

Beginning of the Path

IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE MOST MERCIFUL, THE MOST COMPASSIONATE

INTRODUCTION

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Allah's mercy and peace be upon the most honorable human beings and messengers the Prophet Mohamad Bin Abdellah and his Descendents

For researchers, it is clearly evident that writing a profoundly-rooted text so as to build up the believer is the beginning of the path and meets so many difficulties concerning the priority of the form and content.

In this context, this book had been compiled following blessed efforts, God willing, made by the researchers of Knowledge Center for Islamic Studies and Researches, an offshoot of the Islamic Cultural Knowledge Organization.

In this book, we tried to keep away as much as possible from the language of logic and theological proof, heading instead directly to the language of conscience and sentiment and concentrating on awakening and exciting the nature of human being. This is because that what we badly in need of in these material times... hoping that may Allah grants us success.

Islamic Cultural Knowledge Organization
Knowledge Center for Islamic Studies and Researches

Lesson One:

IN SEARCH FOR THE TRUTH

- **What are the first questions of a human being?**
- **Is life the purpose, end and goal?**
- **What is the way to salvation?**

Introduction:

When man is born, he starts the journey of his life that would last for many years during which he shall face an unknown, hazardous destiny that is filled with hopes and pains. Nonetheless, man is still wondering in an ocean of questions searching for answers that cries out loud: I need the truth; I cannot put up with ignorance ... I shall not feel safe and secure unless I know the answers to these questions: Who am I? Who had brought me here? Why do I exist?

As man asks these questions, he finds out that he does not like to live in the dark; he does not like ignorance; he does not like being sick. Should he not find the correct, satisfactory answers, he would lead a life of anxiousness through which he would not enjoy a grace or shelter to anywhere.

Man, therefore, does not match with unknown because if he stays in unknown, he shall stay in darkness and ignorance. And he does not like both.

Almighty says, "Can he who was dead, to whom We gave life,

and a light whereby he can walk amongst men, be like him who is in the depths of darkness, from which he can never come out? Thus to those without faith their own deeds seem pleasing.”¹

Is life the purpose, end and goal?

Throughout his life, man goes from childhood into adolescence then youth, manhood, middle-age, elderliness, etc... Each of these stages has its own feature through which man tends to a certain conduct or inclination. When young, he is fond of playing. As he grows older, he is attached to pastime activities, amusement and distraction. Later, he is haunted with gaining possessions, such as clothing, vehicles (such as cars) and houses and is also attracted and fascinated with beauty. Upon reaching middle-age, he starts bragging among his peers about his family tree, his education, position, money, etc... As soon as he goes deep into elderliness, he is after more riches and children. About the same, Allah Almighty says, “**Know ye (all), that the life of this world is but play and amusement, pomp and mutual boasting and multiplying, (in rivalry) among yourselves, riches and children...**” then Allah clarifies, “**Here is a similitude: How rain and the growth which it brings forth, delight (the hearts of) the tillers; soon it withers; thou wilt see it grow yellow; then it becomes dry and crumbles away...**” this would happen in life, “**But in the Hereafter is a Penalty severe (for the devotees of wrong). And Forgiveness from Allah and (His) Good Pleasure (for the devotees of Allah). And what is the life of this world, but goods and chattels of deception?**”²

The life of this world, with all its cheerfulness is mortal as well as all other things in it.

If you do not believe, look around you: to your mother, father, and grandfather. All of them were young children, adolescents,

¹ Al Anaam (Chapter 6; Verse 122)

² (Al-Hadid [The Iron] 057.020)

youth, etc... Here they are before you today: all old and elderly. Their heads have become as white as snow, and their faces are marked with the traces of time. They are vulnerable and sick today. Where are youth, beauty, power, vigor and health?

Has life in this world left them anything? Have their riches, family or power kept them from getting old? Not at all.

Now, would you like to become the same as those who wasted their lives in this life and the latter has wasted them, or would you like to learn from what happened to others?

This is life, so is it worth to waste our ages and powers to gain whatever it has to give without taking care of real life?

Imam Khomeini (the great expert in life) says, **“All attacks and retreats, ups and downs in life are gone in no time. We are all shattered under the wheels of time... I have come to this conclusion due to my observations to many various classes: those who are filthy rich have the most inner and psychological pains among others; they have many hopes and expectations which they have not made true and achieved and such pains are more throbbing and even burn the hearts”**³

Imam Al Sadek ^(PBUH) also tells us, **“Life is like the sea water: the more you drink, the thirstier you get until you pass away.”**⁴

Allah describes those who are completely taken by life, who are scooping from it and who have made it their ultimate goal, **“... as if they were to stretch forth their hands for water to reach their mouths but it reaches them not...”**⁵

Life never satisfies hunger and does not deserve to become a goal and we shall inevitably leave it at the end.

What is the way to salvation?

Bottom line: real life is the life of the souls and not the life of

³ Gnostic Commandments

⁴ Al Kafi, Part II, Page 136

⁵ (Ar-Rad [The Thunder] 013.014)

bodies and flesh.

In order to reach such life, Almighty says, **“O ye who believe! give your response to Allah and His Messenger, when He calleth you to that which will give you life...”**⁶

The life that we are called to by Allah and His Messenger is the real life which is full of joys that we shall live eternally in. A life where we shall get to really know our creator who is the absolute truth. Knowing Allah is the purpose and the goal.

Imam Al Sadek (PBUH) says, **“If people knew what favor knowing Allah has, they would not reach out with their eyes into what Allah had given to their enemies of life’s blessings and their life would be equal to nothing more than what they would step on. They would enjoy their knowledge of Allah Almighty and they would take pleasure in it as if they were still in paradise with Allah’s closest and most loyal servants...”**

“Why our Imam,” some say. **“Knowing Allah is an affability from desolateness,”** the Imam continues. We shall never be lonely or alienated.

“It is the Companion in every estrangement,” because Allah is with us, we feel His presence and we know Him.

“The light in every darkness,” so that we shall never fear the dark.

“And the power of every weak and the cure of all sicknesses.”⁷ We shall never suffer any disease.

Who, on earth, would replace and prefer a life that slips away and becomes destroyed to the Everlasting? Who would prefer life to Allah, except he who is a fool?

Imam Al Sadek (PBUH) says, **“He whoever falls for life, his heart shall cling to three traits: eternal grief, unachieved hopes and wishes that are never reached.”**⁸

⁶ (Al-Anfal [Spoils of War, Booty] 008.024)

⁷ Al Kafi, Part IIX, Page 247

⁸ Al Kafi, Part II, Page 320

Conclusion:

You, dear, should stop and contemplate for a moment: would you choose real life and perpetual pleasure and security and come to Allah pleading for His Mercy or waste your life in temporary pleasures that never quench your thirst? Are you to find your way to Allah or stay wandering astray in the dusks of life hopping from one lust into another until Allah gives the order and your life is taken away? Decide. You own your own decision.

Summary:

- Man does not match with unknown because if he stays in unknown, he shall stay in darkness and ignorance. And he does not like both.
- The life of this world, with all its cheerfulness is mortal as well as all other things in it. Life never satisfies hunger and does not deserve to become a goal and we shall inevitably leave it at the end. Bottom line: real life is the life of the souls and not the life of bodies and flesh. Knowing Allah, the Merciful, and finding His Way must be our real goal.

Questions:

1. Does life represent the purpose of the human being and his goal?
2. What is the life that we are invited to by Allah and His Messenger?
3. Label the following statements with TRUE or FALSE.
 - a. Man must know the answer for every question. _____
 - b. Whoever gains happiness in life shall not have it in the Hereafter. _____

- c. Every poor leads a life of misery whereas every rich leads a life of happiness. _____
- d. Man loves life because he believes that is perfect and free of deficits. _____

Additional Reading:

Never Despise or Insult a Believer

The great Hajj Sheikh Mohamad Baker Sheikh Al Islam ^(PBUH) once said:

At the end of collective prayers, I used to shake hands with whoever is sitting on my right and left side.

One day as I finished praying behind the late Mirza Al Shirazi, May Allah elevate his position, I turned and shook hands with the man sitting to my right side who was a very educated brother. A villager was sitting to my left side, so I despised him and did not shake hands with him.

I soon blamed myself for the delusions I had and said to myself, “That despised man as you see may be a believer whom Allah respects.”

Immediately, I turned around and shook his hands with all courtesy. I instantaneously smelled musk that was not like the musk I knew. I was overwhelmed with joy and happiness and asked him, “Are you wearing musk?”

“I never wear musk at all,” the man replied.

I knew then that the odor was a spiritual one and that the villager was a saint and a holy man.

Since then, I undertook not to look with despise to any believer.

Lesson Two:

DO YOU KNOW ALLAH?

- **What are the ways to know Allah?**
- **How do we find the (right) way to Allah? (By Mind/Logic)**
- **How do we find the (right) way to Allah? (By Soul)**

Introduction:

After we have found out in the previous lesson that the purpose of man's existence is to know Allah Almighty and become attached to Him, the following questions must be answered:

The Way to Know Allah:

Human souls can identify things surrounding them and can distinguish among things. Material items are identified by the appropriate sense: visuals are identified by sight; audio by ear, touchable by touching as well as smells and food.

We, consequently, as humans, cannot identify an outstanding scene of nature by hearing, or distinguish between the nightingale's chanting from the crow's croak with our sights, and so on.

As a result, every known, recognized thing has an identifying sense.

But what distinguishes among these senses?

Answer: It is the intellect which is given to us by Allah. Due to mind, we were preferred to all animals. We, for instance, do not put our hand in fire, drink poison or stab ourselves with a knife to death because we have a mind that prevents us from performing such actions that lead to our bereavement.

Thus, a man's mind is the power by which he perceives, checks and identifies things. If senses themselves are incapable of finding the way to Allah, would mind be able to find Allah?

Mind leads to Allah:

Allah says, “**Is there a doubt about Allah, The Creator of the heavens and the earth?**”⁹

If you saw an eye-catching, well-structured house, would you doubt that such a construction was not made by a creative designer?

Should we say that you saw smoke coming out from a certain place, or you smelled something burning, would you doubt for a moment that a fire is giving off that smoke and smell?

When you are walking on the beach and you see foot traces on the sand, would you also doubt for a moment that some has passed and left these traces?

Now, come with me to have a look around us.

This ornamented sky with its moon and stars in the dark and planets that have been swimming in the space for billions of years in their accurately predetermined orbits. These planets would collide and collapse if their velocity and orbit changed. Now let us ask: who calculated the distances, orbits and velocities of these planets?

Do you suspect that there is an extraordinary designing power that is so wise and precise that had calculated, organized and made these things?

Look at rain and its relationship with the earth and reviving it. Look at rain's role in the blooming process of the plants of

⁹ (Ibrahim [Abraham] 014.010)

the earth of which we eat. Would you believe if one told you that he suspects that someone had created these things and made them available for us?

Who had connected these things together?

Man ploughs and seeds, using machines and animals, and manures the land. Rain comes and waters these seeds buried in the ground. These seeds flower and become plants. Then, wind and insects move pollen from one plant to another so that delicious fruits are produced. Who created such relations among the peasant, earth, rain, flowers, plants and insects? Do you quail that Allah is behind all of this?

“Is there a doubt about Allah, The Creator of the heavens and the earth?”

Intelligence rules that there is a great, mighty and wise creator behind all of this who had instinctively created our brains to believe in undisputable knowledge by which we find the way to believe in Allah. We did not use our eyes to believe in Allah but used our brains. As we go through verses of the ‘signs’ that witness, with all its existence, that Allah had created them: **“Soon will We show them our Signs in the (furthest) regions (of the earth)...**

Soul Leads to Allah

Before we start, we complete the previous verse, **“... and in their own souls, until it becomes manifest to them that this is the Truth ...”**¹⁰ But how do souls know their Creator? Allah, our Lord, never left them hesitant and confused in search. Instead, he showed us the way in the Holy Qur'an. Our Lord said, **“O ye men! It is ye that have need of Allah: but Allah is the One Free of all wants, worthy of all praise.”**¹¹

Don't you see with me brother that we people need air to breathe? And if we ran out of air, we would suffocate and die. Don't you see that we need food to live or else we would starve

¹⁰ {Signs} Spelled out (or Ha-Mim), Verse: 53

¹¹ (Fatir [The Angels, Originator] 035.015)

and die? Also, by structure, we need eyes to see, ears to hear, hands to build, work, plant, etc... and we need legs to walk etc...

We need all of that. What forces us to move our hands and legs either to work or to walk is the need because we are weak and vulnerable... we starve... we get thirsty... we would become naked so we are affected by hot sun and chilling cold. As a result, our need and shortage push us to endeavor to satisfy and meet such needs and instincts. So, we are after food to eat, after water to drink and after clothing to avoid and protect ourselves from cold and hot weathers.

As well as our bodies, we are also poor and needy in our souls. We need knowledge, power and ability, highness and nobility, tenderness and sympathy and love and beauty.

Even if our bellies are full with food, we shall always have another craving that asks, "Who would satisfy me?"

Who would secure my fears in the dark of nights?

Who would comfort me in my lonely times?

Who would be with me in my times of alienation?

The answer comes from the deep inside the soul: do not look for whatever satisfies such a need from those who are like you, who are needy and miserable like you, who are starving the same as you are. You, I and all mankind and other creatures are needy and poor. We are suffering poverty. We need someone whose riches never end to satisfy our everlasting needs.

We are very poor and we need someone who has everything... who might it be?

