LET US LEARN ISLAM

BELIEF • WORSHIP • SIRAH • ADAB

ACCORDING TO SHAFII SCHOOL

ERKAM PUBLICATIONS

FOR JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS | 7th CLASS

ACCORDING TO SHAFII SCHOOL

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

FOREWORD

Praise to our Lord for giving us the honor and joy of living as a Muslim!

Many greetings to our Beloved Prophet –upon him blessings and peace-, his family and Companions, who lived and taught Islam in the most beautiful manner!

Our Beloved Prophet –upon him blessings and peace- was the greatest teacher who taught Islam to humankind. The Book he taught was the Holy Quran, a matchless miracle. The Blessed Prophet both read and explained the Quran. And he lived the faith, deeds of worship and moral taught by the Quran in the most beautiful fashion. After him, the Companions, the greats of Islam and our forefathers strived to both live this wonderful religion and to pass it onto future generations. The knowledge of Islam has hence been delivered to us, from heart to heart and from mouth to mouth. And now, it is our turn to learn.

Let Us Learn Islam – 1 has been prepared to cater for students of junior secondary level.

Consisting of four main chapters,

The first chapter teaches us our creed.

The second chapter instructs us the proper manner of offering worship.

The third chapter presents a segment from the exemplary life of our Beloved Prophet.

And the fourth chapter provides information on the good manners a Muslim should adopt.

We wish that we can learn our beautiful religion in the best manner; and become among the Muslims at whom the Blessed Prophet will smile in the Hereafter.

May your hearts be filled with faith, your lives with Islam and minds with sincerity! May the angels be your companions, and the righteous your friends! May Allah, glory unto Him, be your companion and helper!

May the path of your lives lead you to Paradise!

So in the name of Allah…

رَبِّ يَسِّرْ وَ لاَ تُعَسِّرْ رَبِّ تَمِّمْ بِالْخَيْرِ

'Make it easy, o Lord, and not difficult; and conclude it all with goodness.'

Lesson book preparation comitee

Istanbul / 2013

TABLE OF CONTENTS

THE WAY THAT LEADS US TO ALLAH:
RELIGION / 9

Story: TAHIR AND MAHIR 10
Man and Religion 15
What Religion Contributes To Us 18
Story: THE SOAP THAT IS NOT USED 22
The True Religion: Islam 24
Poem: My Religion 26
The Characteristics Of Islam 27
The Prophet Muhammad is the Best Example For Us Showing How To Practice the Religion 30
QUESTIONS 33

THE KEY TO PEACE IN WORD AND PARADISE IN THE HEREAFTER:
FAITH / 35

Story: "SO I WAS A BELIEVER BUT NOT AWARE OF IT" 36
Faith (Al-Iman) 39
Story: HİS LIFE CHANGED JUST LIKE THIS 42
Humans In Terms Of Their Faith 45
About What Should We Be Carefull In Respect to the Matters Of Faith? 47
Story: THE GOOD NEWS OF THE PROPHET 49
What Should We do to Strengthen our Faith? 50
Poem: The Holy Word 54
Story: THE PERSON WHO KNOWS HOW TO ASK A QUESTION 57
The Benefits Of Faith 60
The Sincerity Of The Prophet Muhammad In Faith 63
Story: THE MAN WITH THE WHITE DRESS 65
The Principles Of Faith 66
QUESTIONS 67

THE PURPOSE OF OUR CREATION:
WORSHIP / 71

Story: THE FEAST IN THE PALACE 72
What is Worship (Ibadah)? 74
Why Do We Worship? 75
Story: I THANK ALLAH 76
What Benefits Do We Gain from Worship? 78
QUESTIONS 79

OUR RELIGIOUS RESPONSIBILITIES:
DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LEGALLY-RESPONSIBLE / 81

Story: THE WAY TO PARADISE 82
Our Religious Responsibilities 83
Categorization of the Acts of the Legally-Responsible 84
Pillars of Islam 87
Poem: THE PILLARS OF ISLAM 87
Story: A MAN FROM NAJD 88
QUESTIONS 89

THE SYMBOL OF ISLAMIC CIVILIZATION:
CLEANLINESS / 91

Story: THE WOMAN WHO CLEANED THE HOUSE OF GOD 92
The Religion of Islam and Cleanliness 94
Poem: CLEANLINESS AND MUSLIM 95
Types of Purity 96
Poem: CLEANLINESS AND HEALTH 99
What is the Relationship between Cleanliness and Worship? 100
Our Prophet Paid Attention to Cleanliness 101
Poem: CLEANLINESS 102
QUESTIONS 103

THREE KINDS OF PURITY SPECIAL TO MUSLIMS: ABLUTION (WUDU) - RITUAL BATH (GHUSL) - DRY ABLUTION (TAYAMMUM) / 105

Story: ABLUTION PURIFIES FROM SINS 106

ABLUTION (AL-WUDHU) 108

What is Ablution? 108

What are the acts that cannot be performed without ablution? 108

How Do We Perform Ablution? 108

Story: COLD SPRING 110

Benefits of Ablution 112

What are the obligatory acts (fard) of ablution (Wudu)? 113

What are the Sunnah Acts of Ablution? 114

What are the things that nullify our ablution? 115

The Divine Light of the Followers of Prophet Muhammad 115

GHUSL (RITUAL BATH) 116

What is the ritual bath (Ghusl)? 116

What are the things that we cannot perform without ritual bath (Ghusl)? 116

What are the obligatory acts (fards) of Ghusl? 116

When do we have to perform ritual bath (Ghusl)? 117

How do we perform ritual bath? 117

What are the acts that are considered inappropriate in our religion while taking a ritual bath? 118

Benefits Of Ritual Bath (Ghusl) 118

Story: THE POWER OF WATER 119

TAYAMMUM (DRY ABLUTION) 123

What is Tayammum? 123

When is Tayammum Performed? 123

How is Tayammum Performed? 123

What are the obligatory acts (fard) of Tayammum? 124

What are the Sunnahs of dry ablution? 124

What nullifies dry ablution? 124

Story: THE CAVE OF ÇORAKTEPE 126

QUESTIONS 130

I AM LEARNING MY PROPHET:
SIRAH / 133

THE LIFE OF THE BELOVED PROPHET BEFORE HIS PROPHETHOOD 134
Arabia and Mecca before Islam 134
a) The Kaabah 135
b) The Elephant Incident Abraha's Attack on Kaabah (571) 135
1 - THE BELOVED PROPHET'S CHILDHOOD 138
a) The Honorable Birth 138
b) His Pure Lineage 138
c) Entrusted in the Care of a Foster Mother 138
d) Trip to Medina 139

2 - THE BELOVED PROPHET'S YOUTH AND MARRIAGE 140
a) Journey to Damascus 140
b) Joining the Hilfu'l-Fudul Society (The Society of those who Unite for the Good) 142
c) Commitment to Trade 143
d) Marriage to Khadijah–Allah be well-pleased with her- 143
e) Arbitration in Kaabah (605) 144

3 - THE ARRIVAL OF PROPHETHOOD AND THE CALL TO ISLAM 145
a) The First Revelation and Prophethood (610) 145
b) The Beloved Prophet's Invitation of His Relatives to Islam (613-614) 147
c) The Beloved Prophet's Exceptional Appearance 149

THE OPPRESSION OF THE IDOLATERS BEGINS 150
a) Mockery and Insults 150
b) The Period of Torture 152

THE ROAD TO RESCUE: MIGRATION TO ABYSSINIA 155
HAMZA AND OMAR-ALLAH BE WELL-PLEASED WİTH THEM- ACCEPT ISLAM 158
THE RUTHLESS BOYCOTT 160
a) Moving Scenes 161
b) Divine Aid and the End of the Boycott 161

QUESTIONS 163

THE MANNERS THAT MAKE ONE A GOOD MUSLIM:
ADAB / 169

Story: HE COULD NOT LOOK AT HIM IN THE FACE 170
1. What Are Manners? 172
2. Personal Hygiene 173
Story: AS IF ABOUT TO ENTER DIVINE PRESENCE 176
3. Manners in the Toilet 177
4. Manners in the Bathroom 180
ANSWER KEY 183

THE WAY THAT LEADS US TO ALLAH:

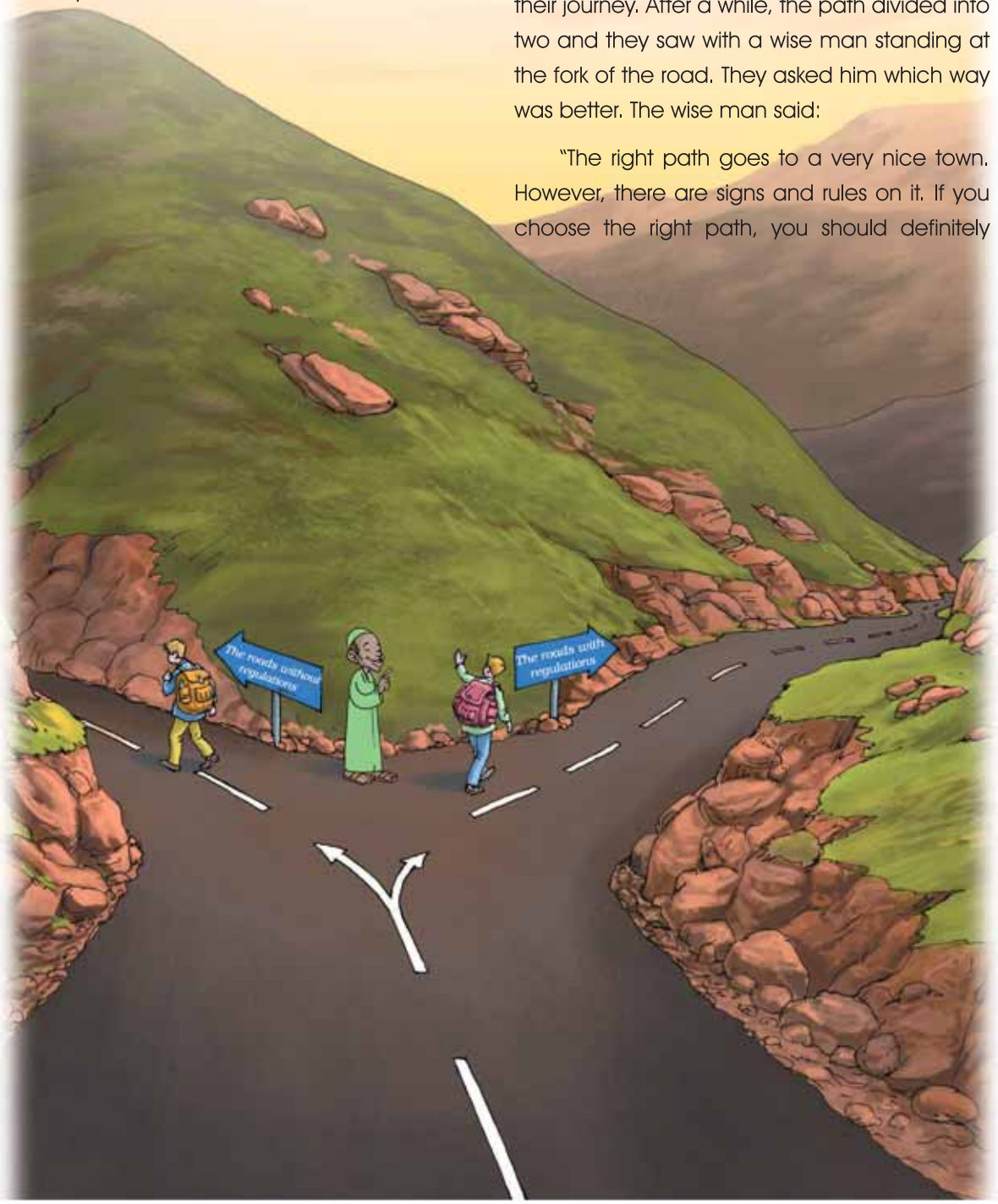
RELIGION

- *Definition of Religion*
- *What Religion Contributes to Us*
- *Characteristics of the Religion of Islam*
- *Our Prophet (p.b.u.h.) Being the Exemplary Personality in Religion*

TAHIR AND MAHIR

There was a very nice town located at the skirts of a volcano. There lived two brothers named Tahir and Mahir. According to scientists, the volcano was going to erupt soon and destroy and ruin the beauties of this town. Tahir used to believe that there would be another town whose beauties would not be destroyed. Mahir did not want to live in a wrecked town. This is why the two brothers decided to leave their town. One day, early in the morning, they set off their journey. After a while, the path divided into two and they saw with a wise man standing at the fork of the road. They asked him which way was better. The wise man said:

"The right path goes to a very nice town. However, there are signs and rules on it. If you choose the right path, you should definitely



obey its rules, and avoid the prohibitions. You should keep the places that you pass by clean and treat other humans and animals nicely. You should only eat from the food that is allowed. You should never forget that there is an owner of this road and everything on this road, and he is the one who has determined these rules. If you follow the signs carefully and obey the rules, you can pass all the dangers and difficulties that you come across and reach to a town that is lovelier than you could ever imagine.

On the left path, there are neither laws nor rules. You may act as you wish and behave freely. However, there are dangerous passages on this path. You may encounter brigands and wild animals at any moment. They can harm you or your valuables."

Tahir and Mahir gave a little thought after listening to what the wise man had told them. Tahir decided to go down the right path. Thus, he was going to secure himself and his valuables and learn the ways to avoid the dangers. He was going to reach his destination safely by traveling down the secure path. Mahir was unable to stand the gaff. He thought to himself "Why should I obey any rules when I can live freely and travel as I wish?" According to Mahir, real peace was to be able to act as one wishes. He thought that he could run away from any danger that crossed his path, and thus he could save himself. For this reason, he insisted on going down the left path. Tahir told him that his decision was wrong and the end of the left path would be very bad. He also told him that the rules on the right path are for the safety of the travelers. No matter how hard he tried to explain to his brother that real peace and happiness could be found in well-ordered and organized traveling, he could not make him listen. Finally, they said goodbye to each other and separated.

Mahir set off on his journey with the easiness of being free. He did not have to obey any rules here. He was happy to act freely and continued his journey as he crossed with joy over the hills and streams . He was eating from everything he came across and did not care about the damage he was causing to his surroundings. Just at that moment, he came to flat and wide moorland. While he was walking on the moorland, he suddenly heard a voice. Then, guess what he saw: A lion from the forest running towards him. Mahir, who was shocked, started to run away. If he continued at his speed, the lion was going to catch and tear him up. Nearby, he spotted one of the largest wells he had ever seen before. He reached the well before the lion caught up with him and desperately jumped in.

The well was so big that trees had grown up on its walls. Mahir held on to one of the trees as he was sliding down. Relieved that he had escaped from the lion, he closed his eyes for a moment and took a deep breath. However, his happiness did not last long. What he saw was really frightening: He looked down and there was a dragon. He looked up and the lion was at the edge of the well. The root of the tree that he was holding on was continuously being eaten by one white and one black mouse.

It was a very interesting tree; every kind of fruit one could imagine could be found on it. Seeing this wide variety of fruits made Mahir hungry.

There is a dragon if you look down and lion if you look up! And the root of the tree is being eaten. Mahir forgot this frightening situation and continued to act as he had done on the way. By blocking his ears to the voices of his soul and heart, he gave into his appetite. Without worrying about if it was harmful or not, he ate all the fruits that he could get a hold of. He

had already forgotten about the dangerous situation that he was in. The temporary satisfaction that the fruits gave him fooled him into thinking that he was happy and at peace. Though in reality, he was surrounded by danger.

A tragic ending awaited him. If he climbs back up the tree, he surely will be the lion's prey, and if he falls down, he will be the dragon's prey. There was no way he could avoid the ending that was about to happen; and because the tree was being eaten by the mice, he was going to fall.

But, what was he supposed to do? How could he be saved from this difficult situation?

Would eating whatever he wanted without having discern for the good and harmful make him happy? Would it be possible for him to save himself from this devastating situation by acting as he wishes without following any laws and regulations, and by disregarding the rules that rule maker had ordained?

Let's leave Mahir by himself for a while and see what happened to his brother. What did Tahir do? Did he reach the place that we wanted to go, safely?

Since Tahir believed that it would be safer to travel by obeying the laws and rules, he had chosen the right way. He thought that unlimited freedom was impossible. He knew well that people

who live without rules and regulations would harm either themselves or others.

Tahir, who had made the best decision of his life, performed the duties that were asked of him. He read the signs carefully, followed the commands and prohibitions written on the boards, and learned the ways to protect himself from the dangers that he would face in future.

Finally, just like his brother, Tahir's path also reached to a flat and wide grassland. Tahir noticed that a lion was coming towards him. However, he did not get scared like his brother did. He knew that this grassland had an owner and that the lion was under this owner's command, and that he could save himself from the lion if he asked for the owner's help.

However, first he needed to protect himself. By running away from the lion, he jumped down into one of the wells whose walls were covered with trees. He held on to a tree when he was falling down. Just like in the well that his brother jumped into, one white and one black mouse were eating the roots of the tree that he was holding on. There was a lion at the top and a dragon at the bottom. There were thousands of kinds of fruits on the tree. Luckily, Tahir knew what to do when facing with such a dangerous situation. This was a test that everyone had to pass in order to reach that beautiful town that the wise man had been talking about.

Tahir understood that there is an owner of this grassland, the well, the lion, and the dragon and that the owner was testing Tahir. He knew that he needed to act with caution just like he did on his way. He knew that the fruits on the tree in this well were just examples of the fruits at the beautiful town he was going to. And some of the fruits had the property of putting him to sleep. Furthermore, those particular fruits with the sleeping agent in them were of the forbidden fruits. If he were to eat one of those fruits, he would fall from the tree. For this reason, Tahir should not eat from all of the fruits, but only from those that are allowed and that would give him energy. It was written on one of the signs that there was a tunnel that connected this tree to the beautiful town. He needed some energy to find this tunnel and reach the town. The only thing that Tahir needed to do was to try and find the tunnel that would save him from this tunnel and to pray to the owner of all these things.

Tahir started to search for the tunnel. He did the best he could. He both worked very hard and sincerely prayed to the owner of those things.

O Lord of these places! I followed your orders. I tried to follow the right path. I stayed away from the things that you have forbidden. I did not harm anyone. Now, I need your help. I trust in you and seek refugee in you."

This prayer was giving Tahir hope and making him feel stronger. After working hard and praying, Tahir found his way to the tunnel, which had the shape of a dragon. He opened the door. Now in front of him, there were bedazzling gardens. This town was incomparably more beautiful than his old town.

And thus, Tahir received the gift of being patient by obeying to the rules and praying to the owner, the creator of everything. He reached eternal peace and happiness in this new town.

WHAT DO THE SYMBOLS IN THE STORY REPRESENT?

In this story, the journey of man in this world is symbolically described. Now let's see the explanations of such sybolism.

Tahir: Tahir represents the faithful and sincere Muslims who do good by using their intellect, trusting in Allah and obeying His rules.

Mahir: Mahir represents humans who do not obey Allah's rules, follow their own desires, and who have adopted doing harmful deeds and acts of denial as their habits.

The Path to the Right: This represents faith and Islam. It is characterized by the rules that Allah commands. It is the way that Quran shows us that which our Lord wants us to follow. It coincides with the life style that Islam promotes.

The Path to the Left: This is the path that Allah does not approve of. It is the profane and rebellious path that Satan directs. This is the path disapproved by our religion; it promotes a lifestyle that is rebellious towards Allah.

Flat and wide moorland: Represents the world that we live in.

Tree: It is the life span of every human. It is the life that one experiences.

Black and White mice: The black mouse represents the night. The white mouse represents the day. They slowly eat away at human life each day.

The lion: The lion represents the death of humans. It is the reality of death that separates humans from the material joys and loves.

The dragon/the door: The dragon represents the grave, which is the door to the Hereafter. It is a door that opens up from this world of tests to the gardens in Paradise for those Muslims who follow the way of Allah, shown in the Quran. It is a step towards attaining peace and happiness, and escaping difficulties.

The fruits on the tree: Represent the blessings in this world. They are examples of the blessings in the Hereafter. The real blessings are in the Hereafter. Those who busy themselves with such worldly blessings, look for satisfaction in them and forget about the Hereafter harm themselves, because they would be destitute of the better blessings that Allah the Exalted will give them in the Hereafter. Those who utilize the safe worldly blessings and spend them on the right path to Allah reach the eternal blessings in Paradise.

Having thousands of kinds of fruits in one tree: It shows the power and grandeur of Allah the Exalted. It also refers to thousands of different kinds of blessings bestowed upon the servants of Allah on this earth.

- *Whoever acts like Tahir and lives his life as a believer according to our religion, reaches eternal peace and goes to Paradise.*
- *Whoever acts like Mahir and disobeys our beautiful religion's sacred laws lose eternal happiness and a place in Paradise. Their seat is in Hell.*

MAN AND RELIGION

Human beings are creatures composed of body and soul. The body represents their material side and the soul represents their spiritual side. Our soul (spirit) is what separates us from other creatures and makes us human.

We cannot perceive the soul with the senses. The relationship between our body and soul is similar to the relationship between a lamp and electricity: We cannot see electricity, but we recognize its existence when the lamp is turned on. Just as the lamp cannot be turned on without electricity, a human cannot live without a soul.

The soul has needs, just as the body has needs. The body gets hungry, thirsty, and cold. It needs food, drink, and warmth. The soul lives by experiencing joy, sadness, happiness, and sorrow. It must have some kind of innate happiness and inner peace.

Both the structure and the nourishments of the body and soul are very different from each other. Our body, which is made out of clay, needs material nourishment, and our soul, which is an abstract being, needs spiritual nourishment. We satisfy our body's needs with the foods that are provided from the earth, while we can satisfy the needs of our soul with the spiritual nourishments such as believing in Allah, worshipping, praying, being altruistic, having compassion and mercy. Only this way we can achieve the happiness and inner peace that our souls need.

Our bodies and souls are entrusted to us by Allah the Almighty. As our Exalted Lord wants us to keep our bodies healthy, He also wants us to nourish our souls with goodness that will keep us away from evil and this can only be achieved with the help of our religion.

Our body is like a car, and our soul is its driver. Can we argue that we have fed the driver when we put gas into the car? Arguing this would be obviously ridiculous. Because we know very well that the car needs fuel and the driver needs food. Is it not more ridiculous to assume that by feeding someone we also feed his soul?

The Creator of All: ALLAH (j.j.)

Allah has created the universe in a perfect order. He put the sky, the land, and all that is in between in perfect order making them wonders of the universe. He adorned our world with mountains, lowlands, canyons, rivers, and seas. He established such an order in the universe that even our intellect cannot fathom. This perfect system has been working without a problem for billions of years. Night and morning follow each other; the sun rises in the East every morning and sets in the West every evening. Seasons come and go in their designated order.

All of the creatures in universe have been acting in accordance with the laws that Allah has decreed, therefore fulfilling their duties perfectly. A seed dropped to earth blossoms, grows, and satisfies the needs of humans and animals. Animals are born and they live a life according to Allah's unique plan. To sum up, the universe continues in perfect balance and order.

The universe has been created to serve humanity. The worldly palace – with all its beauty – has been embellished for this purpose. Well then, for what purpose was the human race created, to which countless blessings have been given? What is the duty of humans in this world?

A great blessing was given to us for the purpose of finding our Creator: Intellect.

Man is different from other creatures in this universe. He was created as an intelligent being. Since he has an intellect, he also has the freedom to worship his Creator or not; he may choose how to behave in this world as well. By using one's intellect, one can choose the right path; he can avoid all and any kinds of evil. A human being can recognize the right and good path by using one's intellect. It is for this reason that people are responsible for their actions.

Allah the Exalted says:

"Behold! in the creation of the heavens and the earth; in the alternation of the night and the day; in the sailing of the ships through the ocean for the profit of mankind; in the rain which Allah Sends down from the skies, and the life which He gives therewith to an earth that is dead; in the beasts of all kinds that He scatters through the earth; in the change of the winds, and the clouds which they Trail like their slaves between the sky and the earth;- (Here) indeed are Signs for a people that are wise."

(Surah Al-Baqara (The Cow), 2:164)

Our guides that inform us of the Existence and Oneness of Allah: PROPHETS

Apart from our intelligence, our Exalted Lord also sent His messengers to us. They guided people in finding the right path. The first human, Adam (p.b.u.h.), was also the first prophet.

Allah the Exalted says:

"Verily We created Man from a drop of mingled sperm, in order to try him: So We gave him (the gifts), of Hearing and Sight. We showed him the Way: whether he be grateful or ungrateful (rests on his will)."

(Surah Al-Insan (Man), 76:1-2)

Those who use their intellects and acknowledge the guidance of the prophets believe in the existence and oneness of Allah. However, throughout human history there have also been people who have not used their intellects well, and therefore have not been able to recognize the guidance of the prophets. These people have deviated from the right path by worshipping nature, spirits, or idols instead of Allah.

