the Muslims and not any deficiency in the teachings of Islam that has caused our present decay. We must, therefore, have the will to learn and progress and to become scientifically and economically efficient. But the important matter is that we must remain Muslims. We should not exchange the spiritual civilization of Isam for the materialistic experimentation of the west.

Exercise

A. Fill in the blanks.

1. Ar-Raazee is known as _____ in the European world.
2. It was _____ and not Sir Willaim Harvey who first explained the system of blood circulation.
3. In the west, Ibn Seenaa was called _____.

B. Answer the following questions.

1. Write briefly about the contribution of ar-Raazee to medicine.
2. How was the treatment of small pox through vaccination made known to the western world?
3. What was Ibn Seenaa's contribution to medicine?
4. What precaution should we take while advancing in science?

Food in Islam



Islam Permits what is Wholesome

Allah Most High says in the Qur'an:

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلنَّاسُ كُلُوا۟ مِمَّا فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ حَلَٰلًا طَيِّبًا وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا۟ خُطُوَٰتِ ٱلشَّيْطَٰنِ ۚ إِنَّهُۥ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُّبِينٌ ﴿١٦٨﴾

'O Mankind! Eat what is good and lawful on the earth. And do not follow in the footsteps of Satan. He truly is an outright enemy to you' (2: 168)

Tayyib, or good, here means lawful, and that is emphasized by the use of the actual legal term *halaal* immediately after it. The term *tayyib* denotes good, pleasant and wholesome (good for health). Thus, Allah speaks to all the people on the earth. He calls upon them to eat of the good things which He has provided for them.

All Life Belongs to Allah

All life, human as well as animal, belongs to Allah. Animals, however, have been created for the benefit of men. Man has duties towards them. He will be accountable to Allah for their proper treatment.

Allah says in the Qur'an, concerning the animals, **'And He has created cattle for you; you derive warmth from them and various other uses; and from them you obtain food; and you find beauty in them when you drive them home in the evenings, and when you take them out to pasture in the mornings. And they carry your loads to many a place, which otherwise you would be unable to reach without great hardship to yourselves. Indeed, your Lord is Most Gracious, Most Merciful.'** (16: 5-7)

Cattle give warmth as we use their hide, wool and hair. They have even further benefits. We also obtain milk and meat from cattle. As part of its comprehensive guidance, the Qur'an stipulates how animals are to be treated, what animals can be used for food by humans and how their meat is to be made pure and wholesome. The Qur'an specifies in greater detail what is forbidden.

'Forbidden to you is carrion, and blood, and the flesh of swine, and that

over which any name other than Allah's has been invoked; and the animal that has been strangled, or beaten to death, or killed by a fall, or gored to death, or savaged by a beast of prey, except which you yourselves may have slaughtered while it was alive; and (forbidden to you is) all that has been slaughtered upon idolatrous altars.' (*al-Maa'idah*, 5: 3)



1. Carrion or dead animals

The decaying flesh of dead animals is unhygienic and offensive to human taste. Animals that die of natural causes are almost universally regarded as unfit for consumption. Animals may also die of a disease or from eating poisonous plants or food. Another important reason why carrion cannot be considered for food by a Muslim is that their death was not brought about for the purpose of providing food. There was no opportunity to declare the intention, or *niyyah*, of taking the animal's life for the sake of food. Such intention is an essential part of preparing an animal for food, in Islam.

Centuries after the Qur'anic command was revealed, modern medical research has shown that both carrion and flowing blood attract harmful germs and carry deadly substances. There could be many more reasons why they are forbidden by Islam, which modern medical science has yet to discover. Allah has made it clear that this type of food is not wholesome. This is all that we need to know, because Allah forbids what is evil and what harms human life in one way or another. It does not matter whether or not such harm is known to man. Human knowledge remains limited. It does not know everything that causes harm and all that is useful.

2. Flowing blood

Blood carries organisms which are responsible for various diseases. It is, therefore, harmful to consume blood.

One of the greatest harmful effects of consuming blood is psychological. It may induce wild and savage behaviour. It may also destroy the pure human nature.