The answer comes running from the depths of your heart: It is Allah, the Absolute Richness, and whose richness and generosity have no limits.

Listen with me to the Dua of Imam Al Sajjad (PBUH) **“O Lord! You distinguished Yourself from your creatures: You are Indispensable of them while they are poor and dependant on You. He whoever tries to ask for his needs from You**

and tries to get rid of poverty by asking You has followed the correct way. On the contrary, he whoever seeks help and searches for his needs from someone else or some of your creatures shall never find what he is longing for and none of his aspirations shall come true. He shall be deprived.”¹²

Imam Khomeini also said in his will to his son Ahmad, May Allah have mercy on their souls, “... **and if you could ask all categories of creatures about who could provide their needs, they would all instinctively reply that they are in need for Him who needs no one and He Who is the perfection of existence...**”

Until he says, “**Attach yourself to the absolute richness (Allah) until you need nothing else and ask Allah to guide you through to reach his sacred square...**”¹³

So my gracious brother, look at yourself and ask it, "Are you a needy poor or not?" It shall surely answer you with yes. Then invite it to know the Richest of the Rich and the Most Generous of All who is Allah because when you know Him, you are the richest person on earth.

Summary:

Human souls can identify things surrounding them and can distinguish among things. The mind granted to us by Allah is a power that man can perceive things when using it. If man's senses are incapable to reach Allah, mind, through verses of the ‘signs’, that witness, with all its existence, that Allah had created them, is able to do so.

¹² Al Sahifa Al Sajjadia

¹³ Meeting Date – Merciful Manifestations, P. 54-55

Questions:

4. Mention in brief the ways stated in the selection to know Allah.
5. State a Hadith (saying) told by the Infallible (Maasoum) ^(PBUH) which clarifies that man is poor and in need of Allah.
6. Label the following statements with TRUE or FALSE.
 - a. The more intelligent a person becomes, the nearest he becomes to Allah. _____
 - b. The greatness of the Universe is a proof on the greatness of the creator. _____
 - c. The poor state of a human being as well as all other creatures is sign on Allah's richness. _____
 - d. Man keeps away of Allah because he thinks he is indispensable of Allah. _____

Additional Reading:

Stories of Friendship

A rare, intimate and peculiar friendship and brotherhood existed between Sayyed Mohamad Baker Al Mirdamad and Sheikh Baha'I, May Allah have mercy on their souls. It was told that Shah Abbas Safawi was in a convoy accompanied by Al Mirdamad and Al Baha'i. He rarely departed them. Contrary to Sheikh Baha'i, Al Mirdamad had a huge body. The Sultan wanted to test their friendship, so he came to Mirdamad who was riding his horse in the tail of the convoy. Mirdamad was so tired that it showed on his face due to his huge body whereas Al Baha'i was racing the wind in the front of the convoy.

The sultan said, “O Sir! Do you see the Sheikh leading the convoy with no courtesy unlike you?”

The Sayyed replied, “O King! The horse of the Sheikh cannot walk slowly because it knows who is riding (an exceptional religious scholar).”

The sultan then came to Sheikh Baha’i and said, “If you look behind you, you will see that Sayyed has been a burden to this convoy due to his heavy weight. A religious scholar, in fact, must be like you: a spiritually exercised with moderate weight.”

“No O King! The horse is tired for it cannot bear the knowledge (in clear reference to Sayyed Al Mirdamad) that is on its back. Even mountains cannot hold and burden such knowledge,” Sayyed replied.

As the sultan realized the intimate relation they had, he got off his horse and prostrated before Allah to thank Him for such a great grace.

There are many stories about their friendship and intentions. They were two pure and sincere scholars.

Lesson Three:

ALLAH CALLS US TO HIM

- How did Allah call us to Him?
- Why did Allah call us to Him?
- What is this call about?

How did Allah call us to Him?

Allah has created us and specified the purpose of creating us when He said, **“I have only created Jinns and men, that they may serve Me.”**¹⁴ And it was interpreted that they may know. In the Divine Hadith, **“I was a concealed treasure and I wanted to be known, so I created every creature so that I could be known...”**

We, to Allah who created us, are dispensable. He does not need to create us. He is generous without limits. He grants what we desire and what is within His Hand. Knowing Allah is amongst the greatest graces granted to us. Allah has created us for this great grace and purpose. As a consequence, and due to His love to us, he has given us this grace: **“When My servants ask thee concerning Me, I am indeed close (to them) ...”**¹⁵

¹⁴ (Adh-Dhariyat [The Winnowing winds] 051.056)

¹⁵ (Al-Baqara [The Cow] 002.186)

Allah is close but his servants are far ... **You do not veil Yourself from Your creatures unless their own misdeeds would block them from You.**¹⁶

Allah even calls us to Him to know him and calls us to love him. He calls us to come close to Him morally and to increase our knowledge in Him and to enjoy such knowledge.

Allah has never left anything without leaving evidence in it that tells about His ability, wisdom, knowledge and generosity. Let us listen to Imam Zein Al Abidin (PBUH) when he says, **“With You I know Thee. You showed and led me to Thee and called me to Thee. If were not for You, I would not know Thee.”**¹⁷

The entire existence calls for Allah, and in the depths of ourselves, an instinctive voice calls us to Allah.

“My knowledge, O' my Master, is that which guides me to You and my love is my intercessor to You, and I am trusting of my evidence with Your guidance and comfortable of my intercessor with Your intercession.”¹⁸

Everything within this existence calls to Allah and guides to Him: the flower, the bee, the atom, a galaxy within a universe, and the depth of our soul. If we followed these things, we shall find that all of them are invitation cards sealed with a divine stamp and are proofs to Allah. Let us listen to the supplication of Imam Hussein (PBUH) on the Day of Arafah:

“O Lord! I knew by the changing and movements of things that Your purpose is to know everything about me so that I would not unaware of anything about You.”¹⁹

Why did Allah call us to Him?

Allah is the Lord of all Worlds, that is, administrating and managing the affairs of human beings and universe is within His Hand alone. He regulates and organizes the universe,

¹⁶ Du`aa Abi Hamzah al-Thumali – Al Mafatih

¹⁷ Du`aa Abi Hamzah al-Thumali

¹⁸ Du`aa Abi Hamzah al-Thumali

¹⁹ Bihar Al Anwar, v 95, p 225

creates the sun and the moon and makes them work for us. He holds the skies, makes them rain and causes plants to grow. Anything that we need, Allah has made it work for us. Allah is the Lord; that is, raising humans and other beings is within His Hand. He leads us to reach the purpose of our existence: happiness. Since we are being created and formed within the wombs of our mothers through our deaths, Allah keeps on taking care of us and providing us with our physical needs, without forgetting our spiritual needs. As He sent us rain, He sent divine, holy books. As he created a lighting sun and glowing moon, He sent us prophets, messengers and Imams. So, as He is the one who provides us with food and drink, as Ibrahim (PBUH) says:

“Who gives me food and drink, And when I am ill, it is He Who cures me;”²⁰

He is the one Who guides, educates and purifies us.

“So fear Allah, for it is Allah that teaches you.”²¹ **“...but Allah doth purify whom He pleases...”**²²

This is why we read the master of those who prostrate, **“O’ Master! I am the young one whom You raised, And I am the ignorant whom You educated, And I am the mislead whom You guided...”**²³

Due to Allah’s mercy, compassion and wisdom, and since He is a Lord, that is a Teacher, He calls us to Him, to get acquainted with him and get closer to Him with our minds and hearts.

Therefore, he called us to him in his Holy Book:

“O ye who believe! Give your response to Allah and His Messenger, when He calleth you to that which will give you life...”²⁴

Consequently, Allah calls us to what gives us life and to be among those who are living...

²⁰ (Ash-Shuara [The Poets] 026.079-080)

²¹ (Al-Baqara [The Cow] 002.282)

²² (An-Noor [The Light] 024.021)

²³ Du`aa Abi Hamzah al-Thumali

²⁴ (Al-Anfal [Spoils of War, Booty] 008.024)

What is this call about?

Listen to the previous verse once again: **“O ye who believe! Give your response to Allah and His Messenger, when He calleth you to that which will give you life...”** Does it not raise your question and wonder? Are we not alive? Then, what is meant by **“to that which will give you life...”** So, let us contemplate this life we lead. With our short sight, we shall find that the living signs are heartbeats and breathing. This is a medical view. Others believe that the survival signs are food, drink and marriage. As for Allah, He Who created life and death, what is real life? Is it the animals' life? Allah has always denied such a life on those who reject Faith since it is a bestial life.

Real life is about leading a life of mind with conscious and spirit, or else whoever has a sense of hearing and does not benefit from it is deaf to Allah. And who ever has a sight and does not use it is a blind man. The same thing applies to anyone who never benefits from his life and does not turn to the lights of Allah's guidance and never listens to his words: Allah looks at him as a dead man.

“Truly thou canst not cause the dead to listen, nor canst thou cause the deaf to hear the call, (especially) when they turn back in retreat.”²⁵

A spirit which has lost Faith and never benefited from the divine guidance calls of Allah is actually dead; and what a death!

Thus, we are dead if we never answer the call of Allah. We are dead if we never answer Allah's invitation to us and never benefit from the lights of divine guidance. To exit our death into real life, we have to look into ourselves and make them pay attention and listen to Allah's words and His messengers' words. This is how we leave the darkness of ignorance and death and get into the light of knowledge and life: **“Can he**

²⁵ (An-Naml [The Ant, The Ants] 027.080)

who was dead, to whom We gave life, and a light whereby he can walk amongst men, be like him who is in the depths of darkness, from which he can never come out?”²⁶

How many lives are bettered by death because in fact they are merely torture for those who own such lives and never feel the same because they have turned their faces away from recalling Allah. He who leads such a life never listens to Allah’s guidance verses, feels the pain of punishment or refrain from what he is doing: **“But whosoever turns away from My Message, verily for him is a life narrowed down, and We shall raise him up blind on the Day of Judgment.”²⁷** Others’ deaths shall change into life. Has Allah not say, **“Whoever works righteousness, man or woman, and has Faith, verily, to him will We give a new Life, a life that is good and pure ...”²⁸**

Allah calls us to live a good life which is so different than the bestial one. A life through which we enjoy security and safety and which is everlasting because then we will be overwhelmed and blessed with Allah’s love and approach Him more, He who has and owns life and death within his hand.

Conclusion:

O Dear! If Allah, the Master of our bodies, is the One Who provides us with nutrition and necessities and He is the Master of our minds Who teaches and guides us, does He not deserve our listening and obedience? **“Say: Shall I seek for (my) Cherisher other than Allah, when He is the Cherisher of all things (that exist)? Every soul draws the meed of its acts on none but itself: no bearer of burdens can bear the burdens of another. Your goal in the end is towards Allah: He will tell you the truth of the things wherein ye disputed.”²⁹**

²⁶ (Al-Anaam [Cattle, Livestock] 006.122)

²⁷ (Ta-Ha [Mystic letters Ta-Ha] 020.124)

²⁸ (An-Nahl [The Bee] 016.097)

²⁹ (Al-Anaam [Cattle, Livestock] 006.164)

Summary:

- Allah has created us and specified the purpose in his Holy Book: He created us to worship him.
- Allah calls us to know, love and approach him so that we could get more acquainted with Him and become more closer to Him.
- Everything within this existence calls to Allah and guides to Him: the flower, the bee, the atom, a galaxy, the universe. All these things are sealed with the divine stamp of Allah.
- We are dead unless we respond to Allah's call and benefit from the divine lights of guidance. We have to exit the darkness of ignorance and death into the light of Allah, knowledge and life.

Questions:

7. Is everything in the universe calls us to worship Allah? Justify.
8. What is the good life that Allah invites us to?
9. Label the following statements with TRUE or FALSE.
 - a. The main purpose of creating man is to come and enter into heavens. _____
 - b. Allah has sent us his messengers and rules so that they advise us only. _____
 - c. Each man has one life only. _____
 - d. The life Allah invites us to is a life of eternal happiness. _____

Additional Reading:

Sayyed Bahr Al Ouloum Tests the Late Narakki

The late Mulla Mahdi Narakki, who was a scholar in many sciences and who wrote '*Jame'a Al Saadat*' in morals and purifying the self, sent a copy of his said book to Sayyed Bahr Al Ouloum in Holy Najaf. Later, he traveled to visit the holy shrines within Najaf and entered the city. Due to his elevated and high position, scholars began to visit him. However, Sayyed Bahr Al Ouloum abstained from visiting him. Days later, Narakki visited Sayed Bahr Al Ouloum, but the later did not give him any attention. Once again, Narakki paid Sayed Bahr Al Ouloum a visit at his home and spent an hour with him. This time was not better than those before since Sayed Bahr Al Ouloum did not pay much attention to Narakki. Another time, Narakki visited Sayed Bahr Al Ouloum without keeping in mind that this time would be better than the previous visits he had paid. That was the third time. When he asked permission to enter and see Sayed Bahr Al Ouloum, the latter came barefooted to receive his guest this time, warmly embraced his guest and even kissed him. He further led his respectfully in. Sayed Bahr Al Ouloum then talked to Narakki saying, "You have written a great book in morals and self-purification and granted us a copy of the same. I have read this book entirely and accurately and it is true to say that it is a very rare and beneficial book. I have not come to see since you came to Najaf and I have treated you with indifference intentionally and deliberately because I wanted to test whether you do and apply in fact what you had written or not. It appeared to me that you have reached the highest level of self-purification. You, yourself, are a book of morals that guides others with your conduct and not with your book."