A way that will make us happy in this world and the Hereafter: RELIGION

Our Exalted Lord has created the universe and put it in the service of humans. Unlike other creatures, He gave humans the freedom to believe or not, and to choose how they should act. Man was created in such a way that he is capable of acting both arrogantly or servile.

Our Lord, who has infinite mercy, did not leave humans, whom He provided with many blessings, helpless on the issue of having the freedom of choice. He has given human beings the intellect so that they may make the right choices. He also sent prophets to show them the straight path. He has given certain rules and made suggestions which will help humans reach happiness by leading them to good behaviors and protecting them from bad ones. The happiness of humanity lies under these divine rules and counsel. When humans learn and practice them, then they are able to keep their lives balanced. They may attain peace in this world as well as in the Hereafter. These rules and counsel that our **Exalted Lord provided us with in order for us to be happy in this world and Hereafter is called religion.**

Allah the Exalted says:

"Messengers of good cheer and of warning, in order that mankind might have no argument against Allah after the messengers."

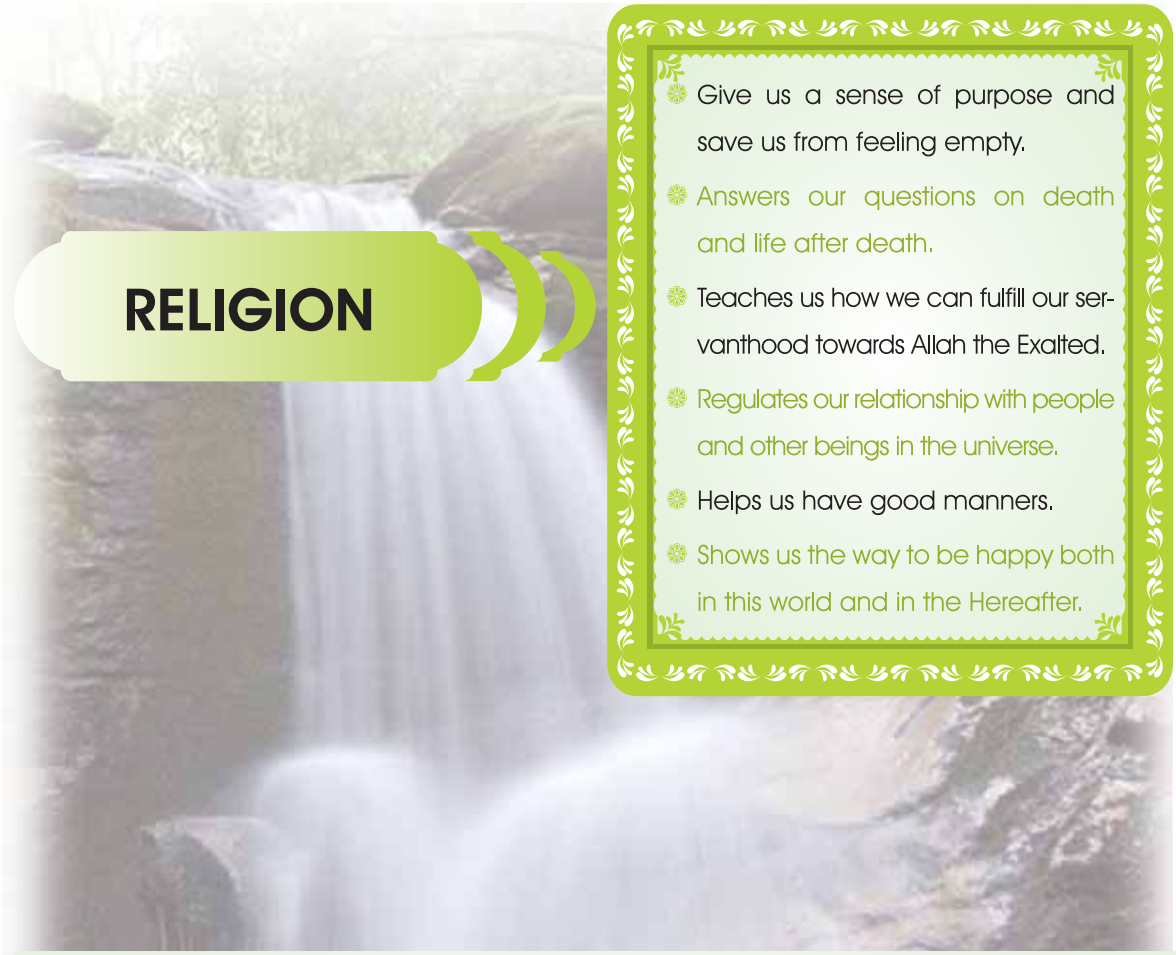
(Surah al-Nisa (Women), 4:165)

Allah the Exalted says:

"So set you your face steadily and truly to the Faith: (establish) Allah's handiwork according to the pattern on which He has made mankind…"

(Surah Ar-Rum (The Romans), 30:30)

WHAT RELIGION CONTRIBUTES TO US



RELIGION

- Give us a sense of purpose and save us from feeling empty.
- Answers our questions on death and life after death.
- Teaches us how we can fulfill our servanthood towards Allah the Exalted.
- Regulates our relationship with people and other beings in the universe.
- Helps us have good manners.
- Shows us the way to be happy both in this world and in the Hereafter.

As our Exalted Lord did not create anything without a purpose, He did not leave humans without guidance. The religion was sent to us to teach our purpose of creation and how to act in this universe. According to our religion, the fundamental purpose of our creation is to know our Lord and worship Him. As long as we live in accordance with this principle, our life will have a meaning.

Knowing that there is a purpose in our creation and living in accordance with this purpose saves us from feelings of purposelessness and aimlessness. Religion fills any spiritual void that may be in our hearts.

Allah the Exalted says:

"Does man think that he will be left uncontrolled, (without purpose)?"

(Surah al-Qiyamah (Resurrection), 75:36)

- Who am I?
- Why am I here?
- What will happen to me after I die?

All of us question our purpose in life by asking these and other similar questions. We want to understand our place in this universe as intelligent beings. However, just like our other abilities, our intelligence is limited as well. Our mind lacks the capacity to find the answers of these questions. Only Allah the Exalted, who created everything and knows everything, knows all the answers. Therefore, only a religion revealed by Allah can answer our questions about creation, death, and life after death.

Allah the Exalted says:

"He Who created Death and Life, that He may try which of you is best in deed…"

(Surah Al-Mulk (Dominion), 67:2)

We can find the existence and oneness of Allah by using our intelligence.

By thinking about all His blessings, we can come to the conclusion that we must thank Him for them. However, we may not know what would be the best and nicest way to thank and worship our Lord. Only religion teaches us how to be in the service of Allah. This is because our Exalted Lord is the One who knows about the forms of worship necessary to show our love, respect, and loyalty to Him. He is the One who determines when and how worship should be conducted. We learn about how to worship by means of the religion that He revealed to His prophets.

Allah the Exalted says:

"And they have been commanded no more than this: To worship Allah, offering Him sincere devotion, being true (in faith); to establish regular prayer; and to practice regular charity; and that is the Religion Right and Straight."

(Surah Al-Bayyinah (Evidence), 98:5)

We are not the only creatures that live in this universe. We share this world with other humans and other creatures. Therefore, our acts affect other living or nonliving beings, no matter we are aware of them or not. Therefore we have to act in such a way that would be beneficial to humans and our surroundings. Religion shows us the best way of life by teaching us good and evil, and right and wrong. It teaches us to be nice and just towards each other, to treat animals humanely, and to protect the environment; in short, it shows us how to respect the rights of all creatures. It regulates our relationships with one another and with other creatures in this universe.

Allah the Exalted says:

"Allah commands justice, the doing of good, and liberality to kith and kin, and He forbids all shameful deeds, and injustice and rebellion: He instructs you, that ye may receive admonition."

(Surah An-Nahl (The Bee), 16:90)

Religion teaches us that we are always and everywhere under the control and supervision of our Lord. It enforces our belief that Allah sees us, even when no one else does, and that we will be held accountable for our actions in the Hereafter. This feeling of spiritual control surrounds our inner life. It enables us to avoid doing wrong and makes us good-natured.

Allah the Exalted says:

"O my son!» (said Luqman), «If there be (but) the weight of a mustard-seed and it were (hidden) in a rock, or (anywhere) in the heavens or on earth, Allah will bring it forth: for Allah understands the finest mysteries, (and) is well-acquainted (with them)."

(Surah Luqman, 31:16)

Whether rich or poor, human beings sometimes feel a kind of emptiness and uneasiness in their inner-lives. Some people turn towards harmful things, such as alcohol or drug abuse in order to fill this emptiness they feel in them. They think that they can find happiness in games and entertainment. They disregard the connection between man and Allah. They forget about the reality of death and the Hereafter. However, when they are alone and remember the reality of death, the superficial happiness that they have created in their minds comes to an end. Hence, the most important thing for humans is to find true and real happiness. Indeed, religion is the perfect means to attain eternal happiness. Religion builds the connection between man and Allah. It reminds us that death is not the end, but the beginning of a new and eternal life. It establishes the love of Allah in our hearts. It teaches us to look at the whole universe from the window of this love. It shows us the way to happiness in this world and in the Hereafter.

Allah the Exalted says:

"And there are men who say: «Our Lord! Give us good in this world and good in the Hereafter, and defend us from the torment of the Fire!»"

(Surah Al-Baqara (The Cow), 2:201)

THE SOAP THAT IS NOT USED

Having led the Afternoon Prayer, Hasan Hodja, who gained the people's respect of all ages in town, was slowly walking towards the downtown Religious Administration Building.

The municipality had decided to install curbstones on the downtown streets. The pavements the town center were broken up and everywhere looked like a construction site. While shop owners were happy thinking that in a few days, downtown will look much better, the unexpected rain made the area muddy. The shopkeepers felt sorry for this situation but there was nothing they could do about it!

Hasan Hodja was walking over the marbles in front of the shops but when these parts ended, he had no choce but to walk on the muddy road. While he was trying not to get any mud on his clothes, he greeted the shopkeepers and inquired about their well-being.

When he came in front of the electrician shop, master Najib invited him to the shop.

— Come in hodja! Let's have some tea.

How nicely you explained us in the Friday sermon that only embracing the religion can save humans. There are a couples of questions that I would like to ask about this issue. "If you are not in a hurry, please come in!"

— "I have things to do in the Religious Administration Building, but they are not that urgent. Let's have a cup of tea while we chat".

Mr. Kazim, who was a soap seller and at odds with mosque and praying, was the neighbor of master Najib. When he heard the voice of Hodja, he came into the electrician shop. As Mr. Najib was ordering the teas, he interrupted:

— "Master! You say that religion provides peace and happiness to humans. However, despite all those years, the world is still full of bad people".

Hasan Hodja said,

— "You have entered into an important and deep subject".

He glanced over at the soap seller, turned to him with confidence as he showed him a man walking around with his muddy pants and said,

— "The world has known about soap for hundreds of years. It has been said that soap cleans filth and dirt. However, there are still many filthy and dirty things in this world and many people become dirty because of them, isn't it so?"

The soap seller disagreed and said:

— "Yes but soap works only when it is used. What can soap do for those who consistently put themselves in the mud?"

Hasan Hodja now had the opportunity he had been waiting for. It was the perfect time to make his point:

— "You are right. What can soap or a soap seller do for those who put themselves in the mud? My child! Religion works in the same way. If it is practiced and lived, it brings happiness to the world. What can religion do for those who perform forbidden acts, sins, cruelty, and injustice?"

THE TRUE RELIGION: ISLAM

The religion that is sent by Allah and that commands us to believe in the One and Only God Allah and to worship Him alone is called **the true religion.**

Allah is the only One who has the right to establish a religion.

It is our Exalted Lord who created the stars in the universe and the creatures in the deep oceans. Everyday, scientists discover new traits of creatures in the universe. We know that the person who knows the computer best is the engineer who designed it. Our Exalted Lord who created man from nothing is the One who knows him best. He is the One who knows the needs of our bodies and spirits the best. Therefore, Allah is the only One who can command the most suitable rules, in other words, establish a religion, which can make us happy both in this world and in the Hereafter. No one except He can have the power to establish a religion, change the fundamental rules of a religion, or abolish it.

Islam is the common name of the religions brought by all the prophets.

Prophets are people who deliver the message that they received from Allah to human beings and show them how to live in accordance with it. The first man, Adam, was also the first prophet. The religion that was revealed to him was the "faith in one God: Allah", in other words **"Tawhid."**

"Islam" is the common name of the true religion that Allah sent to humans through revelation.

The verse following verse from surah Al-i Imran learly states this fact: *"The Religion before Allah is Islam"* (Surah Al-i Imran (The Family of Imran); 3:19).

Throughout history, there were times when humans deviated from the way of divine revelation. They contaminated the faith and pure morality that the religion taught. Our Exalted Lord has sent new prophets to correct the wrong beliefs and the corrupted moral values. All the prophets had claimed to their people that there is no deity but Allah and one must worship only Him. They let them know that everyone will be accountable for their actions in the Hereafter. The fundamentals of faith, morals and values like justice, righteousness, and servitude, which the prophets taught, never changed or differed from one another.

Allah the Exalted had appointed the first human, Adam as a prophet. He taught his people about Islam, the oneness of Allah, and not to worship anything else but Him. Our Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) was the last messenger of Islam; no prophet after him will come, nor will any book after The Noble Quran be revealed.

Religions that do not command believing in Allah (Tawhid) the One true God are false religions

Made-up religions that are not revealed by Allah are called **false religions.**

There are also religions that were later corrupted by human beings even if they were originally revealed by Allah. Some additions and superstitions were mixed into those religions. Many changes were made to the fundamentals and practices of those religions and they are called "corrupted from their originals." Judaism and Christianity are religions that are corrupted from their originals.

Our beloved Prophet said:

"My situation with regard to other prophets is as follows: Somebody builds a very nice house. The house is completed but only one empty space for one brick is left in its corner. Then, upon seeing that empty spot, the people who visit that house and admire it say "Only if that one-brick wide spot had not been left empty!" Indeed, I am that missing brick, I came and became the last of the prophets."

(Bukhari, Menakib, 18)

Allah the Exalted says:

"This day have I perfected your religion for you, completed My favor upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion."

(Surah Al-Maida (The Table), 5:3)

Allah the Exalted says:

"If anyone desires a religion other than Islam (submission to Allah, never will it be accepted of him; and in the Hereafter He will be in the ranks of those who have lost (All spiritual good)."

(Surah Ali Imran (The Family of Imran), 3:85)

MY RELIGION

My religion is exalted, I love my religion,
I consider it superior to other religions and praise it.
My religion is Islam, the best of all religions,
We say "Allah is one," we say "Allah is one,"
We do not know anything else but to say "Allah is One"

Prophet Muhammad, the sun of both worlds,
There is no match to him among the prophets…
He is the one who brought this religion to us from Allah
Light shines on us from the skies above, because of this religion.
This religion says "Be clean!" it says: "Be righteous!"
Our book is the Quran; we read it all the time,
Many thanks to Allah for making us Muslims…

Şerafeddin YALTKAYA

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF ISLAM

The last religion that Allah had sent to humanity is Islam. Some of the important characteristics of Islam are the following:

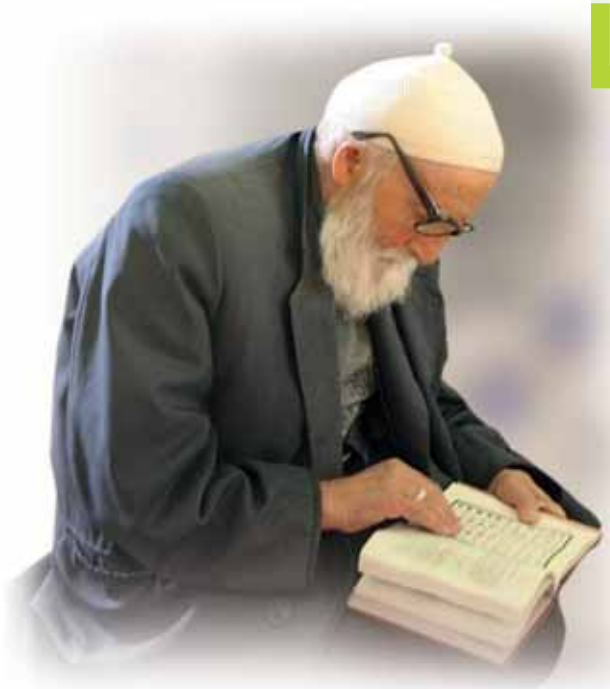
1. Islam is a universal religion that addresses to every time and every human being.

Our Prophet was sent to all humanity until the end of time. The religion that he brought has the characteristics that will satisfy the needs of all humanity. Islam commands to act kindly towards one's parents, to show mercy and affection to all living beings, to avoid extravagance, to be honest in trade, and to be just in whatever happens. These and other similar principles are the fundamental humanitarian values that every society needs.

Allah the Exalted says:

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

(Surah Al-Saba, 34:28)



2. Islam is a religion that aims at making things easier for us. It demands from us the things that we are capable of.

Islam does not burden us with major responsibilities that we cannot handle. For example, a sick person who cannot stand up can perform his prayers while sitting. A person who cannot find water to make ablution can make tayyammum (dry ablution with clean soil). A person who is traveling a long distance can postpone the Ramadan fasting for a time after the month of Ramadan.

Allah the Exalted says:

"Allah intends every facility for you; He does not want to put to difficulties."

(Surah Al-Baqara (The Cow), 2:285)

3. Islam does not discriminate between rich and poor, or strong and weak.

Islam does not recognize one's race, language, or skin color as superior to others. Therefore, everyone is equal before the court. No matter what one's status in society is, no one person or group has privileges. A perfect example of this principle of equality in Islam is seen in the Hajj (pilgrimage). During Hajj, millions of people dress in white clothes (ihram) and worship shoulder to shoulder. Discrimination is completely non-existent, and this is what our religion commands.

Our beloved Prophet says:

"O people! All mankind is from Adam and Eve, an Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab nor a non-Arab has any superiority over an Arab; also a white has no superiority over a black nor a black has any superiority over white except by piety and good action."

(The Farewell Sermon of Prophet Muhammad)

4. The goal of Islam is to make people happy both in this world and in the Hereafter

Islam encourages people to utilize the blessings of this world and earn the Paradise along with them. Islam does not accept setting the Hereafter aside for this world, or setting the world aside for the Hereafter. It tries to incorporate a perfect balance.

Allah the Exalted says:

"But seek, with the (wealth) which Allah has bestowed on thee, the Home of the Hereafter, nor forget thy portion in this world."

(Surah Al-Qasas (The Narration),28:77)

5. Islam places great importance on cleanliness.

The practices commanded by Islam not only sustains physical cleanliness but also cleanliness of the heart and spirit. For example, wudu (minor ablution), ghusl (major ablution), salat (ritual prayers), sawm (fasting), hajj, and zakat (alms) purify our souls and keep us away from both material and spiritual filth.

Allah the Exalted says:

"For Allah loves those who turn to Him constantly and He loves those who keep themselves pure and clean."

(Surah Al-Baqara (The Cow), 2:222)

6. The commands and prohibitions of Islam is compatible with human nature

Islam prohibits alcohol, gambling, adultery, lying, oppression, and injustice. Islam commands goodness, altruism, and justice, behaving well towards parents, and watching after the poor and the destitute.

Allah the Exalted says:

"... Prophet, for he commands them what is just and forbids them what is evil; he allows them as lawful what is good (and pure) and prohibits them from what is bad (and impure)..."

(Surah Ar-A'raf (The Heights), 7:157)

We can summarize the characteristics of Islam as follows:

CHARACTERISTICS OF ISLAM

1. Islam is a universal religion sent to all humanity.

2. Islam does not place responsibilities on people that they cannot bear.

3. There is no racial or class based discrimination in Islam.

4. Islam considers the balance between this world and the hereafter.

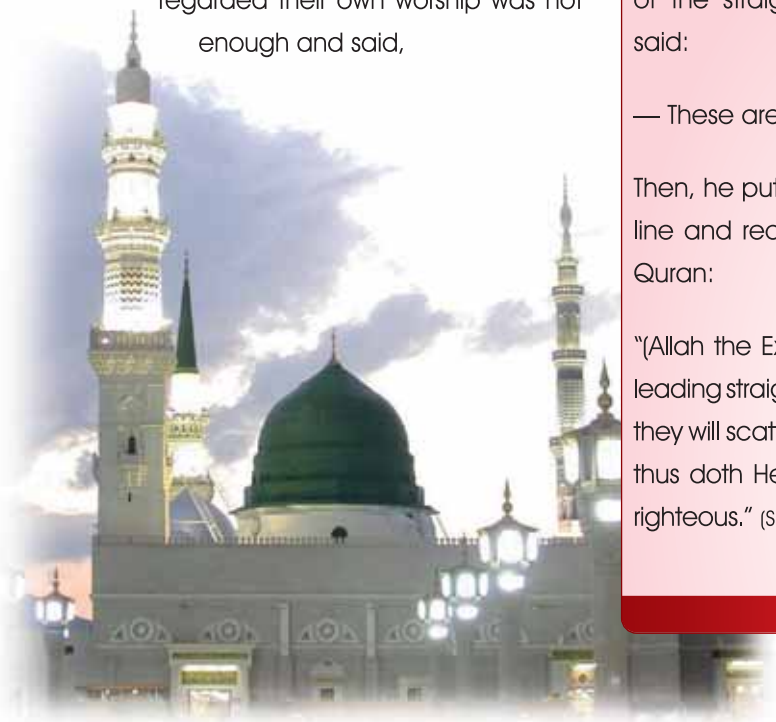
5. Islam places importance both on physical and spiritual cleanliness.

6. Islam commands good and useful things prohibits evil and harmful things.

THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD IS THE BEST EXAMPLE FOR US SHOWING HOW TO PRACTICE THE RELIGION

Our beloved Prophet Muhammad, who was sent to teach people our beautiful religion Islam became an example to all of humanity with his way of life. All of his behaviors, acts, and good manners were shaped by the divine standards prescribed in the Noble Quran. He was the one who taught and demonstrated people how to practice the religion of Islam.

The Prophet was very careful when it came to fulfilling the commands of our religion and avoiding acts that were forbidden. He would avoid habits and extremes that did not benefit individuals or societies. He would recommend Muslims to be moderate, to follow the middle way and to hold on firmly to the commands of the religion. One day, three friends of the Prophet came to his house and asked about his supererogatory worship. When they were told how our Prophet performed his acts of worship, they regarded their own worship was not enough and said,



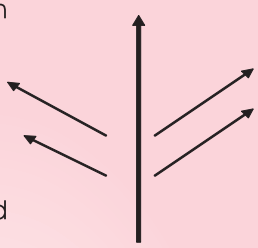
— Who are we in relation to the Messenger of Allah? His past and future sins are forgiven. One of them said,

— For the rest of my life, I will perform prayers the entire night without sleeping. Another one said,

Our beloved Prophet says:

One day, our beloved Prophet picked up a stick while sitting with his friends. He drew a straight line on the ground. He pointed out the line to his curious friends and said:

— This is the straight path of Allah the Exalted.



Then he drew two more lines to each side of the straight line and said:

— These are the paths of Satan.

Then, he put his blessed hands on the middle line and recited the following verse from the Quran:

"(Allah the Exalted says :) Verily, this is My way, leading straight: follow it: follow not (other) paths: they will scatter you about from His (great) path: thus doth He command you that ye may be righteous." (Surah Al-An'am (Cattle); 6: 153)

— For the rest of my life, I will fast every day; there won't be a day that I spend without fasting. The third companion promised himself by saying:

— For the rest of my life, I will refrain from marital relations; I will never marry. After a while, our Prophet came over to them and said:

"Are you the ones who said so and so? By Allah and I am the one who is the most fearful of Allah and the most respectful to Him. Yet, I sometimes fast and sometimes don't. At night, I pray and get some sleep. I also marry women. Those who do not follow my tradition in religion is not from me (not one of my followers.)" (Bukhari, Nikah 1)

Our beloved Prophet used to solve the problems that he faced in life under the lightof Islamic principles. When a question was asked to him or when he wanted to solve issues between people, the first resource that he would resort to was the Noble Quran. He would say that our religion makes things easy, and he would choose the easier solution over the difficult one. He would also recommend to his friends that they take the standards set by Islam into consideration when solving their problems.

Our Prophet would consider religion even more important than his own life. He experienced many hardships because of it, and he endured many difficulties for the sake of Allah.

During the first years of Islam, unbelievers who did not accept the religion tortured our Prophet. They threatened him with his life many times. They left our Prophet and his followers to starve. They spread thorns to the paths that he would pass through. In the city of Taif, they stoned him and his feet were covered with blood. They did many more tortuous things. Despite all of these, our prophet never stopped practicing, preaching, and teaching Islam.

The Prophet (p.b.u.h.) had raised an exemplary generation that understood and practiced the religion correctly. The people who heard his Noble message and had accompanied him by accepting our beautiful religion are called "the Companions (Sahaba)."

Even if our Prophet did not perform miracles, the generation of Companions that he trained would be enough to prove his prophethood.