3. The Flesh of Swine

The next item is the flesh of swine. Some so-called researchers have raised doubts about its prohibition.



But the pig is an unattractive animal with foul habits. Moreover, it has been shown to be singularly prone to infections with parasitic worms, which are a serious health hazard to humans. Some argue that advances in health care and modern cooking methods have reduced or even eliminated this risk. But there is no guarantee that pig's meat does not carry other risks of which we are yet to become aware.

Islamic Law is well ahead of human sciences by many centuries, and it will remain so. It deserves our complete and unqualified trust. It must be considered the final argument or statement in what is wholesome and what is not. The Qur'an describes the flesh of swine as loathsome (*rijs*). It regards the pig as *khabeeth*, or unclean and not wholesome.

It is the legislation revealed by the One Who is wise and All-Knowing. Apart from this, scholars have found that eating pork diminishes and gradually erases a person's sense of shame in relation to what is decent. This includes the consumption of every form of pork product.

One of the great misconceptions about Islam is just why exactly Muslims abstain from eating pork. Some people in the west make outrageous statements. Some people think Muslims revere the pig as Hindus revere the cow. So, they do not want to eat something they hold in such high esteem! Others think that perhaps Muslims are being punished by Allah, and they are not allowed to eat pork by way of punishment! Some people even hold that the reason Muslims do not eat pork is because it is a pink animal, and Muslims are not allowed to eat things that are pink!

In fact, pork contains harmful things like parasites, worms, bacteria and viral diseases. There have been several cases where humans have had huge tapeworms growing inside them as a result of eating pork. Other types of worms in pork travel through the blood and settle in the human heart, which can trigger a heart episode!

4. The Meat of Animals Slaughtered in Dedication to Other than Allah

This is the fourth category of forbidden meat. The meat of animals slaughtered in dedication to something or someone other than Allah, for example an idol or a saint, is forbidden to Muslims. This prohibition is meant to protect the principle of *Tawheed*. It is Allah Who has created man. He subjected whatever is on earth to him. He gave man the permission to take the life of an animal for his benefit. Man,

therefore, is required to mention the Name of Allah at the time of slaughtering. If the name of other than Allah is mentioned, the permission to take life is void, and the meat of such an animal killed deserves to be made unlawful.

There is nothing physically wrong with the meat. But it is spiritually tainted by the fact that it was sacrificed in reverence of a creature of Allah. This impairs one's loyalty to Allah. This impairs one's faith in Allah. This makes the meat similar to material impurity and filth. Therefore, the use of such meat must be forbidden.



- What does the term *tayyib* indicate?
- What benefits do we derive from animals? What must we do in return?
- Pork in every form is forbidden in Islam. Give reasons.
- Why is it forbidden to eat meat dedicated to other than Allah?

Other Types of Dead Animals

The above are the four principal categories of forbidden animal foods. To these four are added five more categories, which pertain to further classification of dead animals or carrion, as follows:

5. The strangled: An animal which has been strangled, for example, by a rope round its neck, or suffocated, as for instance, by putting its head into something that causes suffocation.
6. The beaten: An animal that has been beaten to death by a club or any other object.
7. Killed by a fall: An animal which dies as a result of a fall from a high place, like a cliff.
8. The gored: An animal which dies as a result of having been gored by the horns of another animal.
9. Savaged by a beast of prey or that which has been partly eaten by wild beasts: This means an animal which has been partially devoured by wild animals and dies as a result.
10. Animals slaughtered on idolatrous altars: The tenth category of prohibited animal meat is that which has been sacrificed to idols. The word *nusub* used in verse 3 of *Soorah* 5 denotes altar stones. Before Islam, there were idols in the Ka'bah, where the unbelievers used to slaughter their animals. The *nusub* were the altar stones set up in pre-Islamic times around the Ka'bah on which the pagan Quraysh used to sacrifice animals to their idols. They also used to throw some of the blood of their slaughtered animals on their idols. Animals slaughtered on such idolatrous altars, wherever they may be, are forbidden, because

of the place of their slaughter, even though the Name of Allah may have been pronounced at the time of slaughter. The action itself is idolatrous.