Lesson Four:

HOW DO YOU ANSWER THE CALL OF ALLAH? (PART I)

(PURIFY YOUR HEART & BODY)

- How do we answer the call?**
- Why do we purify?**
- How do we purify?**

Introduction:

In the previous lesson, we learned that Allah wants us to lead and live the real life which cannot be achieved unless we know him and honor ourselves with getting closer to Him. Thus, He called us to Him and we must answer this call in order to be grateful for Him for honoring and taking care of us. Such response, however, has its morals and forms of purification, prayers, recitation of the Qur'an, dua and supplication, jihad, etc...Now let us begin with the first courtesy that would lead to answering the call of Allah which is purification.

How do we answer the call?

We mentioned in earlier lessons that through out our life we search for real happiness. We also mentioned that the truth for which we have been created and the greatest rejoice that we shall ever achieve is to know Allah and worship him. In fact, it is the greatest pride and happiness.

As we previously mentioned, we are called by Allah to come to him. Allah has honored us with such a call, but let us presume that a great, renowned person invited one of us to a feast during which the latter is to be honored, and supposing that the guest likes that host and the guest wishes to win his host's friendship, we shall see guest taking care of every thing that makes him look decent in order to meet such a host. You shall see that the guest would do his best to be up to the meeting with such person.

He takes a bath, wears perfume, puts on the best of clothes and adds any other decorations that might be fit. Should he know that his host dislikes something, the invited shall avoid doing the same.

Allah wants us to come to Him decorated with all what increases closeness and amicability to Him. He wants us to take off all what would make Him turn His face away from us.

What He ultimately wants from us is to clean ourselves from all material and immaterial filthiness because they prevent us from coming closer to Him. So, He guides us to the way that leads to wining his love; Allah says, **"... and Allah loveth those who make themselves pure."**

Allah loves those who reprimand and purify themselves from sins and loves those who purify themselves from filthiness and dirtiness. Allah also says, **"In it are men who love to be purified; and Allah loveth those who make themselves pure."**³⁰

Why do we purify?

Material things are the image of immaterial ones. For instance, if man left taking care of his body so that he did not clean himself, or take a bath and stayed like this for a period of time, the following would be obtained:

1. The body shall become dirty and the traces of the same shall be evident on the organs of the body.

³⁰ (At-Tawba [Repentance, Dispensation] 009.108)

2. His clothes would become dirty and he shall look repulsive.
3. Rotten smell shall be emitted and prevailed from his body and clothes.

All the foregoing leads to the reproduction of germs, diseases and then death, in addition to the reluctance of other people. Therefore, cleanliness is too important for the safety of the body and soul. This is why the Commander of Faithful (PBUH) said, “**Clean clothes prevent sadness and grief and they are purification for prayers.**”³¹

The Greatest Apostle (PBUH) also said, “**Dirtiness is the worst can a servant do.**”³²

He also described the importance of cleanliness of the body and clothes by saying, “**Purification is halfway to believing.**”³³

As a matter of fact, man is of two dimensions:

First: His appearance and body.

Second: His inside and soul.

Cleanliness of clothing and body is a cleanliness of the outside whereas repentance and good work are the cleanliness of the inside. As we are supposed to take care of the cleanliness of our bodies, clothes, foods and drinks, we are also supposed to pay attention to the knowledge we acquire in order not to contaminate our inside with sins and wrongdoings.

By purifying from griminess, which is material filthiness, with water, we keep and maintain the cleanliness of our bodies and we become decent when we meet people. Cleanliness from immaterial filth is in line with the same.

Impurity condition requiring ritual or major impurity (*Wudui or Ghusul*) or *Al Hadath* in its two aspects hinders fitness and legibility to humans to be among praying individuals or those circling the House of Allah in Mecca. Since Allah knows the effect of slumber, urination, sexual intercourse and touching dead bodies and since He knows that they leave an impeding impact on the honor of worshiping Him, He Himself teaches us how to remove such impediments.

³¹ Truths, P.215

³² Truths, P.215

³³ Truths, P.215

Imam Al Rida (PBUH) said about Ritual Ablution or *Wudui*, “**A servant must be purified whenever he is to stand before Allah for prostration, thus obeying Him in all His orders so pure of the filth and impurities. Purity deletes idleness and slumberousness and chastens the heart to be fit to appear before Allah.**”

How do we purify?

Impurity is of two kinds: material impurity and immaterial (ritual) impurity.

Material Impurity: It is the material filthiness that occurs to the bodies or clothing: urine, feces or stool, blood, semen, dog, pig, wine, beer and dead bodies.

Hadath or immaterial impurity which is sustained by certain actions by man and it consists of two aspects:

Minor Ritual Impurity: Actions that require minor ablution (*Wudui*) to be removed such as snooze, urine, stool, unconsciousness, etc...

Major Ritual Impurity: Actions that require major ablution (*Ghusul*) to be removed such as sexual intercourse, touching of a dead body, etc...

Conclusion:

O Dear Brother! Learn from you have witnessed of life. Man's real life is in his heart and soul not just in his body. If body's and clothes' cleanliness are a must, the man's reality, however, is within his heart. Supposing a person is so accurate and strict in maintaining his apparent cleanliness and had a vulgar and obscene tongue, would he be pure and clean? Should a man be so spiteful and had a dark heart, would he be clean?

Body and clothes have their cleanliness whereas heart and soul have integrity and purity. So, let us be very attentive as for the cleanliness of our hearts. Let us not make them forget Allah. Let us purify them with the water of remorse. Let us

always revive them with knowledge, good work and true doctrines and beliefs.

Have you ever cleansed your heart with the water of atonement? Have you ever cleansed your tongue from the sins of gossip and insincerity? Have you ever purified your soul from hatred, prejudice and envy?

If you have, then you are among purifiers and those who are repentant who are loved by Allah and His Apostle.

How to perform minor ablution?

Go to the place where you are going to perform minor ablution:

1. Wash your face with your right hand vertically from the source-place of hair to your chin and horizontally for the area between your thumb and the middle finger. One time is enough.



2. Wash your right arm from your elbow to the tips of your fingers.



3. Wash your left arm from your elbow to the tips of your fingers.





4. Wipe the forefront of your head top to down for a minimum width of your finger.

5. Wipe the surface of your right foot with the palm of your right hand from the tip of your toes to the



middle of your foot until you reach the place where your foot is adjoined your leg.

6. Wipe the surface of your left foot with the palm of your left hand from the tip of your toes to the



middle of your foot until you reach the place where your foot is adjoined your leg.

Cautions:

1. Before you perform minor ablution, make sure that the organs of minor ablution are pure and remove all materials that hinder water from reaching these organs.
2. The water to be used in minor ablution *Wudu* must be pure, running (flowing) and not extorted.
3. Washing the face from top to bottom and washing the hands from the elbows to the fingers. Reverse washing in both cases is prohibited.
4. Reverse wiping of the head is also prohibited.

Summary:

Allah wants us to come to Him with our decorations on and with all what increases closeness and amicability to Him. He wants us to take off all what would make Him turn around from us. Thus, we must come to Allah with all our purity and repentance.

Body cleanliness is among things that are underlined by Allah at all times especially when trying to approach Him and communicate with Him. “...**Allah loveth those who make themselves pure and repent.**”

Questions:

10. Mention three sayings *Ahadith* about cleanliness.
11. What is the difference between minor and major ritual impurities *Hadath Akbar and Hadath Asghar*?
12. Label the following statements with TRUE or FALSE.
 - a. Allah has ordered us to perform *Wudui* and *Ghusul* for the purpose of cleanliness. _____
 - b. Holy men are those who are not interested in their bodies and never take care of their souls. _____
 - c. *Wudui* consists of two washes and two wipes. _____
 - d. The right and left hands must be washed three times. _____

Additional Reading:

The Old Man and the Two Little Boys

Hassan and Hussein (PBUT) passed by an old man who was performing minor ablution (*Wudu*) and they found out that he was performing it in a bad way. They, Peace Be Upon Them, were little children, but the religious obligation compels them to guide him to the right way of performing the minor ablution. However, how would they do that without hurting his feelings and thus their guidance would leave a wound in his soul? The old man may consider such guidance as a despise to him and he might intentionally insist on what he was doing.

The two little boys thought a while and they came up with the idea that would help them guide the old man indirectly. They started an apparent quarrel between them and each one of them started accusing the other that he does not know how to perform minor ablution in a good way.

Eventually, they decided to refuge to the old man to decide their quarrel. They approached him and said, “O Old Man! Please be our arbitrator.” The old man agreed. Each of the two boys started performing the minor ablution before him while the old man was looking. When they finished, they asked him about the one who performed well. The old man replied, “Both of you performed well, but the old man did not perform well and learned from you.”

Lesson Five:

HOW DO YOU ANSWER THE CALL OF ALLAH? (PART II)

(ESTABLISH THE PRAYER)

- **Why Allah ordered us to pray?**
- **What is the reality of prayer?**
- **Who are those who really establish prayer?**

Introduction:

Having talked about answering the call of Allah for us to purify since Allah loves those who repent and purify, it is time now to know how to answer the second call of Allah by performing the greatest obligation: prayer. Prayer is the means to elevate to Allah and it is the obligation of every pious believer. We shall begin by knowing the reason after the call of Allah for us to pray.

Why Allah ordered us to pray?

Ali Bin Abi Taleb ^(PBUH), the Commander of Faithful, says, “**Allah created all his creatures although He does not need their obedience because neither their sins nor their obedience does affect him.**”¹

Allah knows that we are taken away by the problems and pleasures of life and we may forget ourselves. Moreover, the

1- Bihar Al-Anwar (Seas of Light), v: 64, p: 342.

pleasures of life may take away our lives and the monies, fun and vanity may divert us from the purpose of our creation. Thus, we forget our creator and get lost. We only taste the material things related to life and fail to remember the pleasures of worship and knowing Allah.

Almighty does not aim at depriving us these spiritual pleasures of life but wants us to taste the sweetness of knowing and being near to Him. He wants us to pick us out of the valleys of negligence and from the fields of playing around into the safety of recalling, worshiping and getting closer to him.

He knows that we need a firm bond between Him and us and we need something that calms our souls down. He knows that we need something that cleanses our spirits and hearts from the traces of sins and incautiousness. Therefore, He granted us a constant means of keeping such a firm bond: prayer.

Allah says, “... **And establish regular prayer for celebrating My praise.**”³⁴

So, prayer's purpose is to remember Allah, the generous who has created us and who keeps sending us his graces and who maintains taking care of us since He deserves that we mention Him and keep Him on our minds. We do need the prayer while He does not. Besides, the grace of permitting us to pray for Him is so great. Imam Al Sajjad says, “**The most important of Your graces is to keep our tongues mentioning You.**”²

What is the reality of prayer?

In the previous verse, prayer is considered to establish the celebration in praising Allah through which man and Allah are connected. Prayer is among the most important actions of man that keeps us mentioning Allah, strengthens the relationship of

³⁴ (Ta-Ha [Mystic letters Ta-Ha] 020.014)
2 As-Sahifa Al-Sijadiah, p: 418

man with Allah, alarms man and guides him to the right path and prevents him from getting astray. It is an alarm that wakes up from going in too deep in the pleasures of life and tells us that there is a god, heaven, hell and responsibilities other than work, sleep, money and having fun that are more important. Prayer reminds us of the real goals of existence so that we do not forget the same as we become busy in many other issues. By establishing prayer, we remember Allah; we remember our goals; we remember our hereafter.

Prayer is the practical exercise of the pillars of religion; it is a practical exercise of monotheism, for it is a practical evidence from man to monotheism and that Allah is qualified to be worshiped. We actually mention the same in the prayer itself: **“Thee do we worship, and Thine aid we seek,”** and when testifying **“I testify that there is only Allah the one God,”** and when praying we acknowledge the prophecy of Prophet Mohamad as we say, **“And I testify that Mohamad is His servant and messenger.”**

When we further practice prayer as the Apostle of Allah ^(PBUH) has taught us we are actually practicing the belief in the hereafter, heaven and hell. So, we pray with all our hearts ratifying **“Master of the Day of Judgment”**.

This is why Imam Al Baker said, **“Man shall be first accountable for prayers. If it is accepted, all other things shall be accepted as well.”**³⁵

Who are those who really establish prayer?

This is a question that imposes itself. Is he who says *Allah Akbar*, reads the verses of the prayer, who kneels, who prostrates and who testifies considered among those who establish the prayer? Does a prayer has certain specifications before Allah?

O My Dear Believer! Your first response would be negative. So, who are those who steadfast for prayer?

³⁵ Al Kafi, Volume 3, Page 268.

The answer is: Allah Almighty first wanted prayer to be a means of mentioning Allah. Any prayer does not perform its goal if it is associated with incautiousness and forgetting Allah. As a result, it is not a prayer. Allah says, **“So woe to the worshipers, who are neglectful of their prayers.”**³⁶

Allah denotes their neglectfulness and incautiousness as being a terrible disadvantage. He also says, **“Approach not prayer with a mind befogged, until ye can understand all that ye say.”**³⁷

This is a warning for our negligence to what we say and do.