The era before Islam is called "the era of ignorance." At that time, in the Arabian peninsula, there were bloody battles and civil wars that lasted for years. People used to live in fear and anxiety. There was no security of life and property. The rich used to mistreat the poor, and the strong used to oppress the weak. Free people used to torture slaves in every way imaginable. Islam, however, abolished all of this unacceptable acts and behavior. It established a civilization that honored humanity.

The Noble Companions struggled hard to freely practice their religion. They tried to overcome the obstacles they were faced with the help of their faith. As our Prophet did, his friends too faceded with hardship and mistreatment. Some of them were laid down on burning hot

The companions who witnessed the age of ignorance (jahiliyyah) realized that religion was the only path to salvation. By the virtue of our beautiful religion, they were saved from the age of ignorance which was full of cruelty and injustice. They demonstrated to all of humanity how the religion needed to be practiced and how a society who practices the religion should be. They established an exemplary generation for humans until the last day. For this reason, the era that they lived in is called (the era of bliss)

sand. Some of them were forced to renounce their faith by being whipped. Moreover, they were faced with an economic boycott. All trade and communication means were taken away from them. For three years, they endured those days of hardship with the support of our beloved Prophet. They tied stones around their bellies to ease their hunger pains. They tried to survive by eating plants, leaves, and pieces of dried skin. They had to leave behind all their wealth and leave the town that they had been born and raised in. But they had experienced the taste of faith…Some of them gave up their lives for this path, but they never renounced their religion.

The Companions have sacrificed their wealth and lives in order to spread to the whole world the beauties that Islam had brought them. Some of them became martyrs, like Yasir, Sumayyah, Mus'ab, and Hamza. Those who survived scattered in the direction of the four winds in order to spread the beauties of Islam to all of humanity. Our beautiful religion has come to this day without any corruption due to their sacrifices.

Our Exalted Lord has honored us with Islam. He made us love our faith and engraved it in our hearts. He made us realize how bad it is to sin and perform mischievous acts. Our Prophet has bequeathed us with the Noble Quran and his exemplary life by saying *"I am leaving for you two things. As long as you hold on tight to them, you will never deviate from your way. They are the book of Allah and sunnah (traditions) of His messenger."*

If we appreciate the blessings of Allah and listen to the advice of the Prophet, then we learn our religion in the best way, perform our worships, and stay away from evil acts. As a result, we become good Muslims.

QUESTIONS

Match the sentences

1	Man is a creature composed of soul and		finding the right path.
2	The part that separates us from other creatures and		considered the religion to be more important than his life.
3	By using one's intellect, a human being can choose		shows us the best way of life.
4	Prophets guided people in		addresses every era and everyone.
5	According to our religion, our purpose is to		for the things that they cannot do.
6	By showing us what is good and bad, and the right and wrong, religion		what is right and good.
7	Islam is a universal religion that		body.
8	Islam does not hold humans responsible		are coherent with human nature.
9	The commands and prohibitions of Islam		gives us the characteristics of being a human is our soul.
10	Prophet Muhammad		know our Lord and worship Him.

Fill in the blanks with the words given below in parenthesis.

(turn to Him constantly and repent / try / shameful deeds / Life / goodness / Hell Fire / Islam / keep / your religion / doing good deeds)

1. "Our Lord! Give us …….in this world and in the Hereafter, and defend us from the torment of the…….!"
2. "For Allah loves those who ……..and He loves those who ……themselves pure and clean."
3. "This day have I perfected ……for you, completed My favor upon you, and have chosen for you …… as your religion."
4. "He Who created Death and ….., that He may …. which of you is best in deed
5. "Allah commands justice, …….., and liberality to kith and kin, and He forbids all……., and injustice and rebellion: He instructs you, that ye may receive admonition."

THE KEY TO PEACE IN THIS WORLD AND TO PARADISE IN THE HEREAFTER:

FAITH

- *Al-Kalimah Al-Tawhid and Al-Kalimah Al-Shahadah*
- *Humans in terms of their Faith*
- *What Should We be Careful about in respect to Our Faith?*
- *How Can We Strengthen Our Faith?*
- *Benefits of Faith*
- *Sincerity of Prophet Muhhamad in his Faith*

"SO I WAS A BELIEVER BUT NOT AWARE OF IT"

At that time, I was not even twenty years old. I was going to the famous hot springs of the Haruniyya. Then, not every driver was brave enough to drive through the curved roads of this mountainous area. With just a few families, we found a minibus and hit the road after loading our sleeping bags and other belongings. After a while, we were on the mountain roads where every tone of green was displayed in perfect beauty. While listening to the songs of cicadas, we were traveling slowly between the green mountain pines and leaving dust clouds behind us. Fortunately no car was coming from the opposite direction. Because in some places, the

road was so narrow that it would be impossible for two cars to pass. As a matter of fact, as we made some sharp turns, the pebbles underneath the tires were flying off into the depths of the river.

Finally, our minibus completed climbing the steep hill in difficulty and reached the plain. Soon, we were going to go down the hill. I wished that our journey would never end since I liked the scenic view a lot and I was breathing in the clean mountain air from the open window. At that moment, I saw something interesting. I was so amazed, I looked again and again, and could not refrain myself from exclaiming:

— O my God, look at this pine tree! It is on top of a pointy rock and there is not even a handful of soil on the rock."

While I was thinking out loud like this, the old man in the front seat, angered by my excitement, said:

— What is all this excitement? There are many trees like this here…"

— What do you mean what's all the excitement? Look at the power of Allah! He created a pure and crisp pine tree on top of this huge rock…"

— Are you kidding! What does this have to do with Allah and His power?

— What else could it be? Who could have planted this pine tree in such a bizarre place?

— Nobody kid… Why do you think someone has to create it? Those are all archaic and backward ideas.

— But if Allah did not create and place this pine tree there, who did?

— For example think like this: A bird while flying with a pine tree seed in its mouth dropped the seed on top of this rock. The seed got stuck inside a crack on the rock and took roots. Then with its roots reaching under the rock, it flourished.

— Even if it happened like that, isn't there a creator who did all this?

— Of course there isn't… Believing in a Creator in this era is shameful.

— How could someone say this at your age? I can give you many examples on this topic.

This talk turned into an argument and we raised our voices as a result. As he raised his voice, so did I. The other travelers who were listening to us quietly were also joining in from time to time. However, no one, except this educated old man denied Allah's existence. But they were wishing that we would conclude the argument and be quiet as soon as possible.

At this moment, our minibus began to accelerate. Just at that moment, the pebbles that go down to Jayhan River that looks like a long string maybe a hundred meters below shocked us. While everybody was looking at one another in silence, the driver turned back and said "I guess the brakes are not working." There was a hillside covered with pine trees on our right. At the end of this hill, the water of the Jayhan River was bubbling as it hit the big rocks. On our right side, there was a precipitous slope with huge rocks. After a moment of silence, everybody started to scream. Some of us were reciting the Al-Kalimah Al-Shahadah (testimony to the oneness of God and prophethood of Muhammad),

some of us were saying Bismillah (in the name of Allah), some of us were shouting out "Allah," and some of us were praying to Allah. The man who had denied Allah was also unconsciously repeating "O Allah! Save us. Please Lord save us."

However, this situation did not last long. In our amazement, the minibus started to slow down and then stopped on the side of the road. The travelers got out of the minibus in a panic. Everyone was saying something:

— What was that?

— We thought the brakes did not work!

— We were scared to death.

— Was this some kind of a joke?

The driver came next to us. He turned to the man that I argued with before and said:

— Aren't you ashamed of yourself after denying the existence of Allah? You were denying Allah before, and when you thought that the brakes were not working, you were the one who recited the name of Allah the most! If Allah did not exist, as you claimed, then why were you asking for His help?

Then he turned to us and came back to his seat after saying:

— I apologize from everyone, but the brakes are fine. When I heard the argument, I just wanted to teach this man a lesson.

When the minibus started again, we would only hear the sounds of cicadas. Everybody

was so silent, and the old man was lost in thought and his face was red with embarrassment… When we came to the hot springs and started to unload our luggage, the old man came to me and said:

— My son, I am sorry; for all those years I thought I did not believe in Allah. Yes, I was a believer but not aware of it… You made me realize that. Then he turned to the driver and said "O driver! Thank you, too! You provided me an opportunity to realize my faith."

Vehbi VAKKASOĞLU

(The Notebook of a Teacher)

FAITH (AL-IMAN)

Faith means to accept sincerely the existence of Allah, that He is the only deity and that Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) is His messenger.

The key to the eternal salvation: Al-Kalimah Al-Tawhid

Al-Kalimah Al-Tawhid is the statement that we use to express our faith in words.

There are two parts in Al-Kalimah Al-Tawhid. By saying "La-ilaha illallah" we deny all beings which claim to a deity but Allah. We express our gratitude to Allah for our existence and that we will act according to the way He wishes. We acknowledge that Allah is the only being that is appropriate to be worshipped. When we say "Muhammadun Rasulullah," we sincerely de-

Allah the Exalted says:

"The believers must (eventually) win through"

(Surah Al-Mu'minun (The Believers); 23:1)

Our beloved Prophet said:

"The most virtuous supplication is 'La Ilaha Illal-lah' and the most virtuous prayer is 'Alhamdulil-lah."

(Tirmizi, Deavât, 9)

Al-Kalimah Al-Tawhid

لَا اِلٰهَ اِلَّا اللّٰهُ مُحَمَّدٌ رَسُولُ اللّٰهِ

"La-ilaha illallah, Muhammadun Rasulullah."

"There is no god but Allah and Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) is His messenger."

clare our faith that Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) was sent to us by Allah and that he was an exemplary Prophet that guided us in our lives.

Thinking about the meaning of Al-Kalimah Al-Tawhid and remembering Allah with this statement helps people earn many spiritual gifts. Reciting the sentence "La ilaha illallah" sincerely makes people feel better and opens their chest up. It strengthens the love of Allah in our hearts. Thus we become one of the loved ones by Allah.

Our beloved Prophet said:

"Renew your faith by reciting La ilaha illallah many times."

(Ahmet Bin Hanbel, II, 359)

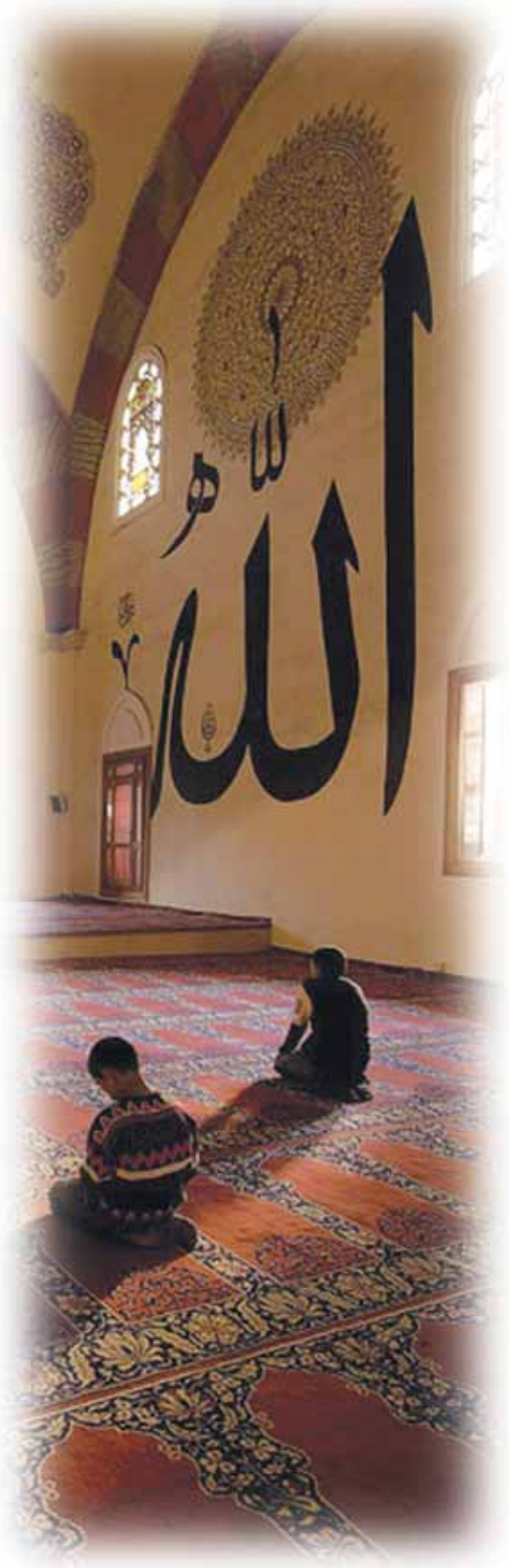
How to express our faith in words: Al-Kalimah Al-Shahadah

The best way to express that we believe in Allah and His messenger is to say Al-Kalimah Al-Shahadah. Al-Kalimah Al-Shahadah is a way of expressing in words that we are Muslims and we announce it to all of humanity. With Al-Kalimah Al-Shahadah we announce that we are Muslims and that we accept the commands and prohibitions of Islam. We gain all the rights and responsibilities that Islam provides to Muslims. We become a member of the Islamic Nation (Ummah).

Our beloved Prophet said:

"Allah prohibits those who testify that there is no god but Allah and Muhammad is His messenger from the fire."

(Muslim, Iman, 47)



What is Al-Kalimah Al-Shahadah?

أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلٰهَ إِلَّا اللهُ

وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ

"Ash-hadu an-la ilaha ill-Allah wa ash-hadu anna Muhammadan 'Abdu-hu wa Rasuluhu."

What is the meaning of Al-Kalimah Al-Shahadah?

I bear witness that there is no god but Allah and I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and messenger.

What do we express by Al-Kalimah Al-Shahadah?

With Al Kalimah Al Shahadah we espress that we believe in the existence and oneness of Allah, that no other being is worthy of worship except Allah, that we will live a life consistent with His commands and prohibitions, and that we believe our master the Prophet and the message he brought from Allah.

HIS LIFE CHANGED JUST LIKE THIS

It was the first years of Islam. The number of Muslims were increasing each day. With the conversion of our Prophet's uncle Hamza, the number of Muslims who accepted Islam had reached thirty nine.

Hamza's conversion to Islam had put the non-believers into a panic. The leaders of the non-believers in Mecca had arranged a meeting without losing any time. They discussed how they could stop the spread of Islam and said:

— Muslims are increasing in number and power each day. If we do not prevent this now, in the future there will be a big problem that will be unmanageable. We should find a solution to this right away.

In this meeting where various ideas were offered, the harshest idea came from Abu Jahl:

— There is no possible way except to kill Muhammad. Let's announce that we will give gold and a camel to whoever kills him. Upon this, Umar stood up and said:

— Only Umar, the son of Khattab, can do this, and he went to his home after an applause. He put on his weapon and went on his way to kill the Prophet. On his way, he met with Nuaym, the son of Abdullah. Nuaym became suspicious after noticing his angry state and asked:

— Where are you going O Umar?

— I am going to get rid of the body of Muhammad, who plants the seeds of separation between Arabs.

— Umar you plan to do something big. Muslims are always around Muhammad to protect him. They would not let you go near him. Let's say you did what you planned, do you think that the Sons of Hashim would let you live?

— Are you one of them too? Did you convert to Muhammad's religion too?

— Should not you question your relatives first? Your brother-in-law Said and your sister Fatima became Muslims too! These words of Nuaym made Umar very angry. He did not know what to do with his anger. He did not want to believe that his brother-in-law and sister were Muslim too, but what if it was the truth? What should he do now? To whom should he go first?

In order to find this out, he changed his way. He went directly to the house of his brother-in-law Said ibn Zayd. The Noble Quran was being read inside. Habbab was reciting the Quran to the household. When Umar was in front of the door, he heard the recitation of the Qur'an and then knocked on the door very hard. When they understood that it was Umar at the door, they panicked. They hid Habbab in a hurry. After hiding the page that they were reading from the Quran, they opened the door.

Umar shouted with anger:

— What were you reading?!

— It was nothing, said his brother-in-law.

— So what I heard is correct, he said and grabbed his brother-in-law by the throat. He knocked him down with a punch. He started to kick him with all of his anger. In order to save her husband, his sister held Umar's hands. Upon this, Umar started to hit his sister. Fatima said with her face covered in blood:

— O Umar! Yes, I and my husband became Muslims. Do whatever you can! Even if you kill us, we won't change our religion.

Fatima's sad look and what she said had touched Umar. His heart had softened. He dropped himself to the floor in shame for what he has done. With a peaceful voice, he said:

— Bring what you were reading, I want to see it.

Habbab got out of his hiding place and said to Umar:

— O Umar! I heard the Prophet praying: "O Allah! Strengthen the Ummah either through Abu Jahl or Umar, the son of Khattab!" I wish that our Prophet's prayer for you would come true. Fear Allah and become a Muslim!

At that moment, his sister brought the page of Quran that they have been hiding and gave it to Umar. On that page, the first verses of Surah Taha were written.

Umar got the page and began reading. After completing it, he began thinking deeply for he was so influenced by the verses. Now his heart felt so close to Islam, and he felt like a new person.

He could barely say:

— Take me to Muhammad.

Umar's words made everyone so happy in the house. Without losing any time, they went off on their way.

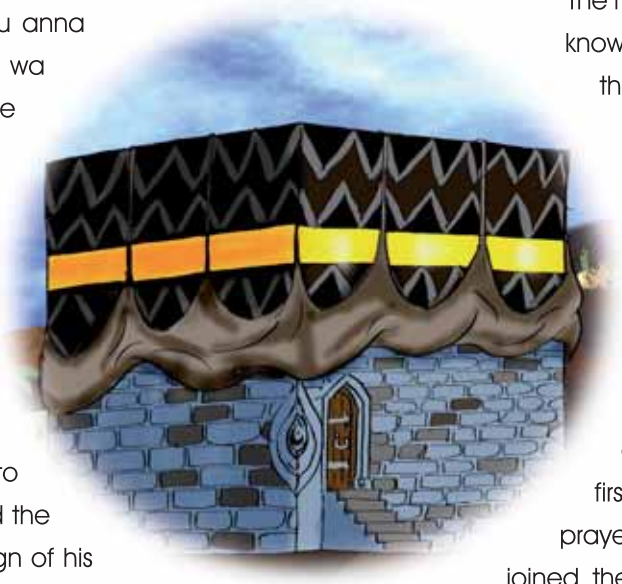
Our beloved Prophet was at the house of Arkam. When Muslims saw that Umar was com-

ing toward the house of Arkam with his weapon on him, they panicked. Hamza encouraged them by saying:

— If he is coming with good intentions, that's good! If he is coming with bad intentions, then let him come, there are things for him to see. There is no reason to panic.

Umar, who came to the door of Arkam, was taken to the Prophet. The Prophet asked him why he had come. Umar said:

— I came to announce that I believe in Allah and His messenger. Then he embraced Islam by saying "Ash-hadu an-la ilaha ill-Allahu wa ash-hadu anna Muhammadan 'Abdu-hu wa Rasuluhu." Those who were there showed theşr joy by saying Taqbirs with happiness. The sound of "Allahu Akbar" from the house of Arkam was echoed in the streets of Mecca.



Umar had entered into a new life; he had joined the Muslims. There was no sign of his anger towards Islam and the Muslims any more. He had understood the beauty of Islam and his heart had filled with faith. The old Umar was gone and a new person was born.

With Umar's conversion to Islam, the Ummah got even stronger. The Muslims were even more encouraged when they had Umar among them. By leaving the house of Arkam where they were learning and practicing Islam secretly, they walked towards the Ka'bah.

While the pagans were sitting close to the Ka'bah, they saw that the Muslims with Umar in front of them were coming towards them. They thought that Umar was bringing all the Muslims to them. However, it was not long before they realized that they were wrong. Within the crowd that was approaching with the shouting of Taqbir, Umar came forward. He faced towards the leaders of Mecca and announced:

— Those who do not know, hear it. I am Umar the son of Khattab. I have become a Muslim too. Then, he recited Al-Kalimah Al-Shahadah with a loud voice.

The non-believers did not know what to do when they heard the news. They were extremely shocked. They dispersed without saying anything.

The Muslims that came to the Ka'bah in congregation for the first time performed a prayer there. Umar had joined them too. He praised Allah for honoring him with Islam.

Umar's heart had been full of so much hatred and dislike that he really could have killed the Prophet. However, now the same heart was filled with faith and love, as well as the willingness to die on this path. Al-Kalimah Al-Shahadah is the best symbol of this faith and love.

HUMANS IN TERMS OF THEIR FAITH

Humans are divided into two main groups according to their faith.

1. Those who have faith
2. Those who do not have faith

Humans In Terms of Their Faith

- THOSE WHO HAVE FAITH (MU'MIN-MUSLIM)
- THOSE WHO DO NOT HAVE FAITH
  - **Kafir** (Those who Deny)
  - **Mushrik** (Those who associate partners with Allah)
  - **Munafiq** (Hypocrit) (Those Who Only Act like a Believer)

Allah the Exalted says:

"Those who have faith and do righteous deeds,- they are the best of creatures. Their reward is with Allah. Gardens of Eternity, beneath which rivers flow; they will dwell therein for ever; Allah well pleased with them, and they with Him: all this for such as fear their Lord and Cherisher."

(Surah Al-Bayyina (Evidence); 98:1-8)

1. Those who have faith

☺ A mu'min or a muslim is someone who sincerely believes in Allah, that He is the only deity, Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) is His Prophet and his message is the truth. Mu'mins who believe in and perform good deeds enter the Paradise in the Hereafter.

2. Those who do not have faith

Those who do not have faith are divided into three subcategories due to the differences in their faith as *Kafir, Mushrik,* and *Munafiq* (hypocrites). Those who deny Allah and His oneness, His messenger, and the message he brought are called *Kafir*.

☺ Just like calling those who deny all of the fundamentals of Islam as *kafir*, those who deny any one of the commands in Islam are also called *kafir*. Those who die as a *kafir* will be punished in the eternal Hellfire.

☺ Those who believe in Allah, but deny His oneness and worship other gods as well are called *mushrik*.

Allah is the only one who can create something out of nothing, provides food and healing. Those who believe that other beings have such powers are associating partners with Allah, which is called *shirk*. It is also *shirk* to believe that there are other bings which are equal or similar to Allah, or that Allah has a helper.

☺ Those who do not actually believe in Allah, but pretend as though they do when around the believers are called *munafiq*. Due to their hypocrisy their punishment in the Hereafter will be very severe indeed.

Allah the Exalted says:

"But those who reject (Allah) - for them will be the Fire of Hell: No term shall be determined for them, so they should die, nor shall its Penalty be lightened for them. Thus do We reward every ungrateful one! Therein will they cry aloud (for assistance): "Our Lord! Bring us out: we shall work righteousness, not the (deeds) we used to do!" - "Did We not give you long enough life so that he that would should receive admonition? and (moreover) the warner came to you. So taste ye (the fruits of your deeds): for the wrong-doers there is no helper."

(Surah Al-Fatir (The Angels); 35:36-37)

Allah the Exalted says:

"Allah does not forgive (the sin of) assosiating other gods with Him…"

(Surah Al-Nisa (Women); 4:116)

ABOUT WHAT SHOULD WE BE CAREFULL IN RESPECT TO THE MATTERS OF FAITH?

Once we accept the existence and oneness of Allah and that Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) is His Messenger, we are considered to have faith. However, just saying "I have faith" is not sufficient. We need to protect our faith until our very last breath.

We need to accept all the fundamentals of our faith and its basic rules

Believing in Allah, the angels, the prophets, the scriptures, the Hereafter, and destiny and fate are the fundamental pillars of our faith in our religion. The obligatory and the prohibited acts

Allah the Exalted says:

"The Hypocrites will be in the lowest depths of the Fire…" (Surah Al-Nisa (Women); 4: 145)

"…That is because they believed, then they rejected Faith…" (Surah Al-Munafiqun (The Hypocrites); 63: 3)

Allah the Exalted says:

"O you who believe! Fear Allah as He should be feared, and die not except in a state of Islam."

(Surah Al-Imran (The Family of Imran); 3:102)

are also the basic rules of our religion; Allah the Exalted has ordered forms of worship, such as *salat* (prayer), *sawm* (fasting), *hajj* (pilgrimage), *zakat* (alms), and *jihad* (struggle; striving in the way of Allah). He has forbidden evil acts such as stealing, murdering, gambling, drinking alcohol, engaging in interest, and fornication and adultery. For our faith to be valid, we need to believe that all of these are Allah's definite commands and prohibitions. Disliking, not accepting, mocking, or saying or performing acts that would imply denial of one or more of these fundamentals of belief and basic rules can cause someone to convert out of the religion and become a kafir.

We need to keep balance between the feelings of fear and hope.

It is wrong to think that entering Paradise is guaranteed simply through our worship and good deeds. Similarly, it is wrong to see ourselves as destined for the Hellfire due to our wrongdoings and sins. Being sure that Allah will forgive or losing hope for His mercy may cause us to lose our faith. Then, we should believe that Allah the Exalted has infinite mercy and forgiveness, without ever forgetting that He will torture the sinners. We must pray that we enter Paradise and fear entering the Hellfire. Therefore, the most appropriate way to live is in moderation. We must try to be worthy of Paradise and avoid bad behavior and sins that would lead us to Hell.