The Exemption of Seafood

The Islamic *Sharee'ah* has, however, exempted fish, whale and other sea creatures from the category of dead animals. The Qur'an says, **'The game of sea is permitted to you and so its food.'** (5: 96)

Umar ibn al-Khattaab ﷺ used to explain, 'Its game is what is caught from it, and its food is what is thrown out from it.' Al-Bukhaaree and Muslim reported that the Prophet ﷺ once sent some of his companions on an expedition. There they found a huge dead whale by the sea and lived on it for more than twenty days. On their return to Madeenah, they told the Prophet ﷺ about this and he said, 'Eat the food which Allah has brought forth for you, and feed us from it if you have any left.' Then they brought him some whale meat, and he ate it. It is important to note that it is unlawful to eat frogs and crocodiles.



Using Skin, Bones, and Hair of the Animal

The prohibition concerning the dead animal is limited to the eating of its flesh. One can, rather, one should make use of its skin, horns, bones and hair. Throwing them away is a waste, and Islam does not permit waste.

Concerning this, Ibn Abbas ﷺ narrated, 'The freed maid-servant of the Prophet's wife, Maymoonah, was given a sheep, and it died. The Prophet ﷺ passed by its carcass and said, "Why didn't you take its skin to be tanned and use it?" They replied, "But it is dead." The Prophet ﷺ said, "It is eating it that is prohibited." (Reported in all the authentic collections of *hadeeth*, excepting that of Ibn Maajah)

Necessity Dictates Exception

All the above-mentioned prohibitions concerning animal meat apply to situations in which one has a choice. In case of extreme need a different rule applies.

Allah, Most High, says in the Qur'an, **'But those who are driven by necessity, not intending to transgress nor exceeding their need, incur no sin. Allah is much Forgiving, Most Merciful.'** (2: 173)

This is a general Islamic principle in all matters of this kind and can be extended to situations of similar nature. A life-threatening situation creates a necessity which allows a person to eat or drink forbidden things when alternatives cannot be found, within conditions mentioned above.

Scholars agree that necessity in this case signifies the need for food to alleviate hunger when no food other than the forbidden food is available. Some scholars hold that at least one day and night should have passed without eating food. In such a situation a person may eat as much which will satisfy his hunger and thus save him from death. The amount of it is what will alleviate his hunger. He should, however, not eat more than what will keep him alive.

Islam always allows what is easy. It ensures that no affliction is caused to its followers. Hence, matters are left to clear intention and to being conscious of what Allah requires of us. A person who is driven by an extreme situation to eat of these forbidden types of food, having no intention to commit a sin, will not be taken to task. Instead, he will find that Allah is certainly Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

What is Good is Lawful and what is Foul is Unlawful

A *hadeeth* narrated by al-Bukhaaree and Muslim states that Allah's Messenger ﷺ forbade the eating predators with fangs and of any bird with talons. The term predators refers to those animals which prey on others and devour them by tearing them apart; for example, lions, leopards, wolves and the like. 'Birds with talons' are those such as hawks, eagles and falcons.

This lesson is an explanation, although brief, of what is lawful and unlawful. Knowledge of it is the personal obligation (*Fardh 'Ayn*) for every Muslim.



- How much of the illegal food is allowed in times of necessity?
- Why are wild animals and birds with fangs and talons forbidden in Islam?

Exercise

A. Fill in the blanks.

1. _____ is an essential part of preparing an animal for food in Islam.
2. One of the greatest harmful effects of consuming blood is _____.
3. Although Allah's Name may have been announced, meat obtained from animals slaughtered at _____ is forbidden.
4. Although it is forbidden to consume carrion, we can make use of the _____, _____, and _____ of the animal.
5. There should be no intention of _____ while consuming illegal food in times of necessity.

B. Think-up

Sacrificing animals the *Sharee'ah* way rids the animal of all the blood. Read up on different ways of sacrificing animals and find out how the Islamic method of slaughtering is the best way.