To be real prayer as Allah sees us, we must be humble and feel the power of words and the power of our addressee, **“Those who humble themselves in their prayer.”**³⁸

The face of Imam Ali (PBUH) **used to change when he wanted to purify due to his fear of Allah.**³⁹

When the time of a prayer come, he used to shiver and quiver and when he was asked what was with him he used to say, **“The time has come for a trust that was offered to and refused by all heavens and earths because they feared the same.”**⁴⁰

On the other hand, real prayer must impact the life of a human being. A person who performs prayer must be a good person, who behaves well, since prayer has an aspired goal: making a good person, for Allah says, **“... and establish regular Prayer: for Prayer restrains from shameful and unjust deeds ...”**⁴¹

A person who swears is not among those who establish prayer; a person who violates the rights of people in their money, honor, and reputation is not a person who establishes prayer. This is why the Apostle of Allah (PBUH) said, **“He whose prayer do not restrain him from shameful and unjust deeds is not a person who establishes prayers.”**

³⁶ (Al-Maun [Small Kindnesses, Almsgiving, Have you Seen]) 107.004 & 005

³⁷ (An-Nisa [Women] 004.043)

³⁸ (Al-Mumenoon [The Believers] 023.002)

³⁹ Bihar Al Anwar, Volume 67, Page 400

⁴⁰ Al Haka'ik, page 222

⁴¹ (Al-Ankaboot [The Spider] 029.045)

Performing Prayer:

1. After minor ablution (*Wuduo*) or major ablution (*Ghusul*), stand upright and face Al Kibla.



2. Say Allah is Greatest (*Allah Akbar*) once, i.e. Takbirat Al Ihram.
3. Read *Sura Al Fatiha* (Opening)
4. Read another small Sura (such as Al Ikhlas [Al Tawhid])
5. Say *Allah Akbar* once, then bow with your hands on your knees (first Rakaa) and say, “**Sobhan Rabi**



Al Azim Wa Bihamdeh.”

6. Stand upright once again and Say *Allah Akbar* once and then go down to prostrate.
7. Perform prostration on your seven organs of prostration which are: your forehead, palms, knees, and thumb toes. After your forehead rests on Sajda (place of prostration), say, “**Sobhan Rabi Al Aala Wa**



Bihamdeh.”

8. Say *Allah Akbar* once as you bring your head up and sit straight then say *Allah Akbar* once and do as you did in the first prostration.
9. Stand up for performing the second Rakaa and do the same as you did in the first Rakaa except for the first *Allah Akbar*. Having finished the second prostration (Sajda) and you are

praying the Morning Prayer, say, “**Ashhad Ann La Ilah Illa Allah Wahdahou La Sharik Lah Wa Ashhad Ann Mohamad Abduhu Wa Rasuluh, Alahom Sali Aala Mohamad Wa Al Mohamad [I testify that Allah is the one God who has no partner and that Mohamad is his servant and messenger; Prayer be upon Mohamad and his desendants].**” Then say, “**Assalam Alaik Aiyouha Al Nabi Wa Rahmat Allah Wa Barakatoh; Assalam Alina Wa Aala Ibad Allah Al Salihin; Assalam Alikom Wa Rahmat Allah Wa Barakatoh [Peace, mercy and graces of Allah be upon You, O ye the Apostle of Allah; Peace, mercy and graces of Allah be upon us and upon the good worshippers of Allah; Peace, mercy and graces of Allah be upon you].**”

Warning:

1. The Sajda must be pure and must not be a food or clothing related item.
2. Do not speak or turn around during the prayer.
3. The first Allah Akbar (Takbirat Al Ihram) must be said for one time. Should you say it again, both are void and annulled.
4. If you are praying a prayer that consists of three or four Rakaas, and after the second Sajda of the second bow, you only say the first part of Nine above (testimony), then you stand up to continue with residue of Rakaas. You may opt to read Soura Al Fatiha only or say “**Sobhan Allah Wa Al Hamdu Lilah Wa La Illah Illa Allah Wa Allah Akbar [Glory be to Allah, and Gratitude be to Allah, and there is no god but Allah and Allah is great]**” one or three times. When you finish the remaining number of Rakaas you do as mentioned in Nine hereinabove. May Allah accept your deeds and ours.

Summary:

As we are busy in our life of desires and pleasures, Allah knows that we need a strong bond so that we do not forget him and get inside peace and purity. This is why prayer is there to strengthen this link with Allah. It the practical exercise for the pillars of religion.

Questions:

13. Why did Allah order us to pray although He does not need such a worship?
14. What are the things that we should pay attention to in performing the prayer?
15. Label the following statements with TRUE or FALSE.
 - a. Sitting after the prostration is not a must. _____
 - b. Allah does not accept the deeds of those who treat prayer frivolously. _____
 - c. Due to His mercy, Allah accepts all the prayers of those performing them. _____
 - d. Prayer grants us power to face shameful and unjust deeds. _____

Additional Reading:

A Slave or a Freeman?

Music, singers and wine were messing the heads of those inside.

Meanwhile, an odalisque came from the house to throw the wastes into the street and met a man, who looked to be a worshiper, passing by and asked her, “Is the owner of this house a slave or a freeman?”

– “A freeman,” she replied.

– “You are right,” the man replied, “If he were a freeman, he would fear his master.”

When the odalisque came in, her master asked, “What took you so long?”

She told him what happened with her and the man.

As she finished, her master was contemplating with the last sentence, ‘If he were a freeman, he would fear his master’ since it hit his heart. Then, he went away running barefooted after the man and he found that he was Imam Moussa Bin Jaafar ^(PBUH) and expressed his repentance. Ever since, the man never wore anything in his feet until he died. Before that day, the owner of the house was known as Abi Nasr Bishr Bin Hareth Bin Abdul Rahman Al Marrouzi and he became known as ‘Bishr the Barefooted’.

Bishr was known for his love for parties and having fun continuously, but it seems that Imam Jaafar’s speech impacted him and was the reason after his repentance. The man became a gnostic, knowledgeable worshiper.

Lesson Six:

HOW DO WE ANSWER THE CALL OF ALLAH? (PART III)

(FOLLOW ALLAH'S WORDS)

- **Why did Allah reveal (sent) the Holy Qur'an?**
- **Is it enough to possess a copy of the Holy Qur'an and to ask for blessing with it?**
- **Would one benefit from reading and listening to the Holy Qur'an?**

Why did Allah reveal (sent) the Holy Qur'an?

As mentioned in the previous lesson, Allah is the lord and master of mankind. He is the one who takes care of their material needs such as food and clothing as well as their spiritual needs in order to make them approach him and benefit from such closeness. He, thus, is the nourisher of bodies, souls, minds and spirits. He called mankind to know him and get acquainted with him. However, since physical sight is unavailable, Allah has chosen to talk to mankind to eliminate mankind's fear and anxiousness. Through such speech, Allah shall, on one hand, relief the anxiousness and shall introduce Himself to man, on the other.

In the same context, Qur'an is the means that Allah preferred to use to talk to his servants so that they would know him through His words. Moreover, Qur'an is a card of identification about Allah's knowledge and wisdom. It is a message whose theme manifests and reveals Allah Almighty to his creatures.

Qur'an is the banquet of soul and mind. The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) says, **“This Qur'an is a banquet of Allah. So, learn from His banquet as much as you can.”**⁴² Qur'an also described the passage from the darkness of ignorance into the light of knowing Allah, **“... A Book which We have revealed unto thee, in order that thou mightest lead mankind out of the depths of darkness into light –”**⁴³. Qur'an is also a prescription for healing the disease of the soul, **“We send down (stage by stage) in the Qur'an that which is a healing and a mercy to those who believe.”**⁴⁴

Qur'an is an image that suits and fits our minds and understanding about the Creator since knowing the wisdoms of Allah is amongst the wisdoms of Qur'an, knowing the greatness of Allah is amongst the greatnesses of Qur'an; from knowing the Qur'an's greatness we could know the elevation and highness of Allah, and from the sweetness of the Qur'an, we would know the mercy and kindness of Allah.

Is it enough to possess a copy of the Holy Qur'an and to ask for blessing with it?

Some people possess copies of the Qur'an as decorations. They might plate them with gold and make holders for them. They might put them in certain places just to dust them later. They might also possess them just because they believe that Qur'an shall protect them from evils and dilemmas. They, however, rarely read them.

Supplication and asking for blessings and preservation by using Qur'an is something good of course, but the Holy Qur'an was never revealed for such a purpose. If it were so, it would be a great abuse. Any one who deals with the Qur'an in such a way is like a person who had gotten an invitation from a glorious and generous king to a party that honors him with the

⁴² Wasael Al Shiia, Volume 4, Page 826

⁴³ (Ibrahim [Abraham] 014.001)

⁴⁴ (Al Isra [Isra, The Night Journey, Children of Israel] 017.082)

condition that such a person abides by the codes and courtesy of conduct in the presence of this great kind. In such an invitation, there is a description for reaching such a banquet and how to benefit from such a presence. But when the guest saw the beauty of the invitation card and that it is stamped with the great seal of the King of Kings, he kissed and made a frame for the same where he reserved it and kept it in the middle of his house so that his guest would look proudly at it. He never read it, never answered its calls and never abided by its courtesies. He only admired its sender and was taken by its decorations. Should he read it, he only pronounced the words it contained and listened to the sounds contained therein without comprehending their meanings. Well, the pronunciation of Allah's words is the words of Allah. It is also the light of Allah. Hence, reading, writing, listening and looking to the same are all beneficial and useful. Despite the same, what is wanted is more just than looking, listening or reading. The aims and blessings of the Qur'an are greater. So, come and let us know and search for these benefits and blessings.

How would one benefit from reading the Holy Qur'an?

It is aspired from the Holy Qur'an to guide us to the truth, introduce us to Allah, increase our link to Him and guide us to the right path that leads to the same. **“Verily this Qur'an doth guide to that which is most right (or stable)...”**⁴⁵

In the Qur'an we shall find clarifications for the rulings of religion, preaching, descriptions of life and the hereafter, history of the previous nations to give example, and sciences and meanings that have never executed, for reading and enjoying what you read is not a mere purpose. On the contrary, one may use a lamp to find his way in the dark. What is needed is to think and contemplate the verses of the Qur'an and understand them so that they move longing for Allah and heaven and helps the heart not to get attached to life. The

⁴⁵ (Al-Isra [Isra, The Night Journey, Children of Israel]) 017.009

verses of the Qur'an are also a treatment for the soul, whoever never does it will be like someone who had gone to a physician who prescribed treatment for him, but the patient took it, kept it and never applied it. Would he be cured then? The same applies to those who are putting Qur'an aside, for Qur'an is the divine healing prescription.

Conclusion:

O Dear Brother! Try to learn more about the Qur'an because when you do, you will like it, and if you do like it, it will comfort you. Just then you will be building a connection with its high intentions and you will never walk alone. Imam Al Sajjad ^(PBUH) says, **“If all people on earth died, I would never feel lonely because the Qur'an would be with me.”**⁴⁶

We and the Qur'an

1. Qur'an must not be desecrated or humiliated.
2. Touching the writing of the Qur'an must not occur unless the person touching it is pure (i.e. performing minor ablution or major ablution).
3. It is hated that a person who has had intercourse and still has not performed ghusul to read more than seven verses.
4. It is highly recommended that the reader of the Qur'an be pure (i.e. performing minor ablution or major ablution).

Imam Al Bin Abi Taleb ^(PBUH) said, **“Any Qur'an reader who is reading while he is pure shall have twenty five favors and ten without purification.”**⁴⁷

5. Bushing teeth with *Siwak*. The Messenger of Allah ^(PBUH) says, **“Clean the way of Qur'an. How do we do that? Your mouths, he replied. With what? With *Siwak*.”**⁴⁸
6. Facing the Kibla in Mecca.
7. Begin with 'I seek refuge with Allah from the rejected Satan'.

⁴⁶ Al Kafi, V. 2, P.602

⁴⁷ Wasailu Shia, V. 4, P, 848

⁴⁸ Al Mahasen, V. 2, P 558

“When thou dost read the Qur'an, seek Allah's protection from Satan the rejected one.”⁴⁹

8. Read slowly and improve your voice. The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) says, **“Allah has never permitted anything like He permitted reading Qur'an with a nice voice.”⁵⁰**
9. Reading at least fifty verses daily in a loud voice because houses where Qur'an is read are houses which are lit for angels. The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) says, **“Illuminate your houses with reading Qur'an.”⁵¹**

⁴⁹ (An-Nahl [The Bee] 016.098)

⁵⁰ Al Majazat Al Nabawia, p.2

⁵¹ Al Kafi, v2, p610

Summary:

The Holy Qur'an is a means that Allah used to talk to his servants so that they would know him more. On the other hand, it is a feast for the spirit and mind and a way that leads people from the darkness of ignorance to the light of knowledge.

Accordingly, it is never enough to possess the Qur'an and use it for decoration, for it has never been revealed for such a purpose. We must do something more than just looking, listening or reading it, for the purposes and blessings of the Qur'an are more important than this.