Allah the Exalted says:

"Then is it only a part of the Book that ye believe in, and do ye reject the rest? but what is the reward for those among you who behave like this but disgrace in this life?- and on the Day of Judgment they shall be consigned to the most grievous penalty. For Allah is not unmindful of what ye do."

(Surah Al-Baqara (The Cow); 2:85)

If on the Day of Judgment it were to be declared that only one person would enter Paradise, I would be hopeful that I would be that person. Similarly, if it were to be declared that only one person would enter Hell, I would be fearful of that person being me.

Umar (r.a.)

Allah the Exalted says:

"Say: "O my Servants who have transgressed against their souls! Despair not of the Mercy of Allah, for Allah forgives all sins: for He is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful."

(Surah Al-Zumar (The Troops); 39:53)

THE GOOD NEWS OF THE PROPHET

Amr ibn As, one of the Companions of the Prophet, was lying on his death bed. Once, his friends came to visit him. When they entered into his room, Amr ibn As had turned his face towards the wall and was crying in deep sorrow. Trying to console him, his son said:

— My dear father! Didn't the Messenger of Allah give you this and that good news? Why are you so sad?

Then, turning his face to his friend, Amr ibn As said:

— The most valuable food that you prepare for the Hereafter is the word "La ilaha illallah, Muhammadun Rasulallah." Then, he narrated one of his memories:

"Once, there was no one who hated and or held grudges against the Prophet more than myself. I was willing so much to find a way to kill him. If I had died while in those thoughts, I would have definitely been destined for Hell.

When Allah the Exalted placed the love of Ilsma in my heart, I came to our Prophet and said:

— Give me your hand; I will pledge allegiance to you (I will promise that I will believe in you and obey you). When the Messenger of Allah (p.b.u.h.) gave his hand, I pulled back my hand.

Upon this the Prophet asked:

— What happened, do you no longer believe?

I said:

— I will believe, but on one condition

He said:

— What is that condition?

I said:

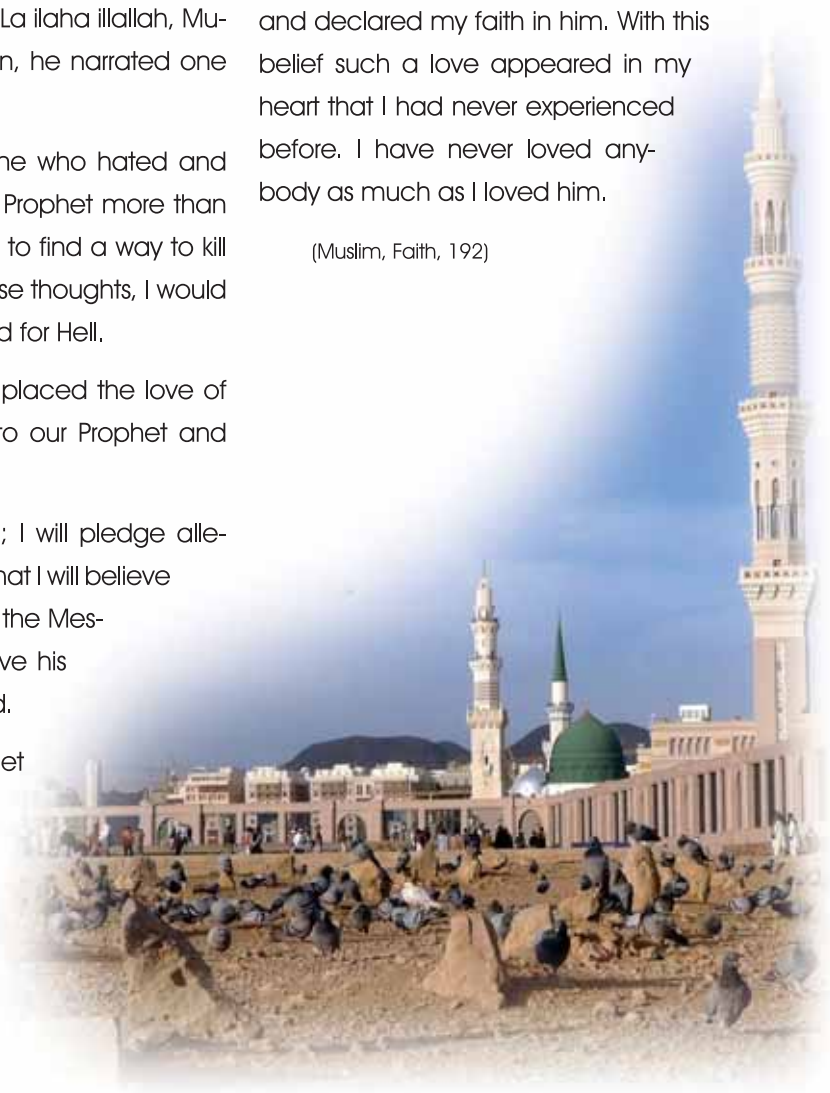
— I want Allah to forgive me.

Upon this the Prophet said the following:

Becoming a Muslim nullifies all previous sins, and so does migrating for the sake of Allah. Similarly, performing the pilgrimage (Al Hajj) nullifies all previous sins.

I was very glad to hear these words from our Prophet. I held his blessed hands and declared my faith in him. With this belief such a love appeared in my heart that I had never experienced before. I have never loved anybody as much as I loved him.

(Muslim, Faith, 192)



WHAT SHOULD WE DO TO STRENGTHEN OUR FAITH?

Faith is the guide of our intellect and the source of serenity in our hearts. A happy passage from this world to the eternal life in the Hereafter is only possible with belief.

Belief is the basis of all forms of worship, which gains its value only by means of faith. Feeling joy in performance of our worships, showing good manners and behaviors, such as paying attention to Allah's contentment, in all the deeds we do can be listed among the most valuable results of our faith. Moreover, these acts will strengthen our belief.

Our belief will take root in our hearts and influence our life depending on

- how close we are to our Lord,
- how careful we are in our worship,
- how attentive we are in staying away from the sins.

The love of Allah is the result of strong faith while committing sins and neglecting worship is a sign of the weakness of belief. The level of belief of someone who cries with the love and respect of Allah is not the same as someone else who, without hesitating, violates the prohibitions of Islam or neglects his worship.

Faith is like a vulnerable sapling that is greening and growing and sprouting in our hearts. In order for this sapling to grow and bear fruits, we need to protect it and take care of its needs. Similarly, we need to feed and strengthen our faith using spiritual nourishment and protect it from all harmful thoughts and beliefs. Otherwise, just like how a sapling dries when we do not take vare of it, faith that is not protected with care also –God forbid- vanishes.

Allah the Exalted says:

"So lose not heart, nor fall into despair: For ye must gain mastery if ye are true in Faith.."

(Âl-i İmran sûresi, 139. âyet)

Faith is both a guiding light and power. The person who attains true belief can challenge the whole universe.

Bediuzzaman

Our faith is our most valuable capital. Satan who is our obvious enemy tries to destroy our faith whenever he gets a chance. For this reason, we should keep our faith alive at all times and preserve it until our last breath.

In order to accomplish this

- We should do good deeds,
- We should regularly perform our worship,
- We should contemplate,
- We should stay away from sins and prohibitions,
- We should always be in the company of good people.

The common name of all the good things we do for the sake of Allah: Good Deeds *(Amal Salih)*

Faith is not a theoretical form of knowledge. To ascend towards the peak of faith depends fully on worship and good deeds. Faith is kept alive by first embroiling it to the heart then acting on it. We feel the true joy of faith when we come to that point. For this reason, faith and good deeds are generally mentioned together in the Noble Quran and the Honorable Sayings of the Prophet (Hadith).

Our beloved Prophet said:

"If one of you lives Islam appropriately, he earns from ten up to seven hundred times the divine reward for each good deed. On the other hand, any evil act he commits is recorded as it is until he reaches Allah."

(Bukhari, Faith (Iman), 31)

Any good deed for the sake of Allah strengthens our faith.

All the good and nice deeds that will gain for us the contentment of Allah are called *Amal Salih* (good deeds). Accordingly, the following beautiful behaviors can be counted among the good deeds:

- The fulfillment of the commands of Allah the Exalted,
- To keep away from the prohibitions of Allah the Exalted,

- Being good mannered,
- Showing mercy and compassion towards creation,
- Acquiring and transmitting knowledge,
- Working for the betterment of humanity,
- Helping people and caring for their troubles,
- Treating animals well,
- Keeping the environment clean.

Our faith is like a lamp that burns in our hearts and lights our way, and good deeds are like a lamp shade that protects the lamp and keeps the light alive. To protect and strengthen our faith we need to increase our good deeds. The light of the faith in our heart increases as our good deeds increase and the love for Allah and Prophet strengthens.

The opportunities to keep our faith alive: Our acts of worship

There is a direct relationship between our faith and acts of worship. Our will and sincerity in performing our ritual duties show the strength of the faith in our heart.

A believer who has strong faith enjoys worshipping. He worships in serenity and feels a spiritual excitement from the worship. The believer whose faith is weak acts lazily when it comes to worship. Since he does not perform his ritual duties regularly, his religious fervor weakens. He ends up committing sins without hesitation. His heart hardens and the light of faith in his heart slowly diminishes.

One day a man came to our beloved Prophet and said;

— O messenger of Allah, tell me the acts that will take someone away from Hell and get him closer to Heaven.

Upon this, the Prophet said the following:

— One should worship Allah without associating any partners with him, perform his ritual prayers, give the mandatory alms, protect and care for his relatives.

(Muslim, Faith, 14)

Worshipping brings us closer to Allah. It helps us attain His love and contentment. All forms of worship and good deeds, such as prayer, fasting, mandatory and supererogatory alms giving, honesty, and treating friends with honor and respect keep the spiritual bond with our Lord alive and strengthen our faith.

The horizon of human contemplation: Tafakkur (reflection)

Tafakkur (contemplation) is deeply thinking about the following and taking lessons from them:

- ✔ The exaltedness of our Lord,
- ✔ The greatness of his power and strength,
- ✔ The beauty of the universe and the beings in it,

Allah the Exalted says:

"Men who celebrate the praises of Allah, standing, sitting, and lying down on their sides, and contemplate the (wonders of) creation in the heavens and the earth, (With the thought): "Our Lord! not for naught Hast Thou created (all) this! Glory to Thee! Give us salvation from the penalty of the Fire."

(Surah Al-Imran (The Family of Imran); 3:191)

- The purpose of human creation,
- The world, death, and afterlife in the grave,
- The Day of Judgment, being held accountable for our actions, and Heaven and Hell.

There is a great deal of evidence in the creation of humans and other beings in the universe of the existence and oneness of Allah. When we reflect upon the endless universe and its perfect structure we understand how powerful and exalted our Lord is. We comprehend our weakness and helplessness. We understand how merciful and beneficent our Exalted Lord is to us while we are so helpless.

When we reflect upon death and the Hereafter, we recall that life in this world is temporary. We do not forget that we will be held accountable in the Hereafter for all our behaviors in this world. As a result of this reflection, we obtain a stronger faith. We consider our life as a great opportunity for us to become well acquainted with our Lord and earn our places in Paradise. We behave well towards our parents, siblings, friends, and others. We never hurt any being.

One moment of contemplation is better than a year's extra devotion without reflection.

Protecting the heart from stains: Avoiding sin

There are certain behaviors that damage our body, spirit, society, humans and other living beings. Our Exalted Lord has prohibited us from committing these acts.

Allah the Exalted has prohibited acts such as associating partners with Allah, lying, not praying, and hurting others. When we do not obey one of these commands and prohibitions, we commit a "sin."

THE HOLY WORD

We were only a few,
That did not fit in the skies.
We were a few,
Longing for the Paradise.

We never quit saying,
And take it out of our hearts,
The holiest word
La ilaha illallah

You became lover in my heart,
You planted love in me.
In the building of Tawhid,
My heart is on yours.

We never quit saying,
It can never be taken out of my heart,
The holiest word,
La ilaha illallah.

Our honesty,
Is the nightmare of the disbeliever,
If anyone is oppressed and hurt,
His cry touches us.

We never quit saying,
It can never be taken out of my heart,
The holiest word,
La ilaha illallah.

The sins we commit damage our faith. The sins that we make a habit of cause our faith to weaken. As our sins increase, our will to worship decreases, and our notion of fear from Allah's torment weakens.

Sins that we commit create stains in our hearts. When our heart becomes tainted, it also hardens, and when our heart hardens, we lose our sensitivity towards sin. We start seeing the sins that we were hesitating to commit previously as unimportant. For this reason, when we may sin knowingly or unknowingly, we should immediately repent and ask for forgiveness from our Lord. We must remove the negative impact of the sins out of our hearts by engaging in beneficiary and good deeds.

Good friends who remind us of Allah: The Righteus Believers

There are some people with good morals and manners who obey Allah's commands, who regularly perform their acts of worship, and who are sensitive to matters concerning what is permissible and prohibited in religion.

These Muslims commit acts that are beneficial, rather than harmful. They are careful about what they say, and try their best to avoid hurting the feelings of others. They love Allah the Exalted very much. These are, as the Quran puts it, "good servants." Good servants are exemplary people who our Exalted Lord mentions favorably and wanted us to be friends with.

A person is definitely influenced by the manners and acts of the people they accompany and love. Being friends with people with bad morals, who neglect their ritual duties and do not avoid prohibitions will affect us nega-

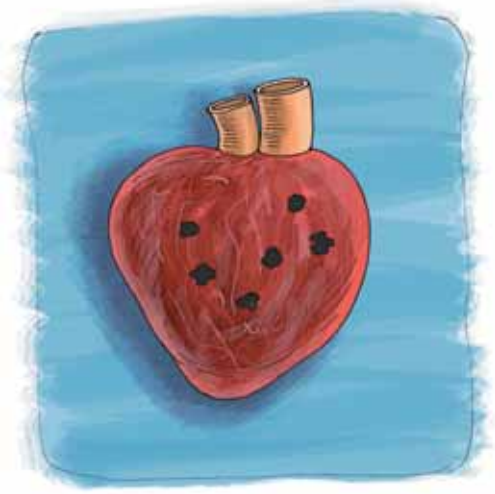
Our beloved Prophet says:

"When a believer commits a sin, a black stain appears in his heart. If he quits that sin and asks from Allah forgiveness, the black stain is erased, his heart becomes as bright as it had been. If he continues sinning, the black stain increase and blacken the heart completely. The rust Allah the Exalted mentions in His verse "By no means! but on their hearts is the stain of the (ill) which they do!" (Surah Mutaffifin, (Defrauding); 8 3:14) is this.

Our beloved Prophet says:

"Someone travels widely for the sake of Allah. His hair is disheveled and covered with dust. He lifts his hands towards the sky (and thus makes a supplication), "O Lord, O Lord!" Whereas his diet is unlawful, his drink is unlawful, and his clothes are unlawful, and his nourishment is unlawful. How can then his supplication be accepted?"

(Muslim, Zakat, 65)



The person who consumes haram (unlawful) becomes a harami (a robber)

What we eat and drink has a great influence on our inner world and religious sensitivity. As much as our food and drink is clean and permissible (halal) so our religious life becomes beautiful, and our faith becomes strong.

Let's consider the gasoline that a vehicle uses. As the foreign materials in the gasoline damages the operation of the vehicle, the prohibited foods that go into our stomach cause corruption in our thoughts. The person who eats haram thinks evil things. That person's heart has a tendency towards evil. He commits bad deeds. For this reason, our ancestors had said "He, who eats haram, becomes a harami (outlaw)."

tively, likely causing our faith to weaken and our morals to become corrupt.

Loving righteous believers and accompanying them, on the other hand, affects us positively. This is because the faithful spirits are like tranquil and wide seas. There is light on their faces and serenity in their souls. The spiritual beauties in their souls reflect in their appearance. These people exert positive energy in their surroundings. They are reminders of Allah and the Hereafter and they are good examples with their speech and behavior.

When we become friends with good servants of Allah our faith strengthens. Our love towards Allah increases. A feeling of hatred towards the prohibitions of Allah arises in our hearts. Our manners become more full of grace. Finally, we also become like those good believers who obey Allah's commands and prohibitions and achieve His contentment.

Our beloved Prophet says:

"People are influenced by the life styles of their friends, so each of you should pay attention to whom you will befriend!"

(Abu Dawud, Adab, 16)

Allah the Exalted says:

"O you who believe! Fear Allah and be with those who are true (in word and deed)."

(Surah Al-Tawba (Repentance); 9:119)

THE PERSON WHO KNOWS HOW TO ASK A QUESTION

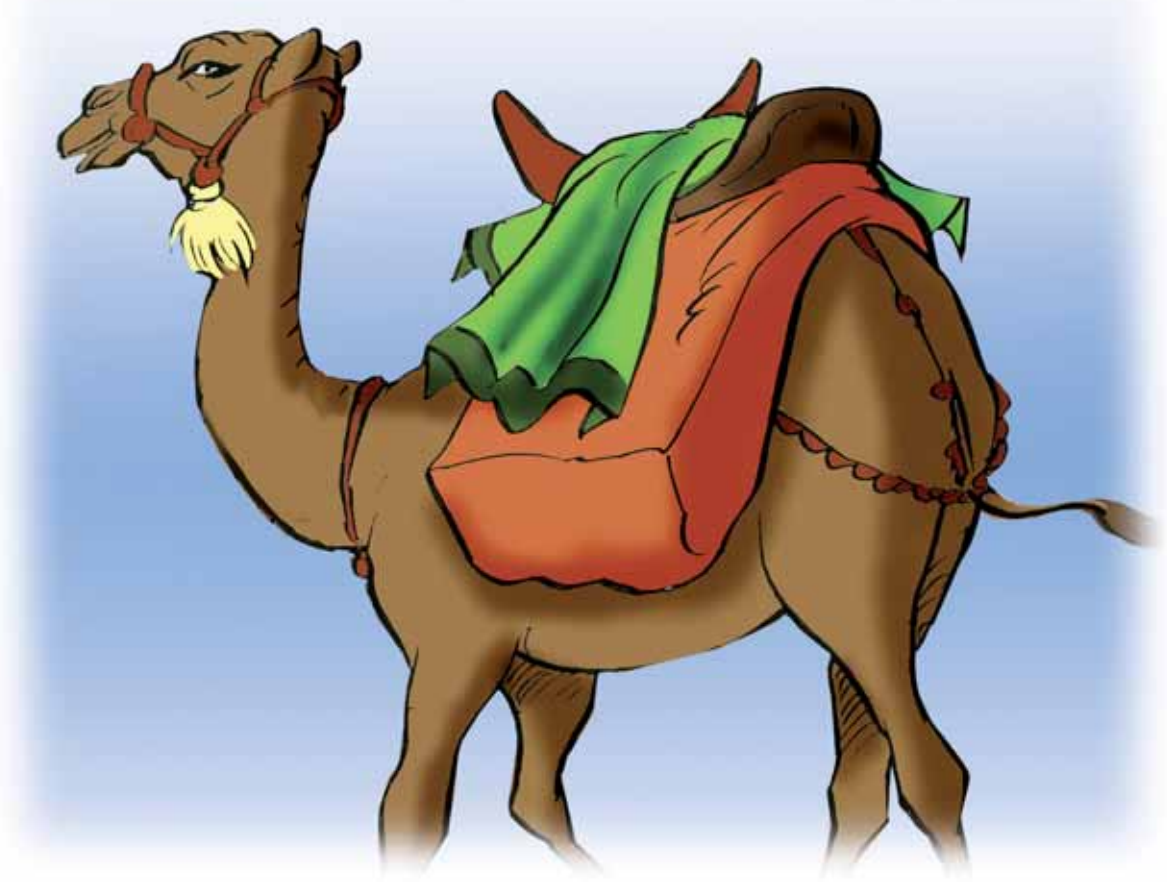
It was the year 630. When the Prophet was conversing with his companions in the Masjid Al-Nabawi (Prophet's Mosque), a stranger appeared in front of the mosque. His long braided hair was hanging from both sides of his head. He was a big strong man. He stepped down from his camel in one swift move. After tying up his camel in the courtyard of the mosque, he confidently marched towards those sitting and asked:

— "Which one of you is Muhammad?"

It was apparent that he was not a Muslim because when Muslims addressed the Prophet, they used to go with the title that was given to him by Allah the Exalted, "the Messenger of Allah," not his name.

The Noble Companions showed him the Messenger of Allah and said:

— Here he is, the person with whitish skin sitting down and leaning against the wall. The Prophet had no special place in the Masjid Al-Nabawi (Prophet's Mosque), nor did he wear any special item of clothing. He used to sit with his companions as if he was one of them. A stranger who had not seen his rose colored face before would not be able to recognize Him.



The man approached the Messenger of Allah and addressed him with the name of his grandfather:

— O the son of Abdul Muttalib!

The Messenger of Allah responded to his rude addressing:

— Go ahead, I am listening to you.

The man said:

— I will ask you certain questions. If I ask you extreme questions please do not be offended.

When the messenger of Allah (p.b.u.h.) replied: "I will not be offended, ask whatever you want", the following conversation took place between them:

— According to the messenger you sent to our tribe, you were saying that Allah sent you as a prophet, I am asking in the name of your Lord

and the Lord of those before you. Is it Allah who sent you to all humanity?

— Yes, Allah sent me.

— Then, who created these Heavens.

— Allah created them.

— What about the Earth?

— Allah created that, too.

— Who placed these mountains on the earth?

— Allah did.

— You are commanding only to worship Allah by leaving aside the idols and without associating any partners with Him. I am asking in the name of Allah. Did Allah reveal these to you?

— Yes, Allah revealed them to me.

— Say for the love of Allah. Did Allah command you to pray five times a day?

— Yes, Allah commanded me.

— Say for the love of Allah. Did Allah command you to fast during the month of Ramadan?

— Yes, Allah commanded me.

— Say for the love of Allah. Did Allah command you to take the mandatory alms (Zakat) from our rich to give to our poor?

— Yes, Allah commanded me.

The Noble Companions were carefully listening to the logical questions with straightforward explanations that the stranger was asking. The man continued as follows:

— According to what the messenger that you sent to our tribe told us, you are asking that those of us who have the financial means should visit the Ka'bah; is that correct?

— Yes, my messenger had told the truth.

— Say in the love of the One who sent you as prophet. Did Allah command you all of these?

— Yes, Allah commanded me.

The man who received affirmative responses to each question he then stated the following as he looked at the Prophet with the deepest sincerity:

— I certainly believe that there is no god other than Allah. I also certainly believe that Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) is his servant and messenger. I have faith in all the commands you brought from Allah. I will perform them correctly. I will also stay away from everything you forbid. I am Damam ibn Salabah from the tribe of Sa'ad ibn Bakr. I came to you as a representative of my tribe. I swear by the name of Allah who sent you as Prophet, I do no more and no less than what you just said.

Damam stood up, untied his camel, hopped on and went back to his tribe.

While the Noble Companions were watching behind him with amazement, a sweet smile was seen on the Messenger of Allah. The following good news dropped from his holy mouth:

— If this man with knitted hair is telling the truth, then it means that he has already entered Paradise.

(Bukhari, Ilm, 6; Muslim, Iman, 10)

THE BENEFITS OF FAITH

FAITH

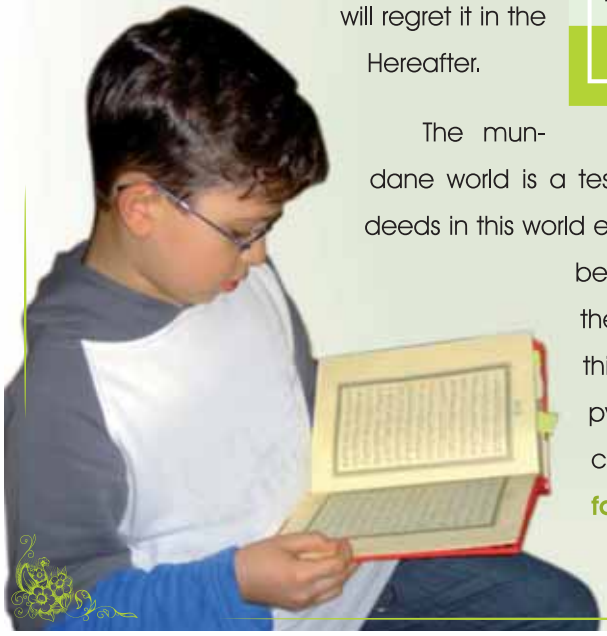
- Guarantees that we us to be saved from Hell and enter the Heaven.
- Gives us the strength to stand against troubles and worries.
- It revives our feelings of brotherhood and solidarity.
- Affects positively our feelings, thoughts, and behaviors.

Life is not just comprised of this world. Life that on average lasts about 60-70 years in this world is an opportunity given to us to prepare for the everlasting life. After we die, we will not have the opportunity to return to this world. Those who miss the opportunity to utilize this world will regret it in the Hereafter.

Allah the Exalted says:

"For those who believe and do righteous deeds, will be Gardens; beneath which rivers flow: That is the great Salvation, (the fulfillment of all desires)."

(Surah Al-Buruj (Constellations); 85:11)



The mundane world is a test. Those who believe and conduct good deeds in this world earn their places in Paradise. Those who disbelieve and conduct evil deeds have earned their places in Hell. Our faith and behavior in this world determines whether we will be happy in the Hereafter. Strong faith causes us to commit beneficial and good deeds. **Such faith protects us from Hell and helps us enter the Heaven.**

Humans are weak by nature. The mundane world, consisting of tests, is full of difficulties and worries. Everybody has their own troubles and problems in the world. The material and spiritual worries and afflictions and calamities are part of our lives. Illness, death and natural disasters are situations that we can encounter at anytime.

The unbeliever considers the troubles of this world an unbearable torment. However, the believing person looks at the world from the perspective of faith. He knows that there is wisdom in everything that takes place. He sees all the events that he is passing through as opportunities that will carry him to Heaven and faces them patiently. He does not lose control and hope in the face of difficult situations such as illness, death, and natural disasters. This is because faith establishes in our hearts the thought that there is ease and relief with every difficulty. It teaches us that everything we encounter is a kind of test and that we need to be patient. **It gives us the strength to stand against such troubles and calamities.**

Allah the Exalted says:

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

Who say, when afflicted with calamity: "To Allah We belong, and to Him is our return"

(Surah Al-Baqara (The Cow); 2:155-156)

Faith forms an atmosphere of love and brotherhood with other people. **It revives our feelings of brotherhood and solidarity.**

Being a member of a community and sharing one's troubles and worries with others makes a person feel relieved. When we believe we become a member of a community whose members are beautiful people. We understand that we are not alone and helpless in this world. We share our happiness and sorrow with them and we produce common solutions to our problems.

Our beloved Prophet says:

"Believers are like a body when it comes to loving, being merciful, and protecting each other. Whenever a part of the body is ill, the other parts of the body share its pain with sleeplessness and fever."

(Bukhari, Adab, 27)

Our belief shapes our feelings and thoughts. Our behaviors are also mirrors of these feelings and thoughts. **Belief affects our emotions, thoughts, and behaviors positively.**

When we have strong faith, our thoughts are purified. As a result, our speech, demeanor, and behavior are purified. We become honest and helpful people, respectful of other people's rights. We do not repeat bad words, and we do not hurt anyone. No harm comes from our hands or tongues. We become good mannered. Thus, we both achieve Allah the Exalted's love and contentment and gain the love and respect of people around us.

Our beloved Prophet says:

"There is a small piece of flesh in the body. When that piece is sound, the whole body is sound. When that piece is corrupt, the whole body becomes corrupt. That piece of flesh is the heart."

(Bukhari, Iman, 39)

Be mindful of your thoughts, for they can transform your feelings.

Be mindful of your feelings, for they can transform your behaviors.

Be mindful of your behaviors, for they can transform your habits.

Be careful of your habits, for they can transform your manners and character.

THE SINCERITY OF THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD IN FAITH

Prophets are holy people selected by Allah the Exalted to invite all humanity to faith. They first believe themselves, then, in turn, they tried to carry the light of belief to the hearts of other people. Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) is the last of the Prophets selected by Allah. As the other prophets, first he believed in the religion that he is supposed to deliver himself. He never worshipped idols. **He did not accept deities other than Allah.** He wholeheartedly worked to spread the religion of our Lord. He bore numerous torments on the way.

The pagans of Mecca tried numerous methods to make our Prophet give up his cause. However, in the face of his sincerity in faith they were helpless. **No power whatsoever could make him give up his faith or give up inviting people to the religion.**

Prophet Muhammad **would never remain silent towards the attacks on faith and Islam even though he used to forgive the evil committed against him personally.** He would never give in to oppression; he used to fight against all kinds of injustice in the best manner possible. He would never even hesitate sacrificing his life for the sake of his faith; he used to see martyrdom as the highest of ranks.

The beloved messenger of Allah would to keep his faith fresh by **worship, pondering, and invocation.** He knew that he had always been watched by his Lord and tried to gain His love and contentment. He never slacked off in his

Allah the Exalted says:

"The Messenger believeth in what hath been revealed to him from his Lord, as do the men of faith. Each one (of them) believeth in Allah, His angels, His books, and His apostles."

(Surah Al-Baqara (The Cow); 2:285)

The pagans of Mecca tried numerous methods to make our beloved Prophet turn away from faith. They succeeded in none of them. At last, they decided to go to his uncle Abu Talib. The Prophet loved his uncle, who raised him since he was eight years of age, very much. The pagans had hoped that the Prophet would listen to Abu Talib and stop believing in Islam and inviting people to it. They asked Abu Talib to talk to him. His uncle introduced the subject to him. He informed him of what the pagans had wished for. He warned him the end of this matter would be very dangerous, and he asked him to give up his cause. Our beloved Prophet responded as follows:

"Uncle! I swear to Allah that even if they place the Sun in my right and the moon in my left I would not give up my cause. Either Allah the Exalted spreads this religion to the whole world or I die in this cause!"

(Ibn-i Asir, Al-Qameel, II, 64)

ritual duties and would to look for opportunities to worship Allah. Worship and contemplation used to make him forget the worries of this world and his heart would find serenity. This beauty and inner peace provided by faith would reflect in the holy face of our beloved Prophet.

Our beloved Prophet **had superior morals.** The beauty in his manners was the outer reflection of the perfect faith in his heart. By saying *"The best of believers in terms of faith is the one whose manners are the best."* (Tirmizi, Rada, 11) he used to draw attention to the fact that having faith entails being good mannered. Furthermore, he used to qualify faith and good manners as two brothers who would never part. He would state that good manners were present wherever there is faith, For this reason, he used to attach special value to the believers with good manners. **He used to assess people based on their faith and good manners, not on their poverty, richness, ranks, or social status.**

Our Prophet, who shaped his life of servanthood for God, used to see the world and **all that was happening in it through the window of faith.**

In short, our beloved Prophet **lived his beliefs in the best fashion.** He became the best example for us. His sincere faith and good manners enlightened the horizon of all humanity like the sun.

At the time of our Prophet there was a poor Companion who used to live in the desert. He was not too happy with his looks. This Companion used to love our Prophet fso much, as our Prophet loved him. Whenever he visited Medina, he would stop by the Prophet's home just to bring small but sincere gifts. The Messenger of Allah, in turn, used to pay him back with a gift worth even more.

One day the Prophet saw this Companion in the market. He approached silently and closed his eyes with his hands. Then he said:

— Is there anyone who wants to buy this slave (meaning the slavery and servant of Allah)

Recognizing the Prophet's voice, the Companion was very glad and said:

— O the Messenger of Allah, who would buy an ugly person like me? You cannot earn much by selling me.

After releasing him, our Prophet said:

— Perhaps those who are deceived by looks may not give too much money, but your value in the sight of Allah is high!"

THE MAN WITH THE WHITE DRESS

Umar said:

One day we were in the presence of the Messenger of Allah (p.b.u.h.). At that time, someone known by none of use came by wearing a very white dress and with very black hair. He came close to our Prophet and sat knee to knee in front of the Prophet. He put his hands on his own knees and said:

— O Muhammad, tell me about Islam!

The Messenger of Allah (p.b.u.h.) said:

Islam means that you testify that there is no deity except Allah, and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, perform the ritual prayers properly, give the mandatory alms, fast during the month of Ramadan, and if you have the means, perform the Hajj (pilgrimage to the Ka'bah).

The man said:

— You are correct.

We found it strange that the man both asked the question and approved the answer. Then the man said: "Now tell me about faith." The Messenger of Allah (p.b.u.h.) said:

— It is the belief in Allah, His Angels, Scripture, Prophets, and the Hereafter.

It is also the belief in destiny and that good and evil comes from Allah.

The man approved again by saying "you are correct" and said

— So then what is ihsan, tell me about that too. The Messenger of Allah (p.b.u.h.) replied

— Ihsan means to worship Allah as if you actually see Him. Even though you don't see Him, He definitely sees you.

Again, the man said: "you are correct," and after asking a question about the Day of Judgment and its signs, he silently left. I was startled and frozen for a while. Afterwards, the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) asked

— "O Omar, do you know who the person who asked those questions was?" I said Allah and His Messenger knows.

The Messenger of Allah (p.b.u.h.) said:

— It was Gabriel; he came to teach you your religion.

(Muslim, Iman, 1 and 5. Also see Bukhari, Iman, 37; Tirmizi Iman, 4; Abu Dawud, Sunnah, 16; Nasai, Mawaqit, 6; Ibn Maja, Muqaddimah, 9)

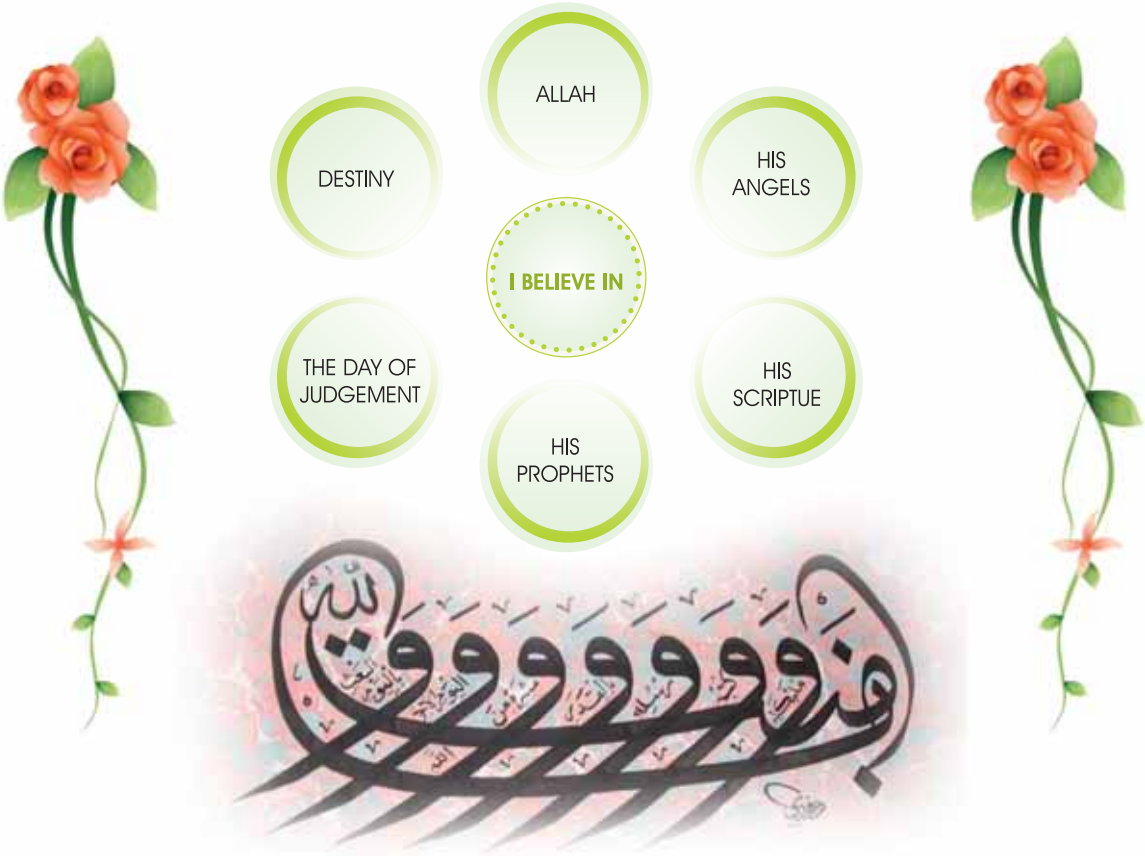
THE PRINCIPLES OF FAITH

All the believers believe in the six principles of faith. These principles are found in the supplication of Amantu:

AMANTU

آمَنْتُ بِاللهِ وَمَلٰٓئِكَتِهِ وَكُتُبِهِ وَرُسُلِهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَبِالْقَدَرِ خَيْرِهِ
وَشَرِّهِ مِنَ اللهِ تَعَالَى وَالْبَعْثُ بَعْدَ الْمَوْتِ حَقٌّ ۞ اَشْهَدُ اَنْ لَا
اِلٰهَ اِلَّا اللهُ ۞ وَاَشْهَدُ اَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ

I believe in Allah, His angels, His scripture, His prophets, and in the Hereafter, in destiny, that is, that good and evil happens by the will of Allah the Exalted. Resurrection after death is true and real. I testify that there is no God other than Allah, and I also testify that Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) is His servant and messenger.



QUESTIONS

Please match the following sentences below with the appropriate parts.

1	The expression that declares our faith in Allah and the Prophet		Neglecting the worships is an indicator as the weakness of faith.
2	Creating from nothing, providing sustenance,		continuously recall Allah and not to forget Him.
3	It is the continuity of our faith		we end up having committed a "sin."
4	Worships gain value		enjoys worshipping.
5	The love of Allah		only with faith
6	Violating the prohibitions and		which will get us to endless bliss.
7	A believer who has strong faith		against worries and calamities.
8	Recitation of invocations (dhikr) is to		is the result of a strong faith.
9	Faith gives the power to withstand		or healing belongs to Allah only.
10	When we do not obey the commands and prohibitions of Allah		is the testimony of faith (Al-Kalimah Al-Shahadah).

Let's try ourselves

1. What is the meaning of the testimony of faith?

A. I believe in Allah.

B. There is no deity other than Allah. Muhammad (a.s.) is His servant and messenger.

C. I certainly believe that there is no deity other than Allah. I also certainly believe that Muhammad (a.s.) is His servant and messenger.

D. Allah is a witness to everything I do.

2.

I. Conducting good deeds

II. performing the ritual worships regularly

III. Keeping busy with deep thinking and invocations

IV. Participating in all kinds of fun and games

V. Staying away from sins and prohibitions

Which one of the above strengthens our iman?

A. I, II, III and V B. II, IV and V

C. I, II, III and IV D. II, III, IV and V

3.

I. That we believe in the existence and oneness of Allah

II. That no other being other than Allah is worthy of worship

III. That beings other than Allah can also be deities.

IV. That we will live a life that is in accordance with the commands and prohibitions of Allah

V. That we believe in the Prophet and all the news he brought from Allah

Which of the above do we express in the testimony of faith?

A. Only I and II B. I, II, IV and V

C. II, III and V D. I, II, III, IV and V

4. Which one of the choices below means "Oneness of God" (Al-Kalimah Al-Tawhid)?

A. Alhamdu lillahi rabbil alemin.

B. Allahumma salli ala Muhammadin wa ala ali Muhammad

C. Ashadu an la ilaha illallah wa ashadu annah Muhammadan abduhu wa rasuluh

D. La ilaha illallah Muhammadun rasulullah

5. Which one of the below is not a good deed?

A. Being good mannered

B. Staying away from Allah the Exalted's prohibitions

C. Misbehaving towards animals

D. Helping people

Please fill in the blanks below using the words in parenthesis

(is sound / is the heart / good deed / creation / seven / befriend / good / hearts / his friend / recalling)

1. Those who believe and perform …….. deeds are the best of ……."
2. "Know this well that …… find serenity only by …….. Allah."
3. "A person is influenced by the life style of …….. Then, each of you should pay attention to whom you will ……."
4. "If one of you lives Islam well with every …… he performs, he gains divine rewards of ten to ……hundred times."
5. "There is a small piece of flesh in the human body. When that piece ……., the whole body is sound. When that piece is corrupt, the whole body becomes corrupt. That piece of flesh ……..."

Our beloved Prophet says:

"Look at those whose life standards are worse than yours; not to those who are better off than you. This is a better way to behave in order not to belittle the blessings God bestowed on you."

(Muslim, Zuhd, 9)

THE PURPOSE OF OUR CREATION

WORSHIP

- *Definition of Worship*
- *Purpose of Worship*
- *Benefits of Worship*

THE FEAST IN THE PALACE

There was once a very rich king. This king wanted to let everybody know about his wealth and the greatness of his kingdom. For this purpose, he ordered a huge palace to be built. He ordered the adorning of all the rooms with precious ornaments. He ordered that tables with all kinds of food to be prepared. Then the king appointed a messenger to tell the people about him and to teach them how they should behave in the palace. Next, he invited the people to his palace.

The messenger gave the visitors a tour of the palace. He offered them the foods and gifts that the king had prepared for them. And then he began to talk to them about the king.

O people! The owner of this palace, our king, wanted to introduce himself to you by showing you this palace and what is in it. With this feast and these gifts, he has showed how much he loves you. You should love him as well and respect him. Do not disrespect him. By his gifts, he has also manifested his benevolence and mercy upon you. You need to show him your respect by thanking him. You can see his seal on every treasure and article in this palace. You should also try to get to know the owner of all these beauties and understand the greatness of his power and mercy. Thus the messenger introduced the king and the palace to the visitors. After this introduction, the guests were divided into two groups.

The first group listened to the messenger and accepted what he told them. They were pleased with the invitation. Throughout the feast, they behaved politely and courteously by following the rules of the palace. They thanked the King for inviting them to his palace and bestowing upon them such beautiful blessings. The

manners of these guests pleased the King a lot. For this reason, He rewarded them by sending them to a bigger and better palace. They lived there happily everafter.

As for the second group, they did not pay attention to anything in the palace but the food and drinks. They ignored what the messenger had said. Messing up the feast tables, they drank from the forbidden drinks and got drunk. They made a lot of noise and bothered the other guests. Instead of giving thanks for the offerings, they belittled them. For this reason, the soldiers of the King put them in jail. They lived a sad life in jail everafter.

QUESTIONS

- What do you think what the palace in this story represents?
- What is being expressed by the food tables, gifts, and decorations in the palace?
- Who does the messenger represent?
- Who are the guests that were invited to the feast?
- Who are being implied by the first group of guests?
- Who are being implied by the second group of guests?
- What is being represented by the second palace that the first group of guests were sent to?
- What is being represented by the jail that the second group of guests were sent to?
- Why are the guests in the second group sent to jail?
- Why didn't the second group listen to the messenger?

WHAT IS WORSHIP (IBADAH)?

✍ Acts of worship show our love and loyalty to Allah the Almighty, the Creator of everything including us. They mean fulfilling His commands and staying away from all the acts and traits that He prohibited.

Worship is the reflection of the faith in our hearts through our behavior. Performing ritual prayer (Salah), fasting (Sawm), reciting the Qur`an, praying to God, and remebering the names of Allah are all acts of worship. Treating parents kindly and visiting relatives are acts of worship. Doing goodness to people and helping the needy, removing something harmful from their ways are acts of worship. Greeting fellow Muslims and showing friendliness to them are also acts of worship. Therefore everything done for the sake of Allah are accepted as the acts of worship.

Our beloved Prophet says:

"Supplication is the essence of worship"

(Tirmizi, Deavat 1)

Allah the Exalted says:

"Say. Surely my prayer and my sacrifice and my life and my death are (all) for Allah, the Lord of the worlds"

(Surah Al-An'am, Ayah 162)

WHY DO WE WORSHIP?

We receive countless blessings in every moment of our lives. The air we breathe, the water we drink, the bread we eat, the sweet and colorful fruits and vegetables, the animals from whose meat we eat and from whose milk we drink are all among the blessings and kindness of Allah the Almighty to us.

We get happy from somebody's smallest kindness to us. We love and feel respect towards the person who favored us. We thank that person for his or her kindness. If he/she asks something from us, we fulfill his/her request with enthusiasm, don't we? Therefore, aren't we supposed to thank Allah who created us out of nothing and provided us with countless blessings by perform ing the acts of worship He commanded?

By performing the acts of worship, we show our gratitude to Allah for the blessings He has created for us. With our acts of worship, we express our belief, reverence, and loyalty to Allah. In this way we gain Allah's love. When Allah loves us, He will bestow upon us even more blessings in the Hereafter and grants us eternal happiness in Paradise.

Allah the Exalted says:

If you are grateful, I would certainly give to you more, and if you are ungrateful, my chastisement is truly severe.

(Surah Ibrahim, Ayah 7)

Our beloved Prophet says:

"Look at those who have worse standards of life than you but don't look at those who have higher standarts than you, for This is a better way to not see the blessings (bestowed upon you by Allah) as insignificant."

(Muslim, Zuhd, 9)

The Shoe

There once was a kid who did not have any shoes. He was really sad about his situation. Once when he was wandering around, he happened to see a man with no leg. He said "Thank God! I do not have shoes, but at least I have legs. Shoes can be bought, but legs cannot."

If we really appreciate what we have, we thank Allah for them.

I THANK ALLAH

Aisha had been lying sick for the last couple of days. She was feeling a little bit better, now, but her mother would not let her leave the bed. She needed to rest a little bit more and watch her diet and get well.

Aisha's bed was next to the window. All day long she was watching people passing by, reading books, and chatting with their parents. She was still very bored. She did not want to eat, and she especially hated to take medicine.

One afternoon, Aisha's teacher came to visit her. This was a great surprise for her. Aisha got really happy.

Aisha's teacher kissed her on the forehead, sat next to her, and asked her how she had been feeling.

Aisha told her teacher how much she was bored of being in bed, how much she hated to take her medicine, and how much she wanted to recover soon and be well again.

Aisha's teacher caressed her head and advised her to be more patient. Aisha thought for a while. She did not like this advice a lot. She asked her teacher:

- My teacher, why has God created sickness?

The teacher replied with a smile:

- For you to appreciate your health and learn to be patient and thankful!

Aisha didn't understand

– How? She asked.

Her teacher replied:

– Look Aisha, everything we experience teaches us something. Sickness teaches us the value of being healthy; hunger teaches us the value of food; thirst teaches us the value of water. If you don't experience those, you cannot understand the value of things that you have.

Aisha agreed with her teacher saying:

– Yes, you are right my teacher. I realized how important my health is when I got sick.

Her teacher said:

– Well done, Aisha! If we don't realize the importance of something, we may not properly thank the One who has provided it to us. I hope, from now on, you will thank Allah more for creating you as a healthy kid.

Aisha said looking in her teacher's eyes:

– Yes, that is right.

After thinking for a while, Aisha had a question and she couldn't help asking:

- Teacher, in this case, should the rich thank God more?

– Imagine for a while, said her teacher, upon this question. If someone gets blind, would he not give all his money to be able to see the world again? Or if he becomes deaf, would he

not spend all of his money to be able to hear again?

– Of course!

– Then, everyone who has eyes to see with, ears to hear with, and legs to walk with is very rich, and above all, people who have intellect and who are able to think…

– Then I am very rich, said Aisha.

Her teacher continued:

– Yes. You are very rich. Therefore you must thank God a lot.

Aisha:

– Teacher, from now on, I will not complain and I will be a person who thanks Allah.

Holding her small hand, her teacher kissed Aisha's forehead. She left her saying:

- Get well soon my dear Aisha. I pray Allah for your quick recovery.

ÇİĞDEM ÖZMEN

(Abbridged version of the story "Thank You - Aisha's Story")

WHAT BENEFITS DO WE GAIN FROM WORSHIP?

Worship gets us closer to God

The purpose of our creation is to know Allah and to worship him. By means of our worship, we express our servitude to Allah. We feel ourselves closer to Him. Without any mediator, we ask for His help and seek shelter under His mercy. We are happy to try to gain His love.

Worship beautifies our manners

Worship helps us to be pure, well mannered, and socially responsible individuals. It purifies our hearts form ill-natured feelings and thoughts. By purifying both our outer and inner self – or our souls – worship beautifies our manners.

Worship strengthens our faith

Protecting and reinforcing the faith is only possible through worship. If we perform our worship properly, our faith gets strengthened.

As can be seen, worshipping is beneficial both in this world and in the Hereafter. A Muslim who tasted the delight of worshipping, wherever he is, can not stay away from worshipping Allah. In fact our beloved Prophet is the greatest example for us in this respect. He was very meticulous about fulfilling his servitude towards Allah, loved to worship, and always performed his acts of worship properly. He often advised Muslims to perform their worship as well. Acts of worship also helps us to correct our mistakes.

Allah the Exalted says:

"I only created jinn and man to worship Me."

(Surah Adh-Dhariyat, Ayah 56)

Our beloved Prophet says:

A man came to the Prophet and said, "O Messenger of Allah! Inform me of a deed which will make me enter Paradise and keep me away from Hell-fire" The Prophet said: "you should worship Allah and join none in worship with Him. You should offer prayers perfectly, give obligatory charity (Zakat), and keep good relations with your kith and kin."

(Bukhari, Adab, 10)

One day our Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) held Mu'adh bin Jabal's hand and said:
"O Mu'adh! As God is my witness, I truly love you! Upon this, Muadh told the Prophet: "O Messenger of Allah! I truly love you, too."
The Prophet continued:
"O Mu'adh! I strongly recommend for you to say the following supplication after each prayer.

اللّٰهُمَّ اَعِنِّى عَلٰى ذِكْرِكَ وَشُكْرِكَ وَحُسْنِ عِبَادَتِكَ

"O Allah! Help me to remember you and to thank you and to better perform my worship of you.!"