Questions:

16. What is our job before the Holy Qur'an?

17. How do we benefit from the Holy Qur'an?

18. Label the following statements with TRUE or FALSE.

- a. The most important sciences of Qur'an is intonation. _____
- b. The most important deeds is to print the Qur'an and highly decorate it. _____
- c. Understanding the Qur'an means reading it much. _____
- d. It is prohibited that you carry a Qura'an without *Wudui*. _____

Additional Reading:

Asceticism and Humbleness of Imam Khamenei

Sayed Akbar Al Husseini, Representative of Tehran at the State Consultative Council (Parliament), says, **“According to what I know about the great character of the Grand Ayatollah Khomeini, I have seen a real ascetic who desires the hereafter. Contenance and simplicity rule his personal life to an extent that people cannot accept and agree that.”**

Mohsen Rafic Dost, Head of the Institution of Islamic Revolution Wounded, says, **“When His Highness was the president of the Republic, there was no refrigerator in his house, so I brought him one. After a while, the refrigerator was down, but His Highness did not tell me it did and it remained out of order throughout his term in office.”**

He further said, **“His house was furnished with torn mats. While he was away, we collected them and sold them then I added an amount from my personal money and bought new carpets for the house. When he was back he said, “What is that, Mohsen?” I told him that we have changed the old mats. “You have done a mistake. Go get the old mats,” he said. We spent a lot of time until we found them and got them back to his house.”**⁵²

⁵² Marjaait Al Imam Al Kaed

Lesson Seven:

HOW DO WE ANSWER THE CALL OF ALLAH? (PART IV)

(Supplicate Allah)

- **Why supplication?**
- **Does Allah need our supplication?**
- **When is supplication useful?**

Introduction:

After discussing purification, prayer and reading the Qur'an in earlier lessons, we shall discuss another means of connection with Allah Almighty. This is a free means to contact and refuge to Allah since we can practice it anytime and anywhere or whenever we feel like it and ready to do it. Contrary to prayer, there is no time limitation or special Qur'anic words to address Allah. Whenever we feel like it and wherever we feel that our heart is aiming at Allah, we just let our tongues go to talk to our Generous Creator.

Now, let us know what Dua'a (supplication) is, if Allah needs supplication and when supplication is useful.

Why supplication?

There is a deep feeling in each one of us: we all starve since we need food; we all get sick and need a doctor and a medicine; we all feel cold, hot, pain, fear and ignorance and we

all need a teacher, a fireplace, a cooler, etc... Our existence is detailed with poverty and needs. Why?

The answer is: Allah Almighty has created us to be needy so that we could have the motivation to address him and beg him to satisfy these needs.

“O ye men! It is ye that have need of Allah: but Allah is the One Free of all wants, worthy of all praise.”⁵³ Allah does not need anything. It is we who are in need for someone who we could go to in order to satisfy our needs. **“And your Lord says: "Call on Me; I will answer your (Prayer)..."**⁵⁴

Allah invites us to refer to him for every need and to fill in the gaps and He ensures answering our calls. Who is more committed to his words and vows more than Allah! In the remaining part of the verse Allah even considers whosoever does not call him an arrogant: **“... but those who are too arrogant to serve Me will surely find themselves in Hell – in humiliation!”**⁵⁵

Hence, dua'a is a natural expression as humans in the existence of Allah and that He is the source of richness, perfection and generosity.

Does Allah need our supplication?

In the Holy Qur'an, Allah says, **“Say (to the Rejecters): "My Lord is not uneasy because of you if ye call not on Him..."**⁵⁶ This verse is an answer for the query: Allah does not need us or supplication and if it were not for supplication, Allah would not care about us.

We need supplication to approach Allah more and get closer to Him. We need supplication to feel His existence as we need Him. As we are in need of satisfying our needs from Him we need supplication itself. By supplication we know Allah, we know that he is close to us and we enhance our relation with him, so

⁵³ (Fatir [The Angels, Originator] 035.015)

⁵⁴ (Al-Ghafir [The Forgiver [God] 040.060)

⁵⁵ (Al-Ghafir [The Forgiver [God] 040.060)

⁵⁶ (Al-Furqan [The Criterion, The Standard] 025.077)

that the outcome of dua'a for us will be knowing ourselves, satisfying our needs and knowing Allah Almighty and to taste the sweetness of being close to Him and closely examine his unlimited generosity. This is why He said, **“When My servants ask thee concerning Me, I am indeed close (to them)...”**⁵⁷

Allah is close then, He hears, knows the need, and can meet it.

“I listen to the prayer of every suppliant when he calleth on Me ...”

He answers, so why does He want us to supplicate Him although he knows our needs and does not need our call? Allah answers, **“... Let them also, with a will, Listen to My call ...”** Answer Allah's call to supplicate Him because that enhances belief, **“... and believe in Me: That they may walk in the right way.”**

By supplication, we know the source of our existence: Allah. We recognize His richness and our poverty and need. We also exercise trust in His generosity, ability and mercy. This is the wisdom of Allah who knows His creatures. He raises us to reach the end so that we do not become indispensable of Him: **“Nay, but man doth transgress all bounds * In that he looketh upon himself as self-sufficient.”**⁵⁸

Also, dua'a is there because it keeps our relation with Allah, addressing him and deepening our feeling in his existence, generosity and mercy. The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said, **“Dua'a is the best worship deed.”**⁵⁹

Poverty, needing, pains and dilemmas that we experience reveal how vulnerable we are and how weak we are from achieving our goals. Dua'a trains us and makes us get used to contact Allah and fixes our souls to help us discover and know them better, as well know the Lord of Lives and Their Creators, so they can link to Him and so we can restrain their tyranny and

⁵⁷ (Al-Baqara [The Cow] 002.186)

⁵⁸ (Al-Alaq [The Clot, Read] 096.001)

⁵⁹ Wasael Al Shia, v4, p1088

wildness. When we confess our vulnerability and sins, we wish Allah could fix these souls and heal them from their diseases.

Dua'a also enhances love for Allah in the heart of man and enhances our feeling to the beauty and generosity of Allah. Imam Al Hussein (PBUH) said, **“The Messenger of Allah(PBUH) once said, “Dua’a is the believer’s weapon, the pillar of religion and the light of heavens and earths””**⁶⁰

When is supplication useful?

Allah says, **“But ask Allah of His bounty. For Allah hath full knowledge of all things.”**⁶¹

There are certain needs that Allah conditioned granting them to dua'a. Moreover, certain spiritual stages cannot also be obtained but by supplication.

Imam Al Sadek (PBUH) said, **“O Maysser! Supplicate and never say that something is done. Allah has a certain rank that cannot be obtained unless you supplicate. If a servant closes his mouth and never asks for anything, he shall not be given anything. So, ask and you will be given, Maysser. None of the doors is knocked and it is about to open.”**⁶²

Answering a supplication is guaranteed provided that dua'a is addressed because of actual need. Also, dua'a must be of interest to the suppliant. Should answering be late, let the servant know that Allah only chooses what is right and of interest to the suppliant.

“May be it is good for me not to answer me so far because you know how things may turn out.”⁶³

We must insist in supplication and do what we have to do, not to sit at home waiting for things to happen.

“A suppliant who does not work is like an archer with no bowstring.”⁶⁴

We should also seize the adequate conditions to obtain the heart dedication to Allah. Let dua'a take place when you are pure. Also, we have to trust who we are calling and that he will answer our calls.

Imam Al Sadek (PBUH) says, **“Should you supplicate, you have to believe that your need is at your doorsteps.”**⁶⁵

We have to work hard when we supplicate, insist, beg and dedicate, **“Supplicate your Lord by secretly and persistently.”**

⁶⁰ Al Kafi, v2, p468

⁶¹ (An-Nisa [Women] 004.032)

⁶² Al Kafi, v2, p466

⁶³ Tahzib Al Ahkam, v3, p89

⁶⁴ Nahj Al Balagha, v4, p79

⁶⁵ Al Kafi, v2, p473

One of the Divine Hadith reported reads, **“O Issa! Supplicate me like a drowning person or a sad person who has no other aid. O Issa! Humiliate your heart for me and mention me much when you are alone. Know that I will be pleased when you sneak on me. Be alive in this and do not be dead in that. Let me hear a sad voice.”**⁶⁶

We must seize the best times for supplication, especially Friday night.

Imam Al Baker ^(PBUH) says, **“Allah calls every Friday night from above his throne from the beginning of the night till its end... Isn’t there any believing servant who repents to Me from his sins before dawn, so I could increase his giving and reward? ...Isn’t there any sick believer who asks Me for cure before dawn, so I could heal him? ...Isn’t there any captured believer who asks Me for his freedom, so I could set him free? ...Isn’t there any oppressed believer who asks Me for justice before dawn, so I could make sure that justice is done for him?”**

Imam Al Baker ^(PBUH) says, **“Allah keeps calling this way until dawn.”**⁶⁷

Conclusion:

So Brother, let us not neglect this door that Allah opened to us and also committed Himself to answer all our calls. Let us make ourselves get used to supplication and let us commit ourselves to Konout (supplication in the middle of each prayer).

⁶⁶ Al Kaki, v8, p138

⁶⁷ Rawdat Al Wa’aizin, p333

Supplication is highly recommended that is made in every prayer in the middle of our prayer, so let us choose for ourselves what the Descendants of the Messenger of Allah ^(PBUT) used to say or what is included in the Holy Qur'an.

Also, let us seize the chance in holy times. Let us go to mosques every Friday night to participate in Kumail's Dua'a, read it and contemplate its meanings. Moreover, let us head to mosques on Wednesday night to read Dua'a Al Tawasol to beg Allah by the Prophet and His Descendants ^(PBUT) who are the means to Allah. Let us make ourselves get used to that to confront the wild dreams of these souls to what begets the anger of Allah. Let us eradicate their wild thoughts.

Summary:

1. We are in need and poor. Allah has created us so to address him.
2. Supplication is a means to know Allah and strengthen the relation with Him.
3. Supplication is a school where man raises himself in and enhances his relation with Allah.

Questions:

19. How do you guarantee answering dua'a?
20. Mention a paragraph from Kumail's Dua'a that refers to man's poverty and Allah's richness and generosity.
21. Label the following statements with TRUE or FALSE.
 - a. One who does not supplicate his god is an arrogant. _____
 - b. If Allah does not answer man's supplication immediately, it means that his supplication is not accepted. _____
 - c. We are supposed not to ask Allah except main and important things. _____
 - d. Allah gives man whatever he wants without dua'a. _____

Additional Reading:

Bunker of Sayed Abbas (May Allah bless his soul)

Enemy's jets were heavily flying over our point. My bodyguards promptly suggested that I refuge to some bushes so that the Jewish aircrafts would not trace me. Shortly after, the Commander of the post came out to check on us. After a short dialogue, he gave his orders to us to shelter to the near bunker, Sayed Abbas Bunker. I was surprised with that name and I had no doubt that Sayed Abbas has been there during his glorious life of struggle and Jihad. He actually used to come to the fronts of resistance where he lived among Moujahideen and listen to each other. Undoubtedly, he might have prayed, sat or participated in building that bunker. I even said these possibilities.

- Has Sayed Abbas come here and participated in building it up? No.
- What? Then he must have prayed in it or sat with the Moujahideen in it!!
- No. Never. Sayed Abbas, the Martyr, never came to this position.
- Then, how come it is called 'the bunker of Sayed Abbas'?

The story goes like this: one of the resistance brothers, who is a member of the position once passed by the bunker one night, heard a sad voice coming from the bunker. He knew that the voice was for Sayed Abbas and he knew the voice well. But the brother never imagined to find Sayed Abbas in the bunker. Sayed Abbas was martyred long before. Also, there was no one in side. He, then, entered the bunker and there was no one inside, but the voice was not there. The brother heard the same voice the next night and told his brothers about it. Then, they called it Sayed Abbas Bunker. This position was the only place that Sayed Abbas never visited in his life. May be we can find an explanation for his coming after his martyrdom.⁶⁸

⁶⁸ Stories of the Free Men.

Lesson Eight:

HOW DO WE ANSWER THE CALL OF ALLAH? (PART V)

(Visit Allah at His House)

- **Why Build Mosques?**
- **What is the Role of Mosques in Our Life?**
- **What is the Right of Mosques on Us?**

Why Build Mosques?

As you are wandering in the countries of Islam, you are attracted by a very familiar sight and a landmark of the Muslim countries. These domes and minarets that go high up in the sky sending the call of prayer at their times. As if mosques were mothers that call their children and they come like chicks come to their mothers. Between mosques and Muslims there is a relationship built by Allah when He ordered them to pray in and build mosques. He also reported the same in a verse of the Holy Qur'an, "**... and that ye set your whole selves (to Him) at every time and place of prayer, and call upon Him, making your devotion sincere...**"⁶⁹

Hadith that Urge Building Mosques:

Abi Jaafar Al Sadek (PBUH) is reported to have said, "**Whoever builds mosques, Allah shall build him a house**

⁶⁹ (Al-Araf [The Heights] 007.029)

in Heaven.⁷⁰ In their life, people work hard and gets tired. They need to refresh their power and nourishment for continuity of their material life and to provide these bodies with necessary power.

Also, as humans, and as a result of our continuous business, we need to charge our spirits and souls with adequate and sufficient spiritual power for the permanence of this spiritual life to keep on going strong and to enhance our connection with Allah where we get power, spirit and morale.

We get our morale from the mosque since we need to meet and visit Allah. Allah knows this need and He is generous. He wants to open a house for receiving us.

It is reported in the Hadith that **in the Old Testament of the Bible it is written that my homes on earth are mosques. Blessed is a servant who purifies in My home. But a host has to honor his guests except with the believers who walk to me in the mosque in the darkness of the glaring light on the Day of Judgment.**⁷¹

What is the Role of Mosque in Our Life?

It is one of the sources of morale and spiritual power. It is the place where we camp to defend our religion and nation. Imam Khomeini said, **“Your mosques are your bunkers, so fill up your bunkers.”**

In times of the Prophet, the mosque was the House of Allah and a source of obtaining morale. It was also the place where the nation’s issues were administrated, armies were prepared to defend Islam and Muslims, a court house to judge among people, a place where Muslims study their problems and a place where Muslims meet each other. The mosque was the school where believers learn from its Imam, just as from the Prophet before, the rulings of their religion.

At the mosque, one may get acquainted with believers and

⁷⁰ Al Mahaja Al Baida’a, v1, p356

⁷¹ Al Mahaja Al Baida’a, v1, p356

take them as friends and brothers. Most importantly, mosque is the place where we all stand performing prayer. In the mosque, the worship of Allah is manifested just like the unity in worship which does not distinguish among rich and poor, bosses and employees. As it is the place where we perform collective prayer, the mosque forms the unification factor of Muslims.

Imam Ali Bin Abi Taleb (PBUH) talked about the interests and benefits of visiting the mosque, “**Any one who visits the mosque shall gain one of eight things: a brother in Allah, beneficial knowledge, an accurate verse, an awaited mercy, a word that refrains him from doing wrong, a word that leads him to the right way or he quits a sin because of fear and coyness.**”⁷²

What are the Rights of Mosque on Us?

Mosques are the Houses of Allah, the owner of all the graces and blessings that we enjoy and who has given us without being asked for; therefore, He decides how we should deal with mosques, “**The mosques of Allah shall be visited and maintained by he who believes in Allah and the Last Day**”⁷³ He wants us to visit and maintain mosques. Visiting and maintaining things are relative. Maintaining the body occurs when it gets nourishment and maintaining the soul is by performing worship, then how do we maintain mosques?

Should we contemplate that the mosque is the House of Allah, the Great of the Greatest and the Power of Heavens and Earths, the Conqueror, and the King of Kings, we would find out that the first thing that we should do for mosques is to glorify them due to their owner.

Imam Al Sadek (PBUH) says, “**If you reach the door of the mosque, know that you have come to a great king only those purified may step in and only those who are true can sit within. Let you come to serve this king.**”⁷⁴

⁷² Al Mahaja Al Baida'a, v1, p356

⁷³ 009.018 (At-Tawba [Repentance, Dispensation])

⁷⁴ Misbah Al Sharia, p130

Mosques are places where Allah is worshiped, so one have to preserve their sanctities by maintaining their cleanliness and purity, keeping one's voice low, talk only mentioning Allah, keep performing worships in them such as performing a supplication, attending a lesson, and praying and we must not desert them.

Imam Al Sadek (PBUH) also says, **“Thee things complain to Allah: a deserted mosque that no one prays in, a person with knowledge who lives among people who know nothing and a Holy Qur’an that is left for dust and no one reads in.”**⁷⁵

One is highly recommended to purify at home and then come to mosque to pray in various spots.

Imam Al Sadek (PBUH) also says, **“Pray in different spots of the mosque, for each spot shall testify for the prayer on the Day of Judgment.”**⁷⁶

Imam Al Sadek (PBUH) also says, **“Whosoever walks to the mosque and steps over wet and dry things shall have earth glorify him till the seventh earth.”**⁷⁷

A neighbor of the mosque is hated to pray somewhere else. The Messenger of Allah (PBUH), **“A neighbor of a mosque must only pray in the mosque.”**⁷⁸

Conclusion about the Collective Prayer (Salat Al Jama'a)

Allah Almighty asks us to perform prayer, that is to make it live. Each thing is alive respectively. Erecting a chair is by letting it stand on its legs. Making a child stand is by letting him stand on his feet. As for prayer, we must take care of giving the prayer its great courtesies, purification, dedication, devotion of the heart, and humble before Allah. This is difficult to achieve,

⁷⁵ Favor of Jumaa and Jama'a, p.10

⁷⁶ Favor of Jumaa and Jama'a, p.9

⁷⁷ Favor of Jumaa and Jama'a, p.9

⁷⁸ Favor of Jumaa and Jama'a, p.9

“It is too enormous...” So, the best way to perform prayer and to be uplifted to Allah is to cooperate on performing it. Our prayer might not be performed as they are supposed to be and thus they are not lifted. Therefore, we refuge to whoever helps us and we cooperate with him to uplift us. This is made through the collective prayer because when performing it as such, it will be accepted even if only one's prayer is accepted. In addition, when performing collective prayer the reward will be doubled.

The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) once said to Gabriel (PBUH) (Jibrail), **“What will my nation have in the collective prayer? O Mohamad! If they were two, Allah shall write one hundred fifty prayers for each Rakaa and if they were three Allah shall write six hundred prayers for each Rakaa,”** until Gabriel said, **“if they become over ten, the reward shall never be measured even if the seas and oceans became ink, the earths trees and people, jins and angels became writers. O Mohamad! Saying Allah Akbar with the Imam is better than sixty thousand pilgrims and this life and what it contains for seventy thousand times, and a Rakaa prayed with the Imam is better than one hundred thousand dinnars spent on the poor and one Sajda made with the Imam is better than freeing one hundred slave.”**⁷⁹ The best of collective prayer is to be made behind religious scholars. Imam Al Sadek (PBUH) says, **“Praying behind a religious scholar is equal to one thousand Rakaa.”**⁸⁰

⁷⁹ Favor of Jumaa and Jama'a, p.11-12

⁸⁰ Favor of Jumaa and Jama'a, p.12

Summary:

1. Mosques are the landmarks of the presence of Muslims in the country.
2. Mosque is the spiritual charging place for Muslims to renew their powers.
3. A mosque has rights on us and we have to fulfill these rights.
4. Praying at mosques is a cooperative prayer; we cooperate together to be included by the divine mercy.

Questions:

22. What are the rights of a mosque on us?
23. What is the reward of collective prayer?
24. Label the following statements with TRUE or FALSE.
 - a. The mosque is the place where Muslims come together to be one hand. _____
 - b. Individual prayer during the collective prayer is forbidden. _____
 - c. Praying at home and dropping the collective prayer makes the mosque complain about us. _____
 - d. One cannot get morale without the mosque. _____

Additional Reading:

Remiss in Prayers

It is reported that Sayeda Al Zahra'a once asked her father ^(PBUH), **“O Father! What do you say for men and women who slack in their prayers?”**

He ^(PBUH) replied, **“O Fatima! He whoever slacks in his prayer shall be doomed by fifteen traits, six in his life, three upon his death, three in his grave and three on Judgment Day when he resurrects from his grave.**

As for those that he is doomed in his life: Allah shall eliminate blessing of his age, livelihood and sustenance and shall take away the features of good people from his face, and each deed he performs shall not get any reward for the same, his supplication shall not be lifted to heaven and he shall not have a part in the supplication of the good.

Regarding those that he gets upon his death: first, he shall die humiliated; second, he shall die hungry; third, he shall die thirsty. Should he be offered the rivers of life to drink from, none will quench his thirst.

While he is in his grave, Allah shall send him an angel who disturbs him, then narrow his grave and darken it.

As for the Resurrection Day, Allah shall sent him an angel who shall drag him with his face down to earth while the creatures are looking at him, then he shall strictly settle accounts with him and finally Allah shall not look at him or nominate him for heaven and he shall suffer the worst of torture.” Al Mustadrak.

Lesson Nine:

Means to Allah (PART I)

(The Prophet ^(PBUH))

- **What is the Means between Allah and His Creatures?**
- **What is the Means between Creatures and the Creator?**
- **What is Our Stance from Messengers?**

What is the Means between Allah and His Creatures?

When a child is born, his parents are extremely happy with him. They feed him with tenderness, love and milk. They raise him until he becomes stronger. As the child grows up and has teeth, their happiness is multiplied. Should he try to speak, they began to talk tenderly to him and try to teach to speak words like 'mom' and 'dad'. They are undoubtedly extremely happy when he first speaks those words. Then, they continue with taking care of him until he becomes able to hold responsibilities of life and to behave well so that he is not astray in this big sea of life.

Allah Almighty has taken care of humans. He has made bodies to keep human in his material growing up and he created people to know him. Also, he is highly preferred to create someone for the human to lead and guide him to his creator and to take care of his soul and religion as he supplied him with

others to take care of him in his life. Allah likes people to know him and tenderly talk to them like a mother talking tenderly to her child. There should be a mediator between them as the mother emits her tenderness to her child through her tongue. Similarly, Allah talks to people through messengers who are true and honest who convey the words of the Creator to His Creatures. Because they are humans, they need other humans to talk to them so that they do not feel alienated. Because people have no way to Him unless what they are familiar with, he sent them messengers from them conveying his verses...

When an atheist asked Imam Al Sadek (PBUH) how prophets and messengers were verified, he (PBUH) replied, **“When we have proven that we have a transcendental creator who is greater than us and all what He has created and that Creator is so elevated and has great wisdom, it is not right then that his creatures could see or touch him or even talk to him. Therefore, we verified that He has ambassadors to his creatures and servants who guide them to their interests, sustenance and mortality.”**⁸¹

A messenger is the ambassador of Allah to His creatures to educate, raise, take care of and introduce them to their Allah and acts as Allah’s proof on them to spare them going astray. Therefore, a messenger must be honest to convey the message flawlessly and he should have what indicates that he is true about his claim. In other words, he must be infallible and supported with miracles.

What is the Means between Creatures and the Creator?

Allah says, **“O Prophet! Truly We have sent thee as a Witness, a Bearer of Glad Tidings, and Warner * And as one who invites to Allah's (grace) by His leave, and as a lamp spreading light.”**⁸²

⁸¹ Ilal Al Shara’ih, v1, p120

⁸² 033.046 (Al-Ahzab [The Clans, the Coalition, the Combined Forces])

Whereas Allah by his favor, mercy and position as God wants to lead the human to Him and makes him know Him, Allah has sent his messengers and concluded them with their master Mohamad (PBUH) so that he could be as one who invites to the grace of Allah via His permission. There is a great place built up by Allah where there is a great banquet to honor human beings. Therefore, he had sent them invitation cards to this place and banquet with a messenger of His. Along with such messenger, Allah sends a map to reach this place and gives his messenger the permission to talk to humans about that place and what it contains to make them long for it. These messengers describe that place and how to get to it and what would happen if they refused to obey, “**O Prophet! Truly We have sent thee as a Witness, a Bearer of Glad Tidings, and Warner and as one who invites to Allah's (grace) by His leave...**”

Moreover, this prophet is the idol in this path to Allah. He clarifies the courtesies of having such an honor. He is an example to those who deserve that and to watch over people in their preparation to win that house.

The prophet is also the leader of that path and the proof and guide of creatures to their Creator, “**and as a lamp spreading light.**” He is the one who lights the way and he is the example. He leads them to the highest ranks and stages.

This prophet is Mohamad (PBUH) who was sent by Allah to teach and educate people and to clarify beliefs, doctrines, and laws to them and to lead them to real happiness: “**It is He Who has sent amongst the Unlettered a messenger from among themselves, to rehearse to them His Signs, to sanctify them, and to instruct them in Scripture and Wisdom,- although they had been, before, in manifest error;**”⁸³

What is the Stance about Messengers?

Allah is the owner of all graces and blessings in this existence that is geared for serving us. The first confession in

⁸³ 062.002 (Al-Jumua [The Congregation, Friday])

these graces is to meet the same with a positive response and never leave them aside.

If Allah sent a messenger to us, we have to accept, follow, honor and love him since he is from Allah. The first duty with messengers, especially prophet Mohamad (PBUH) is to believe in his prophecy and believe what he has brought and abide by the rulings that he told us about because by following messenger, we respond to the messenger and to his sender. Thus, our life would be real, **“O ye who believe! give your response to Allah and His Messenger, when He calleth you to that which will give you life;”**⁸⁴

He who does not respond so that he does not honor, believe in, abide by the rulings and the path of the messenger is more than a dead person. He is blind, deaf and in continuous torture.

“But whosoever turns away from My Message, verily for him is a life narrowed down, and We shall raise him up blind on the Day of Judgment. He will say: "O my Lord! why hast Thou raised me up blind, while I had sight (before)? (Allah) will say: "Thus didst Thou, when Our Signs came unto thee, disregard them: so wilt thou, this day, be disregarded.”⁸⁵

He whoever is given sight in life and never walked or followed the right path shall be like the person who was never given sight. Allah has given us what we can use to differentiate right from wrong, good from evil and sent us someone to guide us to the same. Should we turn away from the prophet and the Holy Qur'an we shall be like the blind and we shall end up on the Day of Judgment as blind, Allah forbids.

Conclusion:

O Dear Brother! Think and contemplate: have you responded to the call of Allah? Have you followed Prophet Mohamad (PBUH) or have you forgotten and turned away from

⁸⁴ 008.024 (Al-Anfal [Spoils of War, Booty])

⁸⁵ 020.124-125-126 (Ta-Ha [Mystic letters Ta-Ha])

mentioning Allah? You have to answer. If you have not responded so far, you still have a chance. Seize this chance and come to the banquet of Allah; do not turn away from mentioning Him, and know the right of Allah and the right of Prophet Mohamad ^(PBUH) on you.

Summary:

5. Allah likes that we know, talk to and tenderly speak to him and walks in his way.
6. Prophets and messengers are the best to tell us about Allah.
7. Some specifications of the prophet is to be the leader, the example, the idol, and the guide to the right way.

Questions:

25. What is people's job before messengers?
26. What is the means of communication between us and Allah?
27. Label the following statements with TRUE or FALSE.
 - a. Allah likes man to know him because man shall find happiness. _____
 - b. We cannot reach Allah without the help of messengers. _____
 - c. Sins made by the prophet are small sins. _____
 - d. Allah has granted miracles to prophets to control others and submit to him by force. _____

Additional Reading:

The Man Who Asked for Advice

A Bedouin from the desert came to Prophet (PBUH) in Medina asking for advice. The Prophet (PBUH) said to him, “Do not rage.”