(Abu Dawud, Witr, 26)

QUESTIONS

Let's Check Our Knowledge

For the sentences below, check the RIGHT or WRONG boxes accordingly

1. Worship means to express our love and reverence to Allah, Who created us, and to fulfill our servitude to Him. ☐ RIGHT ☐ WRONG
2. The purpose of our creation is to grow up and to get a job ☐ RIGHT ☐ WRONG
3. Helping people, greeting them, and showing friendliness to our Muslim brothers and sisters are not acts of worship. ☐ RIGHT ☐ WRONG
4. Acts of worship not only purify our body but they also beautify our soul. ☐ RIGHT ☐ WRONG
5. By worshipping, we thank Allah for His blessings. ☐ RIGHT ☐ WRONG

Let's Check Ourselves

1. Which one of the acts mentioned below is not an act of worship??

a) Performing ritual prayers

b) Not lying

c) Removing the things bothering people form the streets

d) Backbiting

2.

I. A Righteous Deed

II. A Sin

III. An Act of Worship

Which of the above are among the qualities that Allah loves and commands?

a) I-II

b) I-III

c) I-II-III

d) II-III

3. Which one of the below can be said about the meaning of the proverb "One cup of coffee remains in memories for 40 years"?

a) When we drink coffee, we don't forget it for forty years.

b) We like a lot the person who offers us coffee.

c) We never forget a person who behaves nicely to us or offers us something.

d) One can be thankful for a cup of coffee for a maximum forty years.

4. Which of the following characteristics is not among the benefits we gain from worshipping?

a) By means of worship our body and soul become purified and beautiful

b) By performing our worship we become well-mannered and socially beneficial people.

c) By worshipping, we gain the love of Allah.

d) By means of our worship we become famous.

5.

I. In order to obtain the love and pleasure of Allah

II. Because it is the command of Allah

III. To be saved from Hell-fire and to be among the happy servants entering Paradise

Which of above are the correct answers to the question "why do we worship Allah?"

a) I-II

b) I-III

c) I-II-III

d) II-III

Lets Fill in the blanks

Fill in the blanks with the words in parentheses

(our behavior/ Allah/ to thank You/ my worship/ acts of worship)

1. "Say: For sure, my ritual prayer, ……, my living, and my dying, are all for Allah alone, the Lord of all the worlds."
2. Not to tell lies and not to steal are examples of ……..
3. Worship is to express the faith in our hearts through ……
4. Everything that is performed for the sake of …… is an act of worship.
5. O Allah! Help me to remember you and …… for your blessings, and to better perform my worship of you.

OUR RELIGIOUS RESPONSIBILITIES

DUTIES and RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LEGALLY-RESPONSIBLE (MUKALLAF)

- *Our Religious Responsibilities*
- *Categorization of the Acts Of The Legally-Responsible*
- *Five Pillars of Islam*

THE WAY TO PARADISE

One day, Mu'adh, one of our Prophet's Companions, told the Prophet:

- O Messenger of Allah! Tell me about a good deed that will help me enter Paradise and keep me away from Hell-fire. Our Prophet said:

- You are asking about something grand. This, however, is very simple for a person for whom Allah has made it easy. If you worship nothing else but Allah alone and do not associate any partners with Him; if you perform your prayers properly, if you pay the poor-due (al-Zakat), if you fast during the month of Ramadan, if you make pilgrimage to Mecca (al-Hajj) when you are able and have the means, then you will obtain what you asked for. The Prophet then continued:

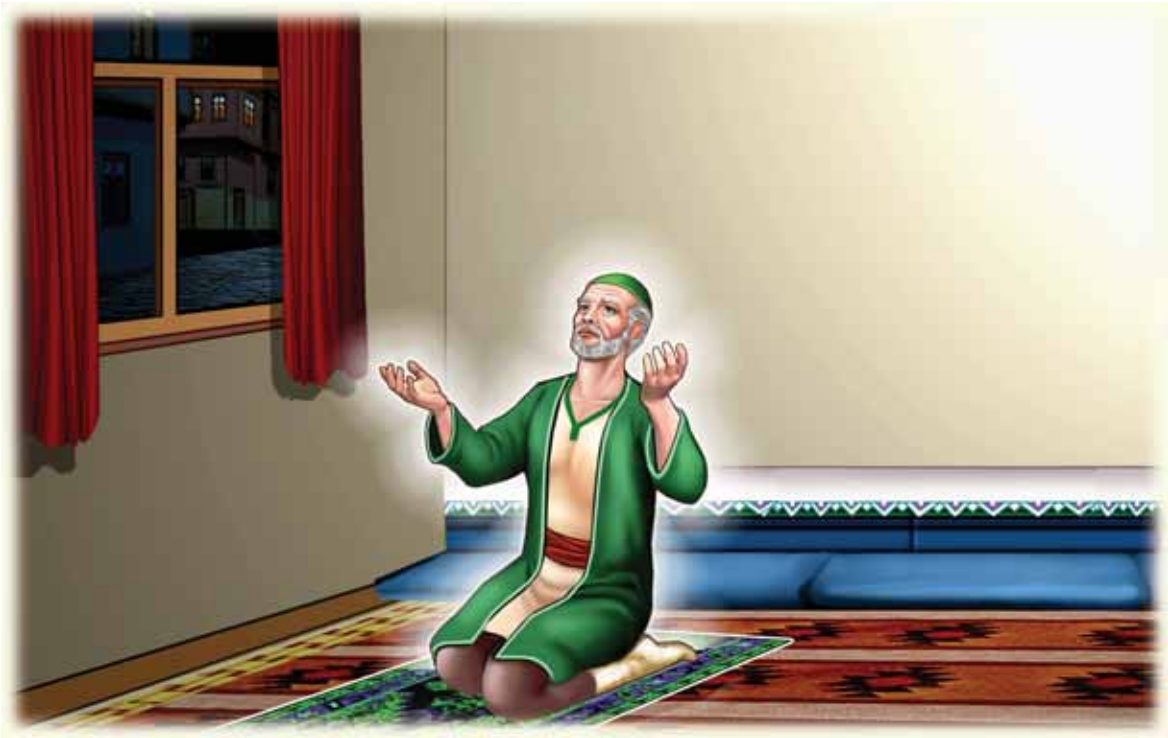
– Would you like me to tell you about the means of goodness? Fasting is a shield (against hell and sins). Charity extinguishes the wrath caused by sins just as water extinguishes fire. And the prayer performed in the middle of the night extinguishes sins.

Then, the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) recited the following verses from the Qur'an- **"Their sides stay clear of their beds as they call on their Lord in fear and ardent hope. And they give of what We have provided for them. No soul knows the delight that is hidden away for it in recompense for what it used to do."** [Sajda 32; 16-17]."

Then He said:

– Would you like me to tell you the head of the good works, the pillar and the most exalted for things? Mu'adh said:

– Yes, please let me know O Messenger of Allah! Our Prophet said:



– Islam is the head of all good deeds, prayer is the pillar, and jihad (struggle for the sake of Alla) is the most exalted of things.

After that he said:

– Would you like me to inform you the vein of life for all of these? Mu'adh replied:

– Yes, O Messenger of Allah! Let me know. Thereupon our beloved Prophet showed his tongue and said:

– Protect this. Mu'adh asked:

– O Messenger of Allah! Are we responsible for the things that we say as well? Our prophet said:

- May God bless you O Muadh! The thing that drags people to hell on their faces is what their tongues do. (Tirmidhi, Iman 8)

OUR RELIGIOUS RESPONSIBILITIES

Allah has given us many blessings. The most important of these blessings is intelligence. We distinguish right from wrong, and good from evil thanks to our intelligence. For this reason, intelligence and thinking are among the fundamental characteristics of human beings that distinguish us from other living beings.

The blessing of intelligence brings along responsibility. That is because Allah, Who gave us these blessings, did not leave us alone and aimless. He commanded the things that are beneficial and good for us and forbade the things that are harmful and bad for us. He held us accountable for some duties that enable our worldly and next-worldly happiness and He commanded us to fulfill those duties. Thus, these duties and deeds that we are commanded to perform or avoid are called "Religious Liabilities."

When does one reach puberty?

The time of puberty in children occurs depending on the children's body structure and the climate. In general, puberty takes place around the age of 12 to 15 for boys and the age of 9 to 15 for girls. After the age of fifteen, a boy or girl is considered as legally mature and becomes responsible for obeying our beautiful religion's commands and prohibitions even if the he/she doesn't show the signs of puberty.

What Does a Legally-Responsible Person Mean?

✍ The individuals who have reached the age of puberty and who are of sound mind and therefore responsible to obey our religion's commands and prohibitions are called "legally-responsible" (mukallaf). Insane people and children who have not reached the age of puberty are not legally-responsible.

CATEGORIZATION OF THE ACTS OF THE LEGALLY-RESPONSIBLE

What does Af'al-i mukallafin mean?

✍ There are certain values attached to the acts of legally responsible people. These are called "Af'al al-Mukallafin" or "the Acts of Legally-Responsible Persons."

Which terms are used in order to express religious responsibilities?

Values given to the acts of legally responsible person are expressed by eleven terms:

AF'AL-I MUKALLAFIN

1. Fard (Obligatory) ☺☺☺
1. Wajib (Necessary) ☺☺☺
2. Sunnah (Customs of the Prophet) ☺☺
2. Mandub (Commendable)
2. Mustahab (Desireble)
3. Mubah (Neutral) ☺
4. Makruh (Reprehensible) ☹☹
5. Haram (Prohibited) ☹☹☹☹

Fard (Obligatory) ☺☺☺☺

Fard: is ithe term used in our religion for the acts of worship whose performance are commanded by our religion. For example performing five daily ritual prayers, fasting, and paying poor-due (zakat) are fard or obligatory.

Whoever performs the obligatory acts gain spiritual rewards (thawab). Whoever does not perform them, without a valid excuse, would be committing sin. Those who do not believe in even one of the obligatory acts or do not acknowledge that it is obligatory would abandon the religion of Islam.

Fards are of two kinds:

a) Fard al-'Ayn (Obligatory upon Individuals): These are the acts of worship that every Muslim is required to perform. For instance praying five times a day and fasting in the month of Ramadan are obligatory on individuals (fard al-'ayn)

b) Fard Kifai (Obligatory upon the Community): These are the duties which are imposed on the whole community of believers. When a group of believers fulfill such duties, the responsibility will be removed from the other believers. If no one fulfills such obligatory acts, then all Muslims living in that region become responsible. For example, when a Muslim passes away, if a group of Muslims performs the funeral prayer, the responsibility is being lifted from the entire Muslim community in that region.

Wajib (Obligatory) ☺☺☺☺

al-Wajib: According to Shafii school wajib denotes the same meaning as fard. There is no difference between the terms "fard and wajib" except in the rituals of pilgrimage.

The term wajib in pilgrimage refers to the duties which are forbidden to omit and which require the offering of a blood sacrifice in case of omission although the pilgrimage is still valid.

Sunnah (Customs of the Prophet) ☺☺

Sunnah: These are the acts that are not among the obligatory ones, but they are among the customs of our Prophet and are advised to us by him.

Sunnah are of two kinds:

a) Emphasized Tradition (Sunnah Muakkadah): Those are the actions that our Prophet would always perform and hardly ever missed. For example, cycles of prayer performed before the obligatory cycles of dawn, noon, and evening prayers and tarawih prayer performed in the month of Ramadan are all examples of sunnah Muakkadah.

b) Non-continuous tradition (Sunnah Ghayr muakkadah): These are the acts or worship that our Prophet occasionally performed but sometimes did not. For instance cycles of prayer performed before the obligatory cycles of afternoon prayer are among the non-continuous customs of the Prophet.

Those who perform sunnahs gain spiritual rewards (thawab),and in the hereafter, he or she would be blessed by the Prophet's intercession. The one who abandons the sunnah would miss the opportunity to gain such spiritual rewards (thawab).

Note: Terms, such as mandub, nafilah, and mustahab, are also used with the meaning of sunnah.

Al-Mustahab (Desirable): ☺

Mustahab: These are the acts that are good and nice to perform according to our religion's general guidelines. They are also called "nafilah/ supererogatory" or "mandub/praiseworthy." For example, Performing the mid-morning ritual prayer (Salat al-Duha), fasting on Mondays and Thursdays, giving nonobligatory charity to the poor (Sadaqah), and exchangings gifts with each others are all examples of Mustahab. Those who do mustahab acts gain spiritual rewards but those who do not perform them are not considered as sinners.

Mubah (Neutral) ☺

Mubah: These are the acts that are permissible to do or not to do. When we perform a permissible act, we do not gain any divine reward (thawab) and, if we do not do it, it does not incur any sin. For example, sitting, walking, or sleeping are all mubah acts.

Reprehensible (al-Makruh) ☹☹

Makruh: These are the acts and behaviors that are not welcomed and are considered bad in our religion.

There are two kinds of makruh.

a) Tahriman Makruh (Disliked, but closer to Forbidden):

These are the acts that are forbidden even though not based on evidence that is not as strong as that which would warrant them to become haram (forbidden). One who performs this kind of Makruh becomes a sinner. For example smoking, deliberately eating and drinking with the left hand, and postponing the performance of afternoon prayer (Salat al-Asr) to a time close to sunset without an important excuse are all considered tahriman makruh acts.

b) Tanzihan Makruh (Disliked but closer to permissible): These are the acts and behaviors that are not welcomed in our religion. Those who engage in such acts do not become sinners, nevertheless they commit an act that is not welcomed. For instance; cleaning our nose with the right hand is considered among the tanzihan makruh acts.

Haram (Forbidden) ☹☹☹☹

Haram: Those are the acts whose performance are prohibited for certain. For instance killing an innocent man without a just cause, stealing, drinking alcoholic beverages, adultery, gambling, eating pork, rebellion aginst parents, and gossiping are all forbidden acts in Islam.

Those who commit a haram is considered as having disobeyed Allah and committed a great sin. Those who abstain from harams obtain Allah's love and earns great spiritual rewards. Those who deny prohibition of such acts or who consider them halal/permissible abandon Islam.

Nullifier (Al-Mufsid):

Mufsit: Those are the things that nullify an act of worship that has already begun. For example, talking during prayer nullifies it; similarly eating or drinking something deliberately during fasting nullifies the fast. Nullified act of worship has to be redone.

Ada (On-time performance)

Ada': It means to perform an act of worship within its time limits. For instance performing the noon prayer at noon, and fasting in the month of Ramadan are accepted as ada'.

Qada (Late Performance)

Qada: It means to perform an act of worship after its regular time. For instance performing a prayer after its limited time or fasting after the month of Ramadan for the days missed in it are all called qada.

If someone does not perform an act of worship in time with or without an excuse he must perform its qada. Those who do not perform an act of worship in time without a valid excuse become sinners; those however who cannot perform an act of worship in time because of an excuse do not become sinners.

I'adah

I'adah: Redoing an incomplete or wrongly performed act of worship before its time passes is called i'adah.

PILLARS OF ISLAM

Because we are Muslims, there are some duties that we must perform. Of such duties those that are of prime import are called the pillars of Islam. Islam is based on these pillars.

These pillars are five:

1. Pronouncing the Profession of Faith (Kalimah al-Shahadah): Believing in and pronouncing that there is no god but Allah and Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) is His servant and Messenger.

2. Performing the ritual prayer (al-Salah): Praying five times a day.

3. Fasting (al-Sawm): Fasting during the month of Ramadan every day between dawn and sunset.

4. Giving the obligatory poor-due (al-Zakat): Giving poor-due (al-Zakat) proportionate to one's wealth and income if it exceeds the predetermined limits.

5. Making pilgrimage to Mecca (al-Hajj): Performing Hajj at least once in a lifetime.

The first one of these five principles is the fundamental creed of our religion. Others are the fundamental acts of worship that have to be performed according to this belief.

Our beloved Prophet says:

"Islam is based on (the following) five (principles): 1. To testify that none has the right to be worshipped but Allah and Muhammad is Allah's Apostle. 2. To offer the (obligatiry) prayers dutifully and perfectly. 3. To pay Zakat (i.e. obligatory charity). 4. To perform Hajj. (i.e. Pilgrimage to Mecca) 5. To observe fast during the month of Ramadan."

(Bukhari, Iman, 1)

The Pillars of Islam

There are five pillars of Islam
Even knowing them is bliss
Whoever complies with them
To him opens Paradise

The first of the pillars
is the Profession of Faith
Other than the One and Mighty God
For sure there is no god
And his last Prophet is
Muhammad The Elect

The second pillar is ritual prayer
What a beautiful worship
To half an hour a day
Adds up the duty of five times.

The third pillar is Ramadan
The intention is to fast
Without eating, drinking during the day
Time passes with joy…

The fourth pillar is Alms.
If Allah has given wealth,
Then divide its worth into forty
And give one share as present.

To perform pilgrimage once
If it is in one's destiny.
The fifth pillar is
To visit the Ka`bah of Islam.

Gökhan EVLİYAOĞLU

A MAN FROM NAJD

One day our Prophet was sitting with his friends. There appeared a man that looks tired with unkempt hair since he was coming from afar. The man, who was from the Najd region of Arabia, got closer to our Prophet and asked him questions in order to learn about our religion. The following conversation took place between them:

– O Messenger of God, what is Islam?

– It is to pray five times a day.

– Is there any other prayer that I have to perform apart from these?

– No there is not! However, if you want to, you can perform supererogatory (al-nafilah) prayers. Also, you have to fast during the month of Ramadan.

– All right! Is there any other fasting that I have to do?

– No there is not! However, if you want, you may perform supereregatory fasting. You also have give the obligatory poor-due.

– Is there any other thing that I have to give?

– No there is not! However, if you want to you may give charity to the poor.

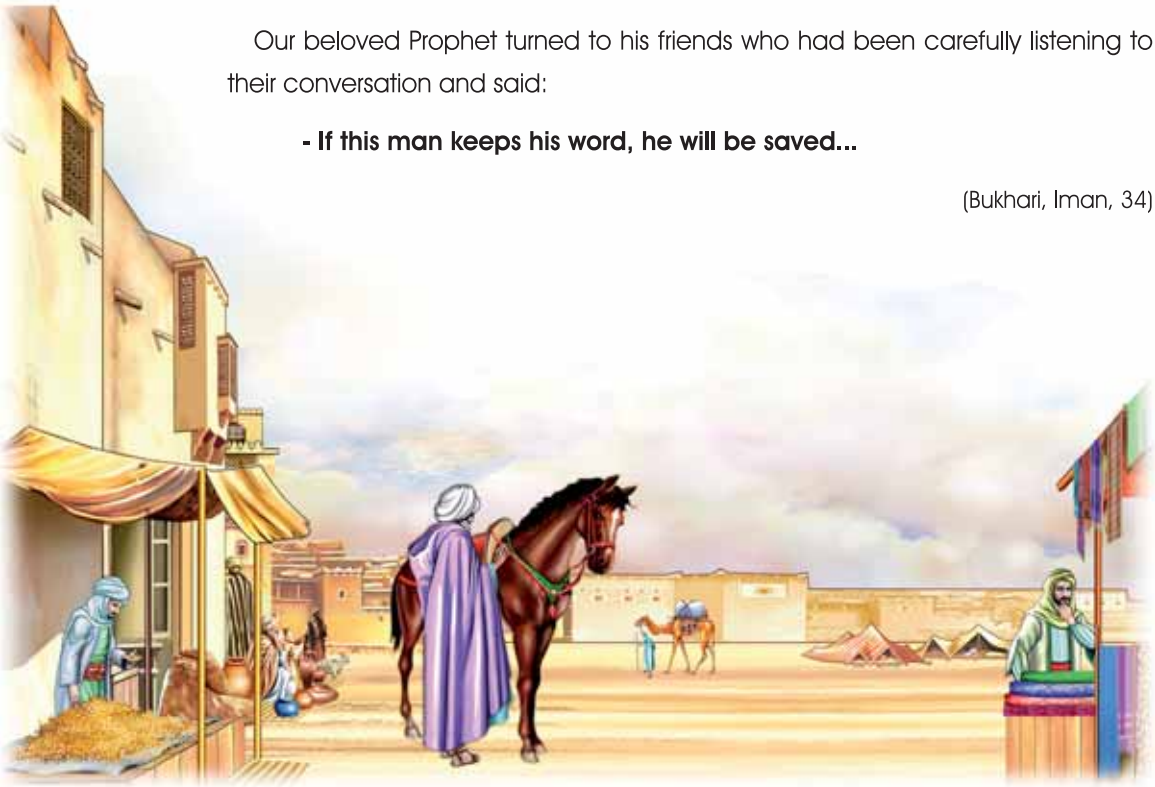
The man from Najd, with the joy of learning his religion, said to our Prophet:

"I will do everything you said, nothing less and nothing more!" and then he left.

Our beloved Prophet turned to his friends who had been carefully listening to their conversation and said:

- If this man keeps his word, he will be saved...

(Bukhari, Iman, 34)



QUESTIONS

Let's Check Our Knowledge

For the sentences below, check the RIGHT or WRONG boxes accordingly.

1. Allah commanded the things that are beneficial and nice for us and prohibited the things that are harmful and bad for us. ☐ RIGHT ☐ WRONG
2. Insane people and children who have not reached the age of puberty are legally-responsible (for religious duties) as well. ☐ RIGHT ☐ WRONG
3. One who performs the obligatory acts (fards) gains big divine rewards (thawab), and the one who does not perform them without any excuse commits a sin. ☐ RIGHT ☐ WRONG
4. One who does not believe in any one of the fards or denies that they are not one of our religion's commands abandons the religion of Islam. ☐ RIGHT ☐ WRONG
5. Disobeying one's parents is forbidden (haram). ☐ RIGHT ☐ WRONG

Let's Check Ourselves

1. Which one of the following is obligatory upon individual?

a) Recitation of the call to prayer
b) Fasting
c) Recitation of call to commencement of the prayer
d) Chanting the names of Allah after prayer

2. Which one of the following is obligatory upon community?

a) Performing five daily ritual prayers
b) Pilgrimage to Mecca
c) Paying the poor-due (al-Zakat)
d) Performing the funeral prayer

3. Which one the following is a Sunnah Ghayr mu'akkadah?

a) The sunnah of the afternoon Prayer (Salat al-Asr)
b) The sunnah of the evening Prayer (Salat al-Maghrib)
c) Witr Prayer
d) The sunnah of the dawn prayer (Salat al-Fajr)

4. Which one of the following is not forbidden (Haram)?

a) Lying
b) Stealing
c) Doing Exercise
d) Gambling

5. Which one of the following is not a tahriman Makruh act (reprehensible but closer to forbidden)?

a) Cleaning one's nose with the right hand
b) Missing the Festival Prayers
c) Performing the afternoon prayer when it is almost sunset
d) Smoking

Let's Fill in the blanks

Fill in the blanks with the words in parentheses

(obligatory (Fard)/ disliked (Makruh)/ forbidden (Haram)/ obligatory (Wajib)/ legally-responsible (Mukallaf) / neutral (Mubah)/ Desirable (Mustahab)/ Mufsid/ obligatory on the community (Fard al-Kifayah) / emphasized tradition (Sunnah Muakkadah)/ obligatory on individual (Fard al-Ayn))

1. Individuals who have reached the age of puberty and who are of sound mind and therefore responsible for our religions' commands and prohibitions are called ……
2. The acts of worship that are strictly commanded by our religion are called ……
3. The fards that must be performed by every legally-responsible Muslim personally are called ……..
4. Fards fulfilled by the performance of a group of Muslims are called ……
5. Things that nullify an act of worship that has already begun are called ……
6. The sunnah that our Prophet would always perform and hardly ever missed is called …… ……
7. The acts that are considered nice and good by our religion are called ……
8. The deeds that are neither required nor forbidden are called……
9. The acts that are strictly forbidden by our religion are called……..
10. The acts and behaviors that are considered bad and not welcomed by our religion are called ……

THE SYMBOL OF ISLAMIC CIVILIZATION:

CLEANLINESS

- *Islam and Cleanliness*
- *Types of Purity*
- *The Relationship Between Worship and Cleanliness*
- *The Importance that Our Prophet Attributed to Cleanliness*

THE WOMAN WHO CLEANED THE HOUSE OF GOD

There was a woman named Umm Mihjan who lived in the suburbs of our Prophet's blessed city, Madina. This respected mother, whose feelings and thoughts were as pure as herself, one day said to herself:

– Since Allah the Almighty has purified my heart from disbelief, then I should clean His House, so she decided to clean the mosque every day. From that day on, she began to keep the Prophet's mosque where our Prophet taught Islam and where Muslims worshipped clean as much as she could.

Umm Mihjan was poor, but her feelings were spotless. Every time she cleaned the mosque, she was feeling peace and her soul filled with joy and happiness as if her heart got cleansed, too.