When he went back into his tribe, he was told that some boys stole money from another tribe. As a result, the other tribe responded by doing the same when they sent some boys to rob the Bedouin's tribe and that the two tribes were lined to start a war now. When he heard the story, he was boiling with wrath. He went after his weapons and joined his tribe. Later, he remembered what happened with him when he went to the Prophet asking for advice and what he said to him about wrath.

Then, the Bedouin came back to his mind and thought to himself, “Why to get nervous? Why are we preparing for war? Why are we angry without a reason?” He then found himself calling the leaders of the other tribe, “Hey people! Why is this conflict? If you have anything that you want to reimburse, I shall reimburse it from my own money. There is no reason for fighting and shedding blood.”

When the leaders heard his words, the gallantry and generosity moved in their souls and said, “We are more entitled to do so from you.” Then, both parties reconciled and no war was waged.

Lesson Ten:

Means to Allah (PART II)

(The Imam ^(PBUH))

- **After the Prophet's death, does the means to Allah become dispensable?**
- **Who are the guides after Prophet Mohamad ^(PBUH)?**
- **How do we build the relation with the Holy Masters?**

After the Prophet's death, does the means to Allah become dispensable?

The Messenger of Allah ^(PBUH) has achieved his duty and mission by conveying the message of Allah and he has been the guide of people to their Creator throughout his noble life. But the age of the Prophet ^(PBUH) was relatively short and did not let him complete the details of what he had to convey, especially the people at the time were at the early beginnings. Doesn't the message need someone to keep and maintain it? Don't the rulings need someone to guard it and prevent manipulating it? What is the guarantee that Allah provides to secure and preserve the safety of the message and maintains the approach of Mohamad ^(PBUH)? If not, wouldn't the efforts of the Prophet ^(PBUH) go in vain?

The Prophet ^(PBUH) has conveyed what he could of rulings and taught what he could and raised as much souls as he could. At that time, he was the leader and the guide of humanity to Allah. Would Allah then leave this convoy without a leader or a

guide? Is it wise to do that? Isn't it a waste of time and effort of the Prophet's work? This is why Allah says, "**O Messenger! proclaim the (message) which hath been sent to thee from thy Lord. If thou didst not, thou wouldst not have fulfilled and proclaimed His mission. And Allah will defend thee from men (who mean mischief).**"⁸⁶

Therefore, by the Imam, the path towards Allah is maintained. By the Imam, the message achieves its goals. By the Imam, those who have fall behind from catching up with the convoy can reach the House of Honor and Glory. The Imam, as a consequence, completes the message of the Prophet and continues his role given to him by Allah.

If it weren't for the Imam, Allah would not have any excuse to use on people since it is by him He reserves the right of the coming generations to benefit from the efforts of the Prophet **(PBUH)**.

People need a guide, a leader, a teacher, and an example. Sharia, as well, needs a person to clarify, to maintain and to apply these rulings. Allah's alibi is not completed but with the Imam, for by it the religion is completed, "**... This day I have perfected your religion for you, completed My favour upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion...**"⁸⁷

So, who would punish those who reject, violate and improvise? Who would defend suspicion? Who would preserve the nation from going astray? It is the Imam who is selected and nominated by Allah Almighty to continue with the mission of calling for Allah which cannot be but under his permission and because the Imam is the proof of Allah, he has to be honest and infallible and has to be slated by Allah.

To ensure that the convoy is really heading towards Allah, man needs someone to take him by the hand to guide to the target and purpose, which are knowing Allah and approaching Allah and the House of Honor. The Imam is the right path that reaches all that, "**Show us the straight way**".

⁸⁶ 005.067 (Al-Maeda [The Table, The Table Spread])

⁸⁷ 005.003 (Al-Maeda [The Table, The Table Spread])

As people in the time of the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) needed a guide, a leader and an idol, they also need a leader and an Imam in their journey to Allah after the Prophet. They need a leader to walk after so that they wouldn't go astray and deviate from the right path. **“And hold fast, all together, by the rope which Allah (stretches out for you), and be not divided among yourselves...”**⁸⁸

Should we decide to travel by sea or land, we cannot dispense with a guide or a captain that leads the ship who knows the way. The same happens in our journey to Allah. We need a guide who knows better the ways of heavens and earth and the ways to Allah so that we could guarantee reaching there because if we do reach, we shall have the complete happiness and everlasting grace. Should we go astray, we shall be thrown into valleys of misery. Moreover, Islam has rulings and Sharia and laws to build the political and social system to construct the earth, lead humans on the right way and to spread justice. Then, who heads this system, supervises application of the same and legislates its rulings? Who is the vicegerent of Allah and the successor of the Prophet on earth?

Who are the guides after Prophet Mohamad (PBUH)?

We, ourselves and independently, cannot determine who the guide is and who is to follow and hold fast to his rope so that we could not drown. We are unable to do the same since these people are attributed to Allah who had endorsed them to him and gave them his vow. Allah knows them and selects them. He only has the right to reveal them via means He adopted such as a prophet or Qur'an.

The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) has determined that by saying, **“I am leaving the two heavy loads among you: the Book of Allah and my close descendants; they shall never be apart until they come to me at the basin.”**⁸⁹

⁸⁸ 003.103 (Aal-E-Imran [The Family of Imran])

⁸⁹ Bihar Al Anwar, V 5, P 21.

Or, **“If you hold fast to what I am leaving among you, you shall never go astray: the Book of Allah and my close descendants.”**⁹⁰

Those people as the prophet said are the rescue ship from temptation and aberrance and deviation. He says, **“O my close descendants among ye are like Noah’s ship: whoever gets aboard shall survive and whoever fails to shall be drowned.”**⁹¹

The Prophet ^(PBUH) further determined their number and their origin, **“My nation shall stay until twelve Caliphs, who are all from Quraish, elapse.”**⁹²

Moreover, he ^(PBUH) determined their names. One account says that a Jewish named Noathol came to the Prophet ^(PBUH) to ask him some questions. Among the inquiries he raised was about his successors after him and the Prophet said ^(PBUH), **“My regent is Ali Bin Abi Taleb, succeeded by my grandsons Al Hassan and Al Hussein and the latter shall be succeeded by nine Imams from his descendants. After Ali, his son, shall come Mohamad, succeeded by Jaafar, then Moussa, then Ali, then Mohamad, then Ali, then Hassan and lastly Mohamad Al Mahdi, the Awaited Imam. These are the twelve caliphs.”**⁹³

Allah Almighty has determined the first Imam in the Holy Qur’an when He said, **“Your real friends (regents) are (no less than) Allah, His Messenger, and the (fellowship of) believers,– those who establish regular prayers and regular charity, and they bow down humbly (in worship).”**⁹⁴

How do we build the relation with the Holy Masters?

As previously proved, the Prophet and his Descendents ^(PBUT) are creatures and servants who are so close to Allah Almighty

⁹⁰ Al Irshad, V 1, P 176.

⁹¹ Manakeb Amir Al Mou’minin, V 2, P 146.

⁹² Bihar Al Anwar, V 36, P 231.

⁹³ Yanabih Al Mawada Lizawi Al Korba, V 3, Al Kannouzi, P281

⁹⁴ Al-Qur'an, 005.055 (Al-Maeda [The Table, The Table Spread])

and being close to someone close to Allah is closeness to Allah. They are the gate that leads to Him. **“Where is the Door of Allah that he is approached from?”**⁹⁵

Hence, whosoever wants to come to Allah shall have to come to Him from the door that leads to Him. So, the relationship with the Descendants of the Prophet (PBUH) is supposed to begin when one believes that they are the holy masters and Imams and they are to be obeyed. **“O ye who believe! Obey Allah, and obey the Messenger, and those charged with authority among you ...”**⁹⁶

Therefore, obeying them is obeying Allah and His Prophet (PBUH) and the benefit of such obedience shall return to the obedient and we are ordered to love them.

“... Say: “No reward do I ask of you for this except the love of those near of kin.”...”⁹⁷

Therefore, if one loves someone who has a relative, one will love this relative. Loving the beloved of Allah is loving Allah and a way to love Allah. Then, how it would be if Allah had ordered us to love them?

Loving the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) is loving of Allah. Similarly, loving the Descendants of Prophet (PBUH) is loving of the Messenger (PBUH) and Allah. The marks of love shall appear on the beloved...

Loving them means to obey and visit them, and loving them means and implore by the. Loving them means believing in their positions, to take words from them, believe them and surrender to them because they are the honest and the reliable persons whom Allah has ordered us to be with.

Loving them means supporting and assisting them to play their roles and preparing earth for them.

Conclusion:

O Dear! Endeavor to glorify the position of those people in your heart, imitate what they do, keep on visiting them, strive

⁹⁵ Du'a Al Nodba, Bihar Al Anwar, V 99, P 107.

⁹⁶ Al-Qur'an, 004.059 (An-Nisa [Women])

⁹⁷ Al-Qur'an, 042.023 (Ash-Shura [Council, Consultation])

so that your heart be with them in order to be with them in life and the hereafter and to get Allah's satisfaction and their love. Follow them because a lover would follow his beloved and one remains with whomever he loves.

Summary:

1. After the Prophet, people need an example and a guide to continue the work of the prophet.
2. Imama is a divine position and Imams are appointed by Allah who had actually appointed them and ordered the Prophet to tell about them.
3. There are twelve Imams: Ali Bin Abi Taleb, Al Hassan, Al Hussein and the nine infallibles who are the descendents of Hussein. The last Imam is Imam Al Mahdi.
4. We have to obey the Imams, love them, follow them, enhance our relationship with them and pave the way for the last Imam.

Questions:

28. Who is intended by the saying of Allah, **“Your real friends (regents) are (no less than) Allah, His Messenger, and the (fellowship of) believers,– those who establish regular prayer and regular charity, and they bow down humbly (in worship).”**?
29. Who is meant to be the regent in the verse, **“O ye who believe! Obey Allah, and obey the Messenger, and those charged with authority among you ...”**?
30. Label the following statements with TRUE or FALSE.
 - a. The main role of the Imam after the Prophet is to kill atheists and canters. _____
 - b. Among Allah's merciful actions on us is that he had left us to decide who the Imam to be. _____
 - c. A certain period of time separates between the Imam and

his successor. _____

- d. In the Prophet's will to the Muslims, the two extremely important things are the Holy Book and the Sunna (tradition) of the Prophet. _____

Additional Reading:

Man's Coyness in the Day of Judgment

The Day of Judgment is the day when all facts and secrets are revealed. So, man realizes that Allah has always been there at all places, looking to his deeds and sayings, and seeing, on the other hand, that his image and outlook conforms with his bad manners and inner states as the Hadith states, **"People are brought with an image that monkeys and pigs, in comparison, would look more beautiful."**

Man shall see himself uglier than pigs and monkeys. He shall see his ugly deeds before him as the Holy Qur'an says, **"On the Day when every soul will be confronted with all the good it has done, and all the evil it has done, it will wish there were a great distance between it and its evil..."**⁹⁸

Due to the shyness and coyness, man shall experience, as reported, a state that he wishes he would be taken immediately into hell to get rid of the state of coyness he shall experience in that day and before all those people. O what a moment that makes hell a joyride.

As reported also, Imam Al Hassan Al Mojtaba ^(PBUH) used to cry when death, grave, and resurrection, are mentioned. And if Hell and Heaven are mentioned, he would become so sick. But when standing before Allah is mentioned, he would fall unconscious.

⁹⁸ Al-Qur'an, 003.030 (Aal-E-Imran [The Family of Imran])

Lesson Eleven:

Means (Way) to Allah (PART III)

(Religious Jurisprudent)

- **Who is the Clerical Reference after the Absence of Imam Al Mahdi?**
- **What is Takleed (Reference to religious jurisprudent to obtain religious rulings and jurisprudence)?**
- **Who shall we refer to?**

Introduction:

In previous lessons, we mentioned that religion needs a guardian that safeguards this religion and the Qur'an and its rulings and takes care of the religion's and Muslims' affairs. After the death of prophets ^(PBUT), Allah has undertaken to provide this mission and appointed an administrator, who is the Imam, for these tasks. Allah selected twelve Imam's who are the elite of humanity and the best people after the Prophet ^(PBUH). But the question that is raised as a consequence is whether Allah leaves this nation without a guide after Imam Al Mahdi. Would Allah leave the religion without someone who guards and explains it? Have people become indispensable of a person who explains and interprets the rulings and the ambiguous verses of the Holy Qur'an?

To whom does the nation refer in the era of absence?

If one had to travel for a long or short time, he would go to someone who trusts to deposit the most precious things that

he has and asks him to take care of his family. He also asks the trustee to provide for them during his absence. Imam Al Mahdi has taken Imama after the martyrdom of his father Al Hassan Al Askary by orders from Allah and without being able to perform his duties in public due to the Abbasid Caliphs who wanted to kill him. They knew that he was the twelfth Imam who would fill this whole world with justice after it had been filled with injustice and tyranny. They tried hard to put out that divine light but Allah's words were done, **“Their intention is to extinguish Allah's Light (by blowing) with their mouths: But Allah will complete (the revelation of) His Light, even though the Unbelievers may detest (it).”**⁹⁹

Allah saved the Imam from the Abbasid and concealed him for a period of time called Minor Absence after he had prayed on his father (PBUH). However, the nation needs him, so he appointed ambassadors from the sons of this nation to keep in touch with nation. These ambassadors are:

1. Osman Bin Said Al Amry
2. Mohamad Bin Osman Al Amry
3. Abou Al Kassem Al Hussein Bin Rouh Al Noubakhti
4. Ali Bin Mohamad Al Samri

Nonetheless, Allah has His own will and what a will it is! The Imam had to vanish for a long time until Allah gives him the permission to reappear again. So, has the religion's and people's need for a guard, a teacher and a leader ended? Never. The Imam is traveling for a period of time and he has to keep his trust in safe hands. Who are these people? Let's read between the lines as we carefully read the Prophet's and His Descendants' words so we may find the full answer.