One day, Umm Mihjan got sick. She was deprived of the happiness to pray behind the Messenger of Allah. Her body was in her bed but her mind was among those pure-hearted people who prayed behind the Messenger of Allah. She was hoping to get well and continue doing her duty at the mosque but was not able to do so. In her ears, there was the voice of our Prophet that appeased the souls, and in her heart there was the wish to place her head down on the ground and prostrate while listening to Prophet's voice.

When our Prophet did not see her for a couple of days, he asked about her. Her neighbors said:

- She is sick, O Messenger of Allah.

Hearing this, our merciful Prophet walked towards the house of Umm Mihjan, who lived

on the outskirts of the city. The ones who arrived beforehand told her:

– Good news, O Umm Mihjan, the Messenger of Allah is coming to visit you.

When Umm Mihjan heard this news, she did not know what to do. Her heart tired from being ill started to beat rapidly. Her forehead became sweaty. A few moments later, a sweet voice was heard:

– Peace be upon you (As Salaamu Alaikum), said our Prophet…

A weak voice full of gratitude answered:

– And peace be upon you, too. O Messenger of Allah.

The visit was short. However, in reality, the value of that time was very great. That is because the Messenger of God, the protector of the orphans and the weak, that pure man, had come to visit her. Our Prophet, who said "Allah is pure and loves those who are pure." (Tirmizi, Adab, 41), loved Muslims a lot who pay attention to the cleanliness of their body, soul, and environment.

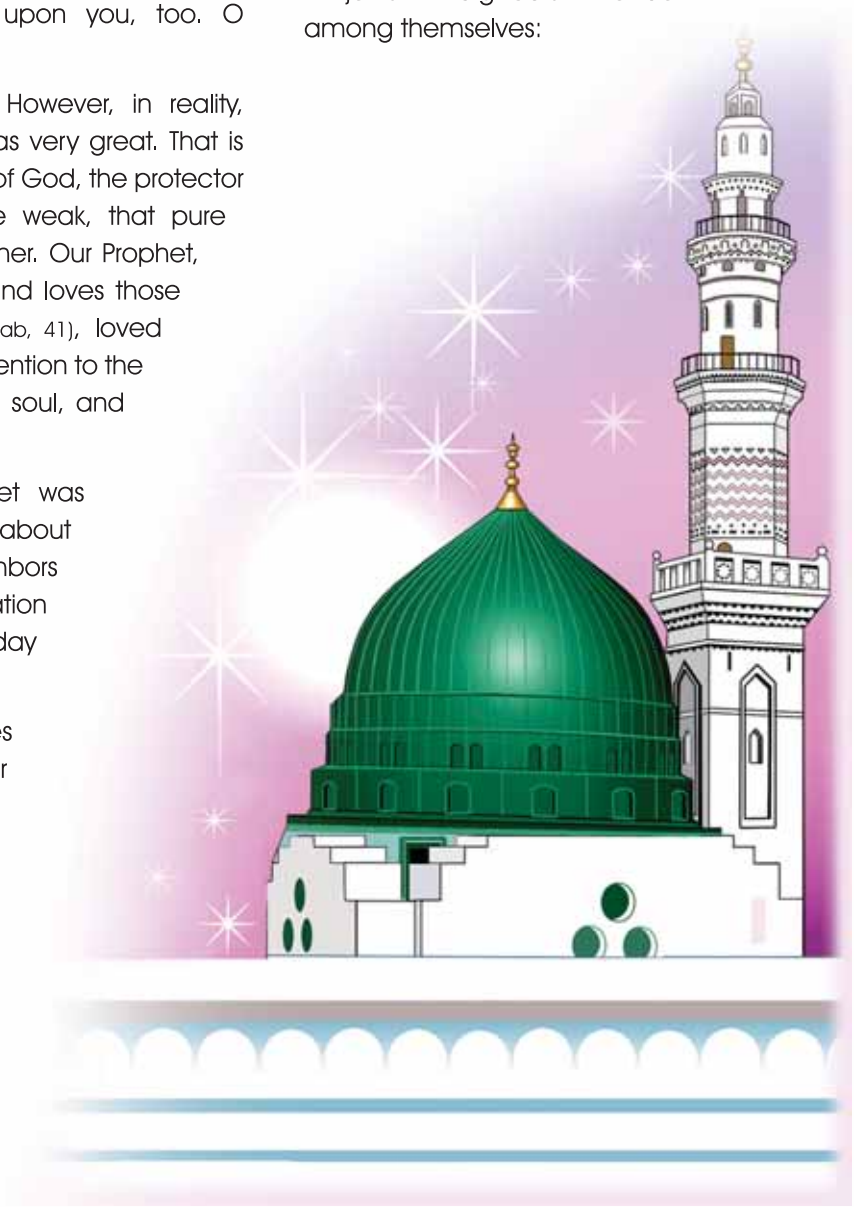
Our beloved Prophet was frequently asking news about Umm Mihjan from her neighbors and inquiring information about her health. One day he said to her neighbors:

- If Umm Mihjan passes away, do not bury her before letting me know.

One evening, Umm Mihjan passed her pure soul filled with the love of serving Allah and His Messenger to the Angel of death that had been sent by God.

Without losing any time, her neighbors gave her the ritual bath and wrapped her in the funeral shroud. When the preparations were done, they set out for their journey. They marched towards the house of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him). However, he had already performed the night prayer and gone to bed.

This news saddened the visitors. Umm Mihjan, who had a special place among her neighbors and whose value had increased even more especially after the Prophet visited her, was going to miss this last and important honor before she was buried. Umm Mihjan's neighbors talked among themselves:



– It looks like that is her fate...

– It would not be something nice to disturb the Messenger of Allah.

– It is possible that he might be receiving divine revelation in his sleep and we might make an unintentionaly sin by interrupting him.

- Let's not bother him, they said.

Because of such worries, They took Umm Mihjan's body to the Baqi' cemetery without letting the Prophet know. Her funeral prayer got performed and she got burried.

The honorable Companions of the Prophet left her in the grave praying that Allah's Mercy be upon her soul.

In the morning, when the Messenger of Allah asked about her, they said:

- "O Messenger of Allah, she was buried." After we had completed the preparations for her funeral, we had come to you. However, you were sleeping. We thought it would not be right to wake you up.

- "Let's walk together" said the Prophet as he set out to the Baqi' graveyard with his friends. Umm Mihjan's neighbors showed him her grave. The Messenger of Allah and his friends redid her funeral prayer. They left after they supplicated for the mercy of Allah the Almighty.

AHMET LÜTFİ KAZANCI

(Adapted from The Era of Bliss series)

THE RELIGION OF ISLAM AND CLEANLINESS

Islam is the religion of purity. Cleanliness is fundamental part of our acts of worship. The cleanliness of our body, clothes, and manners is a manifestation of our faith. Purity is also required for living a healthy life and keeping our good health. This is why our religion attributes great importance to cleanliness.

That one of the first commands of the Qur'an is: "And your garment, purify!" (Muddassir, 74; 4) also shows the significance of purity in Islam. Our beloved Prophet also expressed that cleanliness is a requirement of Islam saying: "Purity is half of faith." (Muslim, Taharah, 1).

Our religion pays special attention to the cleanliness of the environment as well. Our Prophet wanted us to keep our environment clean. By promising Paradise to those who keep public places clean and avoid the acts that may soil them, our Prophet said:

"A man saw a tree branch on the street and said "I swear to Allah, I will remove this branch from here so that it would not harm Muslims" and he did. Then he was sent to Paradise for this act". (Bukhari, Adhan, 32; Mazalim, 28)

In Islam, just eliminating the physical impurities would not be enough for cleanliness. For example, when we wash an apple that was on the floor, we would only clean it physically. It is such that, no matter how much we wash a stolen apple, it would still be dirty; because

it is forbidden (haram). That apple is spiritually impure and it should not be eaten.

Bad words and acts contaminate our hearts just as physical dirt makes our body, clothes, and environment filthy. In order to live in peace and happiness, we should remove spiritual contamination from our hearts. Cleansing our hears from such spiritual impurities can be achieved by repentance for our mistakes, fulfilling the acts of worship, and doing good deeds. This is commanded by our Lord Almighty as follows:

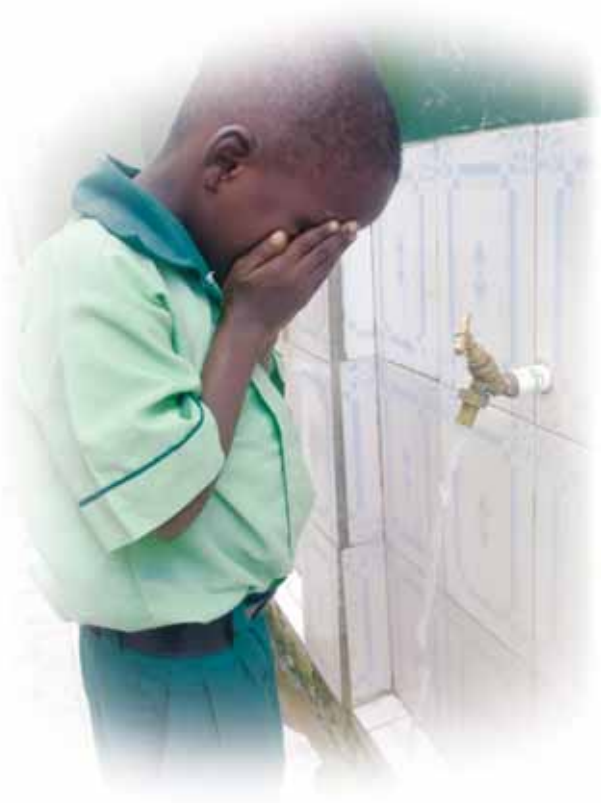
"Allah loves those who turn back from wrongdoing and He loves those who purify themselves." (Baqara 2; 222)

Then, we must both keep our body, clothes, and environment clean and also beautify our manners by avoiding sins, bad words, acts, and behaviors.

Allah the Exalted says:

"Allah loves those who turn back from wrongdoing and He loves those who purify themselves."

(Surah Al-Baqara, Ayah 222)



Cleanliness and Muslim

Cleanliness and integrity
Are the essence of our religion.
No doubt, the most correct word
Is the Word of our Lord.

Each subject who repents,
Is cleansed from dirt in the heart,
Becoming unaffected by
The evil of Satan that scatters doubt.

Each believer who performs ablution
Is happy and eager
Because each drop that falls to ground.
Carries away his sins.

The Muslim who stays clean
In both the body and the soul
Never deviates from integrity
And is respected at all times.

Kasım AK

TYPES OF PURITY

Cleanliness is to purify our souls, manners, body, clothes, and environment form bad, dirty, and filthy things.

There are two kinds of cleanliness:

1. PHYSICAL PURITY

Things that contain germs such as blood, urine, and pus are considered impure in our religion. Removing all kinds of dirt and filth from our body, clothes, and environment is called physical cleansing. The main subdivisions of physical cleansing are the following:

a. Purification of the Hands: Our hands are the parts of our body that we use most and that's why they are the ones which get dirty most frequently. The dirt that gets to our hands creates a proper environment for the germs to multiply. These germs enter our body through the food that we consume and cause us to be sick. Therefore, in order to protect our body from germs and diseases we should wash our hands before and after the meals. We should also thoroughly wash our hands with soap after using the bathroom.

b. Purification of the Face:

Just like our hands, our face is also part of our body which get filthy with dust and dirt. Washing our faces usually decreases our fatigue and the headaches associated with it. It energizes us and refreshes our health and looks. For this reason, we must frequently wash our faces.

c. Cleansing Our Mouth and Teeth:

The residues of the food that we consume accumulate on and between our teeth. When we don't clean our teeth regularly, harmful bacteria start to thrive there. This causes bad breath and tooth cavities. Cavities are the main reason for many of the tonsillar illnesses, and stomach and heart sicknesses. In order to prevent such illnesses we have to keep our

mouth clean and brush our teeth at least twice a day.

d. Keeping Our Nails Clean:

Cleansing the nails completes the hand and foot purification. We should never forget that our nails have the potential to become shelters for germs. When we think about the parts of our body, like our mouth, nose, and eyes, that our hands frequently touch we may realize the risks associated with unclean nails.

e. Purification of the Feet:

Our feet carry the burden of our entire body. Since we wear shoes, our feet may get sweaty and dirty. Washing our feet and in between our toes makes us healthier and more energized. For this reason, we must wash our feet and in between our toes very often. After we wash our feet, we need to dry them thoroughly in order to protect ourselves from fungi and similar diseases. We must pay attention to wearing clean socks and shoes as well.

f. Purification of the Body:

Due to sweating and other reasons, our body gets dirty and starts to smell. Germs populating our body endanger our health. The best way to clean our body from dirt and germs is to take a shower or bath with warm water and soap. To protect our health, one of the most important gifts that God has given us, we should take a bath at least once a week. Also, before some acts of worship, we must completely clean ourselves from any physical filth such as urine, blood, or pus that are also called najasah (physical impurities).

g. Cleansing the Bathrooms:

All types of cleanliness start with clean bathrooms. For this reason, in terms of our health and worship, one of the most important type of purity is cleansing our bathrooms.

Our beloved Prophet said:

"Cut your nails! For harmful things shelter under the long nails."

(Deylemî, Müsnedü'l Firdevs, 4579)

I believe the brushing of the teeth is important but not enough. therefore I try hard to purify myself from evil feelings and bad behaviour that Allah Almighty has forbidden. I sincerely beleive that once I achieve this, Allah will love me very much.

Our beloved Prophet said:

"Using miswak[1] cleanses our mouth and is a way to reach the divine good pleasure."

(Nesâî, Tahrat, 4)

[1] Translator's note: The miswak is a small stick from a special tree that was used widely to clean the teeth prior to the widespread usage of toothbrushes."

When entering a bathroom, the following prayer may be recited:

اللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّی اَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ الْخُبْثِ وَالْخَبَائِثَ

"O Allah! I seek refuge in You from the male and female noxious beings (devils)."

When exiting a bathroom, the following prayer may be recited:

غُفْرَانَكَ اَلْحَمْدُ اللهِ الَّذِی اَذْهَبَ عَنِّی الْاَذٰی وَعَافَانِی

"O Allah I seek Your pardon. All praises are due to Allah who has taken away from me discomfort and granted me relief"

h. Keeping our clothes clean:

When our clothes protecting us from heat and cold get dirty, they can be harmful to both our body and our environment. In order to prevent the harms of dirt and germs, we must regularly change and wash our clothes.

ı. Keeping our foods and drinks clean:

Germs generally enter our body through the foods and drink that we have. For our health, we must wash fruits and vegetables before we eat. We must pay attention to the cleanliness of drinks as well.

i. Keeping our environment clean:

A clean environment starts first with our immediate surroundings. It is important to keep our house, our streets, our neighborhoods, our schools, the whole environment we live in and the air we breathe clean. A clean environment is important to prevent illnesses. It is also important for clean drinking water, and for the lives of other living organisms. By keeping our environment clean, we become considerate of others and not harm them. Our religion encourages keeping the environment clean. The Prophet (pbuh) said: "A man while taking a walk saw a thorn bush and

TO WHAT SHOULD WE PAY ATTENTION TO IN BATHROOM CLEANLINESS?

1. We should be careful not to let our clothes touch the floor and not to let any filth splatter onto them.
2. Before entering the bathroom, we pray "O Allah! I seek refuge in You from the male and female noxious beings (devils)."
3. We step into the bathroom with our left foot.
4. We should not urinate while standing.
5. We use plenty of water to clean ourselves and toilet paper to get dry.
6. We use our left hand in cleansing.
7. We do not eat, drink, or talk in the bathroom.
8. We exit the bathroom with our right foot.
9. When exiting the bathroom, we pray "O Allah I seek Your pardon. All praises are due to Allah who has taken away from me discomfort and granted me relief."
10. After we are done using the bathroom, we should wash our hands with plenty of water and soap.

removed it from the street. God liked this act of his and forgave him." (Muslim, Birr, 127; Imara, 164)

2. SPIRITUAL PURITY

Spiritual purity consists of purifying our hearts, feelings, and thoughts. There are two main types of spiritual purity:

a. Purification of the Heart:

Societies composed of truehearted and well-mannered individuals become happy and peaceful. In order to establish a peaceful society, we must purify our hearts from bad feelings, thoughts, and behaviors prohibited by Allah the Almighty such as selfishness, lying, hypocrisy, jealousy, and backbiting etc. We should stay away from animus and hatred. We should not be jealous of others nor belittle them. It is stated in the Qur'an that **"He who purifies it [his soul] has succeeded."** (Shams 91; 9)

Our beloved Prophet said:

" Beware! There is a piece of flesh in the body if it becomes good (reformed) the whole body becomes good but if it gets spoilt the whole body gets spoilt and that is the heart. "

(Bukhari, Iman, 39)

b. Purification from the states that are considered ritually impure:

It means to perform ritual bath or minor ablution when necessary. In other words this kind of purification refers to elimination of major and minor spiritual impurities preventing us from performing the ritual acts of worship. This is called **purification from ritual impurities or taharah min al-hadath**.

Cleanliness and Health

Wear clean clothes, walk around tidy
So that everyone will respect you.
Nobody likes dirty people.
Is there a bounty like health?

Pride, arrogance, lies, deceit,
These are heart's stains, believe in this.
Whoever stays away from them stays clean.
Is there a bounty like health?

Don't go to places with lots of germs
Never spit on the streets.
Wounds and bruises hurt,
Is there a bounty like health?

Clean body, clean environment
Never let the dirt in,
Health, both for the rich and the poor,
Is there a bounty like health?

Ahmet EFE

WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CLEANLINESS AND WORSHIP?

Islam is a religion that both gets human beings closer to Allah and regulates their relationships with others. For this reason, our religion commands us to be clean at all times. It requires us to perform some pre-prufication like ablution and ritual bath in order to make ready for some acts of worship.

When we worship, we enter to the presence of our Lord Almighty. We should come to His presence in a clean state with a clean body and clean clothes. When we are sweaty or when our clothes are dirty, we do not want to meet with others, such as our respected elders or our friends. In order to feel comfortable, we take a bath, put on clean clothes, and wear nice perfumes. therefore we have to be much more careful about cleanliness when we worship Allah the Almighty as such are times in which we feel closer to Him.

Some types of worship like Friday and festival prayers are performed in congregation. In congregational acts of worship we all stand in the presence of Allah and get together with other believers. This makes purification even more important when performing such acts of worship.

Acts of worship get us accustomed to cleanliness in all aspects of our lives. Paying attention to purification before and during worship not only cleanses our body but also purifies our souls.

At the same time, all of our worship is just a means to purify our hearts. They protect our hearts from evil feelings and thoughts. For example, paying the Islamic poor-due (al-Zakat) purifies our hearts from the feelings of greed and jealousy. Fasting purifies us from the feelings of selfishness, harshness, and self-pride. These and other forms of worship purify us spiritually and remove our sins.

Once our Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) said to his friends:

— "If there was a river at the door of anyone of you and he took a bath in it five times a day would you notice any dirt on him?" They said,

"Not a trace of dirt would be left." The Prophet added, "That is the example of the five prayers with which Allah blots out (annuls) evil deeds."

(Bukhari, Mawaqit, 6; Muslim, Masajid, 283)

OUR PROPHET PAID ATTENTION TO CLEANLINESS

Our beloved Prophet paid a great deal of attention to purity. He used to wash his hands before and after each meal. When he woke up from sleep, he would not eat anything before washing his hands first.

When he woke up for the mid-night prayer or for the dawn prayer, the first thing he would do was to clean his teeth with miswak. Even when he was in his deathbed, he asked for a miswak and brushed his blessed teeth.

Our Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) paid attention to the cleanliness of body and clothes as much as he did to the purity of the hearts. There were times when he would wear patched clothes, but never put on ripped and dirty ones. Especially when he was expecting guests, he would pay extra attention to his clothing.

He would require that foods in open containers to be covered with a lid. He would order people not to pass their needs under the trees that are next to pathways or under whose shadows people rest, and advised to keep them clean at all times. He would not like at all to see spitting on the streets.

Our beloved Prophet wanted everyone to dress clean and keep themselves tidy. He would warn people with dirty clothes by saying "Why don't you clean your clothes?" Once he saw a man with tangled hair and admonished him by asking him why he did not clean and brush his hair.

Our beloved Prophet paid a great deal of attention to cleanliness. He used to wash his hands before and after each meal. When he woke up from sleep, he would not eat anything before washing his hands first.

O my Lord, make me one of those who quit their bad habits and who are purified.

اَللّٰهُمَّ اجْعَلْنِي مِنَ التَّوّابِينَ وَمِنَ الْمُتَطَهِّرِينَ

O our Creator! Purify us from our sins just as a white garment is cleaned from filth.

رَبَّنَا نَقِّنَا مِنَ الذُّنُوبِ كَماَ يُنَقَّى الثَّوْبُ الْاَبْيَضُ مِنَ الدَّنَسِ

CLEANLINESS

Cleanliness comes from belief, says the Prophet,
Cleanliness is the rose in the garden of health,
Those who clean themselves become like angels,
Cleanliness is a piece of Paradise on earth…

The skin and the heart get dirty in the ground,
It is necessary to wash both inside and out.
Let's shine and reach out to serenity,
Cleanliness is the way to the seven Heavens.

Cleanliness outside is to be like the moon,
Cleanliness inside is to feed on licit food.
Nobody likes filthy clothes.
Cleanliness is the most beautiful language to all…

It is God's order; keep your clothes clean,
Eat clean, drink clean, so that your body is pure,
Let us also call you "the cloud that can't get dirty."
Clean is the hand that never seizes trash!…

Staying dirty is a grave sin,
Whoever is dirty suffers, my God!
God loves those who are clean, Seyrî![1]
Cleanliness is that state that turns faces white!

M. Ali EŞMELİ (Seyrî)

1 Translator's note: Refers to the poet.

QUESTIONS

Let's Check Our Knowledge

For the sentences below, check the RIGHT or WRONG boxes accordingly

1. Cleanliness is the basis of our worship. ☐ RIGHT ☐ WRONG
2. Cleanliness can be achieved just by removal of physical dirt. ☐ RIGHT ☐ WRONG
3. In order to purify ourselves from sins, we must repent for what we did and should promise not to commit them again. ☐ RIGHT ☐ WRONG
4. We step into the bathroom with our right foot. ☐ RIGHT ☐ WRONG
5. Not staying away from the acts prohibited by Allah the Almighty contaminates our heart and soul. ☐ RIGHT ☐ WRONG

Let's Check Ourselves

1. Which one of the following statements is wrong in light of the Prophet's saying "cleanliness is half of the faith"?

a) In order to be a believer, it is enough to be clean.

b) Believing in Allah requires purity.

c) The surroundings of a Believer and himself are always clean

d) The faith of those who does not pay attention to cleanliness is weak.

2. Which one of the following is right in terms of bathroom manners?

a) The left foot is used when entering a bathroom.

b) The right hand is used for cleaning in the bathroom

c) It is all right to talk in the bathroom.

d) It is not necessary to wash hands after using the bathroom.

3. Which one of the following does not achieve a real purification?

a) Using miswak or brushing our teeth before going to bed

b) Taking a ritual bath (al-Ghusl) for the Friday Prayer.

c) Washing and eating an apple that is taken by force from someone else

d) Staying away from the prohibitions of Allah

4. Which one of the following is an example of spiritual purification?

a) Cleaning the place where we will perform our prayer

b) Washing the dishes

c) Collecting the trash from under the trees where people sit.

d) Performing dry ablution to perform prayer

5. Which one of the folowing acts cannot clean our hearts and souls?

a) Washing our body and clothes

b) Performing our worship

c) Repenting from our sins

d) Giving charity and paying the poor-due

Fill in the Blanks

Fill in the blanks with the words in parentheses.

(purify themselves/ half of/ clean / hadath / Najasah)

1. "Cleanliness is ..... the faith."
2. No matter how much we wash a stolen apple, it would not be ..... because it would not be halal (lawful).
3. "Truly, Allah loves those who turn back from wrongdoing and He loves those who ....."
4. Before some of the acts of worship, we must clean our body from physical filth such as urine, blood, and pus. Such impurities are also called .....
5. Being in a state without ablution (al-Wudu) or ritual bath (al-Ghusl) is called .....

THREE KINDS OF PURITY SPECIAL TO MUSLIMS:

ABLUTION (WUDU) – RITUAL BATH (GHUSL) – DRY ABLUTION (TAYAMMUM)

- *Ablution*
- *How to perform ablution*
- *Rules related to ablution*
- *Benefits of ablution*
- *Ritual Bath (Ghusl)*
- *How to perform Ghusl*
- *Rules related to Ghusl*
- *Benefits of Ghusl*
- *Tayammum*
- *How to perform tayammum*
- *Rules related to tayammum*

ABLUTION PURIFIES FROM SINS

t was the time when Islam was secretly spreading in Mecca. There was a man named Amr ibn Abasa from one of the tribes living in the desert. Amr ibn Abasa got curious about this new religion and immediately set out for a journey towards Mecca to inquire about it. When he reached Mecca, he looked for ways to speak with our Prophet and eventually found him:

Amr asked:

– Who are you? and What do you do? Our Prophet replied:

– I am a prophet.

– Who sent you?

– Allah has sent me.

– What kind of duties has Allah given to you?

– He sent me with the responsibility to teach people to help relatives and be kind to them, to refuse idols, to acknowledge Allah as One and not to ascribe any partner to Him.

Amr asked again:

– Is there anybody who will help you here? Allah's Messenger replied:

– There is a free man and a slave. On that day there were only Abu Bakr and Bilal with the Prophet. Amr said:

– I want to join you and stay with you to help. Our Prophet said:

– Today, you cannot do what you have just said. Don't you see my situation in Mecca? Go back to your family for now. Whenever you hear

that I begin to preach openly, then you can come to me.

Amr Bin Abasa converted to Islam by pronouncing the kalimat al-shahadah. He stayed with the Prophet for some more time and then went back to his town. For that time ritual payer had not been commanded, yet. This was why our Prophet had not informed Amr about prayer.

Years passed after this incident and the Muslims migrated from Mecca to Madina. Amr, who learned of the migration of our Prophet to Madina, came to Madina to visit him and said:

– O Messenger of Allah! Do you remember me? Our Prophet replied:

– "Yes, I do! Aren't you the one who met with me in Mecca? Amr said "Yes" and continued his words saying:

– O Messenger of Allah! Inform me the new things that Allah has taught you and I do not know.

Our Prophet explained to Amr five daily prayers and the times when they need to be perfomed. After saying that one must perform ablution before praying, the Prophet said the following about ablution:

– None of you who prepares and uses water for ablution and rinses his mouth, snuffs up water and blows it, but the sins of his face, and his mouth and his nostrils fall out. When he washes his face, as Allah has commanded him, the sins of his face fall out from the end of his beard with water. Then when he washes his forearms up to the elbows, the sins of his arms fall out along with water from his finger-tips. And when he wipes his head, the sins of his head fall out from the points of his hair along with water. And when he washes his feet up to the ankles, the sins of his feet fall out from his toes along with water. And if he stands to pray and praises Allah, lauds Him and glorifies Him and shows wholehearted devotion to Allah, his sins would depart leaving him as sinless as he was on the day his mother bore him.

(Muslim, Musafirin, 294)

ABLUTION (AL-WUDHU)

What is Ablution?

✍ Ablution means to wash and wipe some part of the body in a way required by our religion.

What are the acts that cannot be performed without ablution?

Without ablution ✔

- We cannot perform the ritual prayer.
- We cannot circumambulate the Ka'bah.
- We cannot touch the Noble Qur'an.

How do we perform ablution?

1. We make intention (niyyah) by saying "I intend to perform ablution for the sake of Allah" while washing our face
2. We start to take ablution by saying Audhu billahi min al-shaitan al-rajim (I seek refuge with Allah from the Devil the accursed), Bismillah al-Rahman al-Rahim (In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful).
3. Then we wash both hands up to the wrists.
4. We take water into our mouth three times.

5. We draw water into the nostrils with our right hand and blow it out with our left hand and this is performed three times.

6 We wash our face three times. While washing our face we need to be careful not to splash the water onto our face.

7 Then we wash three times first our right arm and then the left arm upto the elbows (elbows included).

8 We wipe over the head with the right hand, which is called Mash.

9 We clean inside of our ears with the forefingers (of the little finger) and wipe back of our ears with our thumbs.

10 We wash first our right foot and then the left one up to the ankles (ankles included).

With this, we conclude our ablution.

Our beloved Prophet said:

"Whoever amongst you performs ablution and does this nicely and then says: "Ashhadu alla ilaha illallah wa ashhadu anna Muhammadan abduhu wa Rasuluhu (I bear witness that there is no god but Allah and Muhammad is His servant and Messenger" eight gates of Paradise thrust open for him — he may enter from whichever he likes.

(Ebû Davud, Tahâret, 65)

COLD SPRING

Tahir had completed the semester successfully. His parents, thinking that he deserved a good summer break, decided to send him over to the village to stay with his uncle. Tahir was so happy to hear this news. His uncle came a few days later. Tahir continuously asked his uncle about the village. He was most curious about his uncle's son Salih. It had been a long time since they had seen each other.

That evening, they prepared for the trip. Tahir was so excited, he could not sleep well.

Tahir started the journey early in the morning with his uncle. At the end of almost ten hours of travel, they arrived at the village.

Tahir got used to the village in a very short time. He and Salih became good friends in no time. Together they were making mud houses next to the river and riding on bikes in green fields. While their grandpa was collecting wood, they would play games.

One night, Grandpa Ali warned them quietly while they were having a pillow fight on their beds:

— If you don't sleep now, tomorrow, you cannot come to the highland with me. I will go at dawn, whoever cannot wake up stays behind at the village.

After this warning, Tahir and Salih went to sleep right away.

The next morning, at dawn, grandpa Ali and his grandchildren started off on their journey. The slightly steep pathway to the highland seemed easy at first to the children. However, when the sun started to warm up the surroundings, the journey hardened and the rocky pathway to the highland seemed never ending. Grandpa Ali was saying to his grandchildren while trying to hold the leash of Karakachan, their donkey:

— Come on my children, after we cross this hill, we will take a break at the Cold Spring. Bear a little more! Tahir liked the name of the spring.

— Grandpa, what is this Cold Spring? Salih and the grandpa smiled:

— My son, Cold Spring is the name of the fountain that is behind this hill. Those who go to the highland take a break there and relax a little. They steep their feet into the Cold Spring and shed their fatigue. If they have a watermelon or cantaloupe with them, they cool them in the fountain as well. When the fruit gets ice cold, they eat it.

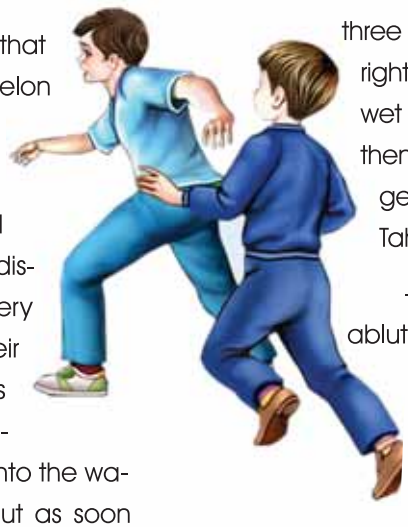
— Grandpa! I wish we had brought some watermelons and cantaloupes with us too. Grandpa Ali gave the good news by pointing to the donkey trudging behind them:

— In one pocket of this bag we have food to eat and in the other we have watermelon and cantaloupe. Does it make sense to come to the highland without watermelon and cantaloupe?

The dream of taking a break and enjoying ice-cold watermelon cheered up the children. However, Karakachan was slowing them down. Tahir bent close to the donkey's ears and said something. His grandpa saw that and asked:

— What's up Tahir, are you talking to Karakachan?

— I told Karakachan that there is an ice-cold watermelon feast at the hill. See how it got faster, grandpa.



After a while, the Cold Spring was seen from the distance. When they got very close, the children left their grandpa and ran towards the Cold Spring. They immersed their scalded feet into the water full of pebble stones. But as soon as they stepped into the water, they jumped back out. Tahir said:

— It is really cold, now I see why they call it Cold Spring. Tahir was so surprised by this cold water that comes out from under a big plane tree. He could not resist asking his grandpa about the ice-cold water in this hot summer month:

— Grandpa, how come this water is so cold in this hot weather? How come this much water is brought to this hill without any machines or motors?

Grandpa's answer was short and clear:

— There is nothing that is hard for God who created this water and the whole universe out of nothing. When He wants something, He just says "happen," and it happens. There is no limit to His power.

Meanwhile, grandpa Ali had dropped the watermelon and cantaloupe into the pool that had formed next to the spring. After a while, it was time to eat the ice-cold watermelon and cantaloupe with cheese and bread.

After the feast, Salih and Tahir went to pick some mountain pears. When they came back, grandpa Ali was sitting on a rock next to the fountain and washing his hands. Then he washed his mouth and nose three times. With the water on his palms, he washed his face three times also. Then he first washed his right arm and then his left arm. With his wet hands, he first wiped his head and then wiped his ears and neck with his fingers. At the end, he washed his feet. Tahir asked his grandpa:

— Grandpa, why are you making ablution? It is not time to pray yet!

— I know, my child! I will pray the Noon Prayer (Salat al-Zuhr) at the highland if God permits, but I wanted to make my ablution in

advance. That is because staying with ablution at all times is considered worshipping. Also it is one of those things that makes one gain divine rewards that is easy and fun.

How come?

— While a Muslim has ablution and stays away from wrongdoings, angels note this as worship. Also, protector angels protect that person from the evil of Satan. What an easy and profitable worship it is, right my dear grandchildren?

Having heard the good news, the children started to make ablution eagerly.

Grandpa Ali yelled while repacking Karakachan's bag:

— Come on children, get ready, there is still a two-hour journey left to the highland.

Adapted from HASAN TAHSİN KARAMAN

BENEFITS OF ABLUTION

Ablution prepares us for worship

We prepare ourselves for most of the acts of worship such as performing the ritual prayer or reciting the Holy Qur'an by performing ablution first. Through ablution, we appear in the presence of Allah purified and try to gain His love and contentment.

Ablution purifies us

As we have already mentioned, our hands, arms, mouth, nose, face, and feet are the parts of our body that get dirty most during our daily lives. By making ablution, we clean these parts of our body numerous times daily. We thus purify ourselves from germs and protect ourselves from diseases that filth and dirt can cause. We experience the energy, joy, and peace brought by cleanliness.

Mouth hygiene is also very important for being healthy. That is because the mouth is one of the places that germs easily populate. By washing our mouth thoroughly in each ablution, we ensure that our mouth stays clean throughout the day. We prevent germs from taking shelter in our mouth. We also would not bother others with bad breath.

Ablution soothes our circulatory and nervous systems

We must pay attention to our circulatory and nervous systems for a healthy life. Ablution ensures that we wash parts of our body with clean water, which makes it easier for our circulatory and nervous systems to work properly. For this reason, we become healthier.

Ablution beautifies our face

Making ablution also causes the blood vessels in our face to work better, and prevents wrinkles. For his reason, the faces of those who make ablution and pray become bright and shiny. Our beloved Prophet said that on the Day of Judgment, he will recognize us from the sign of ablution on our faces. Ablution provides brightness to our faces and peace to our hearts.

Ablution purifies our heart from wrongdoings

We remember Allah each time we perform ablution. We get further away from Satan, and become friends with angels. Thus, ablution protects us from wrongdoings. It purifies our heart from evil feelings and thoughts.

Being in a state of ablution earns us the divine rewards of worship (Ibadah)

We earn divine rewards as if we were worshipping for each moment that we have ablution. So, if we pass away when we have ablution, we die worshipping, which means that we earn the divine reward of martyrdom. This is a priceless gift of Allah to us.

Ablution brings brightness to our faces and peace to our hearts.

Allah the Exalted says:

"You who believe! When you get up to pray, wash your faces and your hands and your arms to the elbows, and wipe over your heads, and wash your feet to the ankles."

(Surah Al-Ma'ida, Ayah 6)

What are the obligatory acts (fard) of ablution (Wudu)?

While performing an ablution ☺☺☺

1. **To make intention just before washing the face**
2. **To wash the face:** To wash the face once from the top of the forehead (hairline) to the bottom of the chin, and to the sides of the face up to beginning of the ears.
3. **To wash the arms:** To wash the arms up to the elbows (elbows included).
4. **To wipe the head:** Wiping a part from the head, even if little, with wet fingers
5. **To wash the feet:** Washing the feet once up to the ankles (ankles included).
6. **Observing the sequence:** Doing the above mentioned acts in the sequence they are mentioned.

are obligatory ☺☺☺

What are the sunnah acts of ablution?

While performing ablution ☺☺

- Turning towards the direction of Mecca.
- Saying bismillah (in the name of Allah) at the beginning
- Rinsing mouth with water and drawing water into the nostrils
- Wiping the whole head.
- Cleaning the ears and wiping their back with fresh water.
- To do the obligatory and sunnah acts of ablution thrice.
- Rinsing the parts of the body while washing.
- Doing the acts of ablution continuously without giving a break.
- Washing the right organs first then the left ones.
- Brushing the teeth with miswak before the ablution.

are sunnah ☺☺

What are the things that nullify our ablution?

When you have ablution → **nullifies your ablution**

- Discharging urine or feces
- Breaking wind
- Fainting
- Sleeping (unless one sleeps in a sitting position)
- losing consciousness because of an illness or intoxication
- Touching the frontal or rear private parts without intervening medium with the inner side of the hand
- Touching the skin of the opposite sex

The Divine Light of the Followers of Prophet Muhammad

One day Prophet Muhammad said:

– How much would I love to see my brothers? They (the hearers) said:

– Aren't we your brothers O Messenger of Allah?

He said:

– You are my companions, and my brothers are those who have, so far, not come into this world.

Companions said:

– O Messenger of Allah, how would you recognise those persons of your Ummah who have not yet been born? Prophet asked:

– "Suppose a man had horses with white blazes on foreheads and legs among other horses which were all black, tell me, would he not recognise his own horses? "

Companions:

– Certainly, O Messenger of Allah. He said:

– They would come with white faces and arms and legs thanks to ablution, and I would arrive at the Pool of Kawthar before them and recognize them from the brightness of the ablution parts of their body. (Muslim, Taharah, 39)

Our beloved Prophet said:

"The brightness and shine of a Mu'min reach wherever the ablution water touches."

(Muslim, Taharet, 40)

GHUSL (RITUAL BATH)

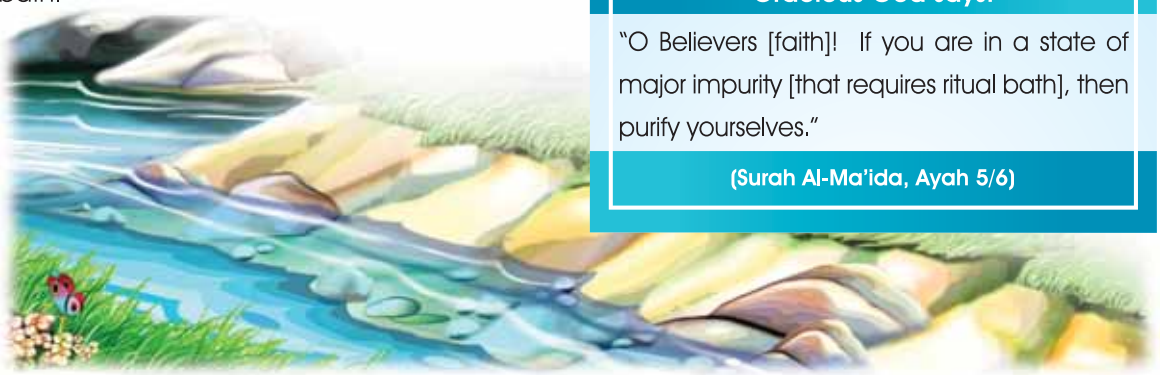
What is the ritual bath (Ghusl)?

It means washing the entire body without leaving any dry spot with the intention of ritual bath.

Gracious God says:

"O Believers [faith]! If you are in a state of major impurity [that requires ritual bath], then purify yourselves."

(Surah Al-Ma'ida, Ayah 5/6)



What are the things that we cannot perform without ritual bath (Ghusl)?

Without Ghusl

- We cannot perform a ritual prayer.
- We cannot circumambulate the Holy Ka'bah.
- We cannot touch the Noble Qur'an.
- We cannot recite or read the Noble Qur'an.
- We cannot enter a mosque.

What are the obligatory acts (fards) of Ghusl?

When performing ritual bath

1. Making intention
2. Cleansing the physical impurities from our body
3. Washing the entire body without leaving a dry spot

are obligatory

When do we have to perform ritual bath (ghusl)?

- ✓ When one has emission of semen or has sexual intercourse.
- ✓ For women when their menstrual period ends,
- ✓ For women when their postnatal bleeding period ends

It is obligatory to perform ritual bath

How do we perform ritual bath?

3. First we perform minor ablution just like we do for ritual prayer.

2. We cleanse the physical impurities, if there is any, from our body.

4. We make intention by saying "I intend to make ghusl for the sake of Allah."

1. We say A'udhu billahi min al-shaitan al-rajim bismillah al-Rahman al-Rahim at the beginning.

5. Starting from the head, we wash our entire body without leaving any dry spot.

What are the acts that are considered inappropriate in our religion while taking a ritual bath?

While performing Ghusl ☹☹

- ☹ Wasting water
- ☹ Facing Qiblah while naked
- ☹ Speaking unnecessarily

are considered makruh (reprehensible) ☹☹

BENEFITS OF RITUAL BATH (GHUSL)

The Ritual Bath (Ghusl) spiritually purifies us

According to Islam, major spiritual impurities (al-Hadath) require performing ghusl. Unless we get cleansed from impurities by taking ghusl, we cannot perform certain acts of worship. Ghusl thus prepares us for worship and relaxes us pschologically.

With Ghusl, we gain Allah's divine pleasure

First of all ghusl is one of Allah's commands to us. By obeying this command, we fulfill one of our duties of being His servants and gain His love and contentment. By fulfilling His command, we feel peace and tranquility. In this respect, ghusl is a spiritual cleansing that places peace and tranquility to our hearts.

Ghusl gives energy to our body

Our bodies' contact with the outer world is through our skin. For this reason, dirt and dust mostly affect our skins. Also, fat and sweat in our bodies exits through fat and sweat glands on our skin. In time these toxic materials stick onto our skins and eventually block the pores on our skin. Thus, our skin could not perform well its task of helping the lungs breathe. When we take ghusl, our blocked skin pores open up. Our body gets cleansed from impurities and our breathing gets easier. Thus, we feel light and energized. In this context, ghusl is also a physical cleansing that purifies our body from impurities.

Ghusl protects our physical and psychological health

Contact with water while taking ghusl discharges electricity in our body and regulates blood circulation. It dispels anger and decreases stress. Ghusl is both a spiritual cleansing that protects our mental health and a material cleansing that protects our physical health. It is an indispensable medicine for our been as a whole.

What are the acts that are considered inappropriate in our religion while taking a ritual bath?

While performing ghusl ☺☺

- ☺ Starting by saying bismillah.
- ☺ Performing ablution before ghusl.
- ☺ Rinsing the body while washing
- ☺ Following the sequence
- ☺ Washing the right limbs before the left ones.

are sunnahs of ghusl ☺☺

THE POWER OF WATER

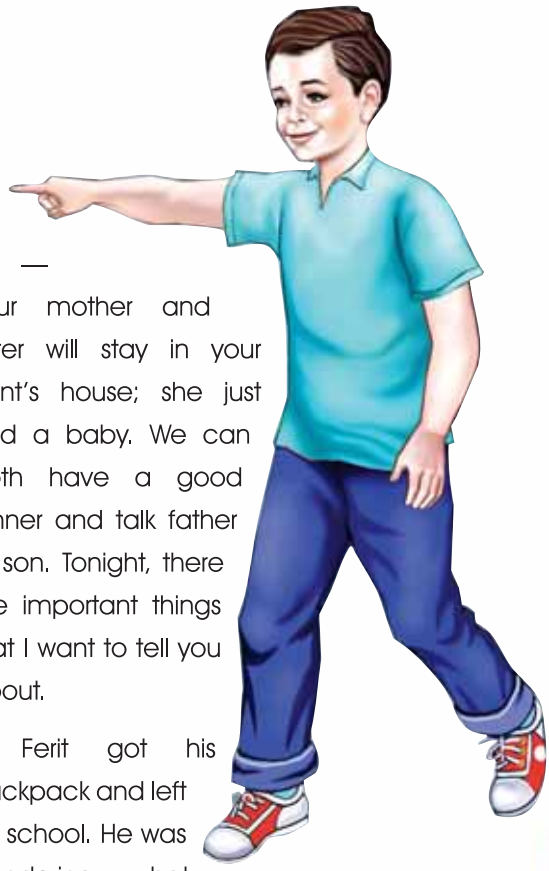
Ferit was playing with his olives at the breakfast table. These days, he felt uncanny distress and was continuously daydreaming. In this year when he was in the eight grade, he was noticing some physical and mental differences. Suddenly he got taller, his voice became thicker, and he even got some beard hair on his face. Sometimes he was doing things listening to the child in him, while at other times he felt ashamed of what he did, feeling too old and responsible for childishness. He did not know how long this would last and capricious feelings in the stage of puberty sometimes disconnected him from the world. He was startled by his father's voice:

— Ferit, you are daydreaming again my son. Finish your breakfast. If you waste more time you will be late for school.

Ferit shook himself awake and answered his father:

— Don't worry dad, I will be on time.

His daddy, who was noticing the changes in him and was planning a chat with him at the right time, said:



— Your mother and sister will stay in your aunt's house; she just had a baby. We can both have a good dinner and talk father to son. Tonight, there are important things that I want to tell you about.

Ferit got his backpack and left for school. He was wondering what his father would talk about as he was trying to walk faster in order not to be late for the geography class and avoid teacher Mr. Irfan's reprimand.

After entering the classroom and greeting his friends, he found a spot in the back and sat down. Waiting for the teacher to arrive, they loudly talked about last night's soccer game, by whom and how the goals were scored, whether the referees were objective or not, penalties that should have been given; in other words, a bunch of idle talk. As soon as Mr. Irfan showed up at the door, the loud chatting stopped.

The classroom became so silent that one could hear a fly buzzing. Mr. Irfan was a disciplined and knowledgeable teacher who sported reading glasses on the tip of his nose, chubby cheeks, and most importantly a look that intimidated any student who made a mistake. He would not break anyone's heart but at the same time he would not allow his class to disturb the lecture. He would find an opportunity to make up for the students that he has punished. He was a tough but fair teacher.

Metin startled with the warning of Mr. Irfan when he was about to hide behind his friend at the front desk and sleep:

— Metin! My son, why are you back there? There are seats in front, what are you doing back there? Mr. Irfan wrecked Metin's plans with these words. Metin had to jump out of the frying pan into the fire. He had to sit right at the front of the class.

Mr. Irfan started his lecture with his loud voice.

— Okay children! Today I will talk about the power of water. This will be the story of water that takes the shape of its cup, that gently flows in rivers with a pleasant noise; soft, clear, refreshing water. The first thing you should know is that a world without it couldn't be imagined. Our Almighty Creator has let us know that all creatures are created out of water. Seasons that can also be called the air conditioning system of the world appear by the effects of currents in the oceans. Water particles that vaporize by the effect of the sun form the clouds. Clouds carry rain to mountains and forests sometimes gain ground for thousands of kilometers, bringing life to plants and other living things that are fed by them. All of the creation interact with water one way or another.

"Fields of science do not contradict each other. The Almighty Creator Allah, without any deviation or contradiction to His decree, has been keeping alive this world and surrounding space for millions of years.

"Children, when discussing the power of water, we always talked about the sweet face of it. Water also has a vicious and naughty side to it. Let's talk about that a little bit. Come on, think about it. Tell me about this side, said Mr. Irfan. All the hands in the class went up:

— Water overflows and floods, my teacher.

— Tsunami, my teacher.

— Erosions that are due to wild rivers.

— Sea storms and wild waves, my teacher…

As the answers came, Mr. Irfan continued with his fatherly voice:

— All of you gave good answers my friends. At the end of the class, all of us had an idea about the power of water; but we came to the most important point now. When we look at the geographic formations,

such as mountains, valleys, plains, we see the dramatic effect of water. The obstinate endeavor of water with consistent effort over thousands of years brings down the mountains that are composed of the hardest rocks to the sea level through corrosion. In points where rivers reach the ocean, the soil that is carried by water produces vast fertile lowlands. If you take a lesson from the power of water, work all the time, show effort, then problems like mountains will fade before you.

Metin would not imagine that a geography class could have such a nice flow. Yet in the morning, as he was putting his geography book into his backpack, he had thought: "I wish I could find a seat at the back of the class and sleep a little bit." Difficult statistics and questions of which products are being produced, where and how much and confusing maps made Metin dislike geography. However, today's class made him change his view. He realized that when looking carefully to the plains, mountains, and water that drain down between our fingers, there are hidden lessons that open our minds and motivate us.

Throughout the day, Ferit, one the one hand, was paying attention to the lessons, and on the other hand, he was wondering about what his father would tell him tonight. As always, time in school had passed quickly.

When he came home, a delicious fish smell was coming from the kitchen. Father and son ate their fish with plenty of salad. Since his father knew that Ferit loved tulumba dessert, he bought some fresh desert from a bakery. After cleaning the table together, they got their tea and went to the living room. All of this time, Ferit was thinking about the important topic that his father had mentioned in the morning. His father felt it but was waiting for the right

moment. He took a sip of tea and introduced the subject:

— Look Ferit, human beings are born, they grow into childhood and youth years, then into old age, and then they pass away. You are fifteen years old now. You are at the stage where you say farewell to childhood and become a mature adolescent. As you do, we follow the physical and emotional changes in you. No matter how much we thank God, it would not be enough. We have two healthy children, you and your sister.

My child! There is nothing to be scared of. In time, the storms in your body and emotions