Should we read the biography of Imam Al Mahdi, we find that Imam Al Mahdi appointed the persons to whom the nation refers to six days earlier to the death of his fourth ambassador Ali Bin Mohamad Al Samri. With the death of the fourth ambassador, the Major Absence began.

⁹⁹ Al-Qur'an, 061.008 (As-Saff [The Ranks, Battle Array])

But to whom this nation shall refer to get the rulings of its affairs in religion and life? The followers asked this question to the Imam himself since they were sure that someone must play this role. The Prophet, however, had already assigned to whom this nation must refer: **Religious jurists are the trustees of prophets.**¹⁰⁰

How would they then not be the trustees of the nation? In fact, the answer of Imam Al Mahdi came as follows: **“As for the religious jurists who strive against themselves, preserve their religion or obey Allah, people may refer to him in their issues and affairs.”**¹⁰¹ The reference are the just jurists.

What is Takleed (Reference to religious jurist to obtain religious rulings and jurisprudence)?

In the previous answer, the phrase ‘**people may refer to him in their issues and affairs**’. What is Takleed then?

The context of the above tale illustrates the meaning of takleed which is to refer to the religious jurist in the rulings of the religion since the Imam made reference to these people who possess scientific, practical and behavioral qualifications so that to guide us through issues permitted and prohibited on us and to know more the doctrines of the great Islam. Through these people, the communication with the line of Imama and Imam Al Mahdi goes on.

Should we have a problem, we would like to know the answer. Whom would we refer to in order to get the solution? Should we have a construction problem, we would refer to an architect. Would it be a health problem, we would see a doctor. But if such a problem is connected to our daily issues of worship and dealing with others, we have to refer to religious jurists. By referring to such religious jurists, we are making them responsible for giving us the ruling. They would be the ones who get the evidence to the same.

¹⁰⁰ Mizan Al Hekma, V3, P2088

¹⁰¹ Wasael Al Shiiia, V18, P95, Hadith 20

Who shall we refer to?

As we refer to a specialist physician experienced enough to entrust him with our bodies, we have to do the same when our religion is aimed. This is why a religious jurisprudent reference (Marjaa Al Takleed) must possess many qualities among which are the following:

1. He must be a jurisprudent who knows how to get into giving religious rulings from the Holy Qur'an and from the Sunna of the Descendants of the Prophet ^(PBUH) (tradition of the descendants). He must be the most knowledgeable jurisprudent who can understand the Holy Qur'an and the Sunnah.
2. He must be just (which we had referred to as to be trustworthy); i.e. he must be a believer who obeys Allah and does not do any sin.
3. he must possess an excellent and sharp memory so that he would not be forgetful.
4. He must not be after life but an ascetic.
5. He must not be a misbegotten.
6. There are many other conditions.

How do we know the Religious Jurisprudent Reference (Al Marjaa)?

After we have discussed the qualities that a religious jurisprudent reference must possess, we still have a dilemma which is how to differentiate between those who possess and do not possess these qualities or how to recognize who is the best persons who possess such qualities. There are certain conditions for this set forth by the Sharia:

1. The testimony of two experienced and just religious experts.
2. Circulation that is beneficial for knowledge.
3. Personal test, which cannot be made but by a religious expert.

For Memorization:

Imam Ali ^(PBUH) is reported to have said, “**A religious scholar is the same as the palm tree which you are waiting for**”

something to fall down from it,”¹⁰² and “The mind of someone who leaves listening to intellects shall be dead.”²

Summary:

5. Imam Al Mahdi has appointed ambassadors to be his communication means with people during his Minor Absence period.
6. Before the death of the fourth ambassador, Imam Al Mahdi asked the nation to refer to just religious jurists.
7. A religious jurist reference must be knowledgeable, experienced, just, and many other qualifications. As for knowing a religious jurist reference, we can know one by the testimonies given by two religious experts, by testing and by circulation, i.e. when he becomes extremely well-known to all.

Questions:

31. What is Takleed?
32. How do we know a religious jurist reference (Marjaa Al Takleed)?
33. Label the following statements with TRUE or FALSE.
 - a. We have to take the rulings directly from the Prophet and Imams (PBUT). _____
 - b. A religious jurist is a religious scholar who has been studying for a long period of time and reading so many books. _____
 - c. Every religious jurist is a religious jurist reference. _____
 - d. A religious jurist reference must be a descendent of the same family of the Prophet (PBUH), i.e. Hashemite. _____

¹⁰² Al Kaki, V1, P37
2 Mustadrak Al Wasael, vol: 11, p: 207

Additional Reading:

Some Testimonies Regarding the Knowledgeability of Imam Khameini

“I hereby ratify and certify that he is most knowledgeable among his contemporary peers. May Allah make us with you benefit from his leadership, knowledge and instructions.”

Ayatollah Sayed Jaafar Al Husseini Al Karimi

“I know no one of those nominated to be religious jurisprudent reference who is more knowledgeable than Imam Khameini.”

Ayatollah Sheikh Ahmad Janati

“I believe that Ayatollah Khameini ^(May Allah protect him) is the most knowledgeable and strongest as for the total sciences and other necessary requisites for takleed and taking leadership in the Islamic nation.”

Ayatollah Sheikh Mohamad Yazdi

“After knowing his knowledge and right opinion in all various aspects of Islamic Sharia and his views about the individual and the community, I testify that he is the most knowledgeable and thus, to me, he is to be referred to.”

Ayatollah Sheikh Mohamad Ali Al Taskhiri

“I believe that Imam Khameini is the best and most knowledgeable as for total sciences.”

Ayatollah Sheikh Mohamad Ibrahim Janati

Lesson Twelve:

Means (Way) to Allah (PART IV)

(The Leader)

- **Why do we need a leader?**
- **Who is the leader during the Major Absence?**
- **The blessing of leadership...**

Why do we need a leader?

In the days of Imam Al Mahdi, he himself took care of interpreting the religious rulings relevant to people's lives and relations. He was the leader of the people who used to refer to him in every aspect of their lives' and religion's affairs. He determined their roles and functions according to the events and circumstances in all levels: politics, economics, legal system, stance with respect to the rulers, laws, enemies and heresies. As the leader explains and illustrates rulings, he also tries to apply them whenever possible and as frequent as possible.

Should we look to the Islamic rulings, we shall find that they cover all details of people's lives and relations. One time they are relevant to man's behavior and his relation with Allah and how to build and practice the same and on other times they are relevant to the relationship of man with his soul, food, clothing, work, sight, tongue and morals. At other times, they are relevant to man's relations with creatures around him such as

animals, water, people, Muslims and others. If we contemplate, we will find rulings such as:

1. Chopping the thief's hand
2. Stoning the fornicator
3. Deciding the matters among people
4. Defense and Jihad ruling
5. Rulings relevant to money such as almsgiving (zakat), one fifth Islamic tax (khoms, etc...)
6. Relations among countries

Contemplating such rulings and other rulings similar to them, we find that they need to someone who applies and executes the same. Such executors would be institutions and not individuals because such issues are the jobs and tasks of governments and states.

Such government issues can be executed under the leadership of a prophet or an infallible Imam, but during the absence of the Imam, who would execute such rulings and supervise them?

Who should we refuge to?

If we refer to logic, it would guide us to the religious jurists who are highly knowledgeable in the rulings of Allah. Should we ask the Imam, the answer would come as follows: **“As for the occurring events, then refer to those who retell our sayings. They are my alibi on you and I am the alibi of Allah on you.”**¹⁰³ Imam Al Mahdi is the one who appoints the religious jurist as a leader to succeed him. The leader after Imam Al Mahdi is the religious jurist leader.

Who is the religious jurist leader?

A religious jurist leader is the leader assigned by Imam Al Mahdi during his absence to be heading the government which has the right to execute the necessary policies and rulings to hold harmless and defend the Islamic nation against the greed of enemies. The religious jurist

¹⁰³ Wasael Al Shiia, V18, P101, Hadith9

leader is the general leader of the nation. On the basis of his knowledge, education, science, courage and competency, he is qualified to execute the rulings of Islam and not to allow any enemy to strike Islam and its rulings, loot the resources of Muslims, kill Muslims, falsify the belief and religion, and spread heresies. He is the safeguard of the nation's frontiers and resources from the looters. Consequently, the religious jurisprudence leadership is must and indispensable or we shall become a nation without a leader, and a religion without a guide and a flock of lambs that have no shepherd or defender in a forest of wolves. The religious jurisprudent leader is indispensable and we must follow him that is like praying, fasting, performing hajj, etc... It is even more essential than other rulings because if it were absent, no rulings would be executed or applied, and if it is present, frontiers would be guarded and religion and believers would be defended. If we worship day and night and then we do not follow the religious- jurisprudent leader it will be as if we had not worshiped at all.

The blessing of religious-jurisprudence leadership...

Undoubtedly, the presence of the religious-jurisprudent leader and the same being followed and obeyed are important factors in Allah's blessing and support because he is the link with Allah, the Prophet and Imams (PBUH) and we have actually lived the blessing of the religious-jurisprudent leader. Come and let us see how.

If the Mujahidin (fighters) of the Islamic Resistance did not believe in the religious-jurisprudent leadership, believers in Lebanon would not have triumphed over that enemy. Also, if it weren't for the instructions and orders of the religious-jurisprudent leader, who was Imam Khomeini at the time, there would not have been any Islamic Resistance. He himself ordered that such resistance be established and founded.

Would Imam Khomeini not go on with what Imam Khomeini had started, the resistance would not have continued or even

triumphed. He personally looked after the resistance directly and issued orders and directions and supervised its work. He blessed the resistance with his instructions, supplications and support.

The Islamic Resistance was an answer to the call of the religious-jurisprudent leader to fight Israel. A group of believers, including Martyr Sayyed Abbas Al Moussawi, abided by this ruling and went on under the auspices of the religious-jurisprudent leader. The resistance fighters set themselves to take the burden and costs of executing this ruling with all its exhaustion, suffering, wounds and martyrdom until Allah granted those believers the victory that no Arab army or king could achieve anything like it. So, Allah granted the Islamic nation glory due to the obedience of this small group to their leader.

By the blessing of the jurisprudent leader and the compliance to his orders, the triumph of the nation is achieved. A victory which no one ever believed that small group would accomplish over a very powerful country in a very weak state.

Conclusion:

O Dear! Would you close your eyes block your ears and tell that there is no way to know your duties or would you abide by the orders of the jurisprudent leader who shall be an alibi on you if you do not obey him and who shall an alibi in your favor if you do comply to his teachings?

Summary:

8. The jurisprudent leader is the deputy of the infallible Imam. The jurisprudent leader is the leader during the absence of the infallible Imam and the former was assigned by the latter.
9. Obedience to the jurisprudent leader is a must as obedience to the Imam because the former is the deputy of the latter and because by obeying him, the orders are executed, frontiers are kept safe and the Sharia is safeguarded.

10. One of the blessings of the existence and obedience expressed to the jurisprudent leader is the victory achieved in Lebanon on Israel.

Questions:

34. Who guards the religion and defend it during the absence of Imam Al Mahdi?

35. Tell the hadith through which Imam Al Mahdi appoints his successors?

36. Label the following statements with TRUE or FALSE.

- a. The jurisprudent leader means the cleric who exerts efforts to find the ruling from the Holy Qur'an and Sunnah. _____
- b. Obedience to the jurisprudent leader is for those who only refer to and imitate him. _____
- c. One could follow religion and not follow the jurisprudent leader. _____
- d. There must be one jurisprudent leader in every country so that Islam would become stronger. _____

Additional Reading:

The Guest of Imam Ali

It is accounted that two guests, a father and a son, came to Imam Ali^(PBUH). He^(PBUH) entertained them generously and then ordered for some food. They ate. Then his servant Kanbar brought some water and a bowl and was going to pour water on the hands of the man when Imam Ali^(PBUH) burst out and took the water to pour it himself on the man's hand. The man refrained from washing his hands and said, "O Dear Imam! Would you like Allah to see me while you are pouring water on my hands?" Imam Ali replied, "**Wash up. Allah sees you while your brother who is not distinguished from you is serving you and thus increase his position in heaven.**"

The man then stood straight to wash his hands, but Imam Ali^(PBUH) said, "**In the favor you knew about me, wash your hands while you are feeling safe and as if Kanbar is serving you.**" The man obeyed and when he finished Imam^(PBUH) gave the water container to his son Mohamad Ibn Al Hanafia and said, "**O Son! If this son came to me without his father, I would then wash his hands, but Allah does not equalize between a son and his father if they are in the same place. A father has poured to a father, let the son now pour on the son's hands.**" Mohamad Ibn Al Hanafia then poured the water on the man's hands.

Imam Al Hassan Al Askary^(PBUH) told this hadith and when he finished, he said, "**Whoever followed Ali^(PBUH) on the same trak is the true Shiite (follower).**"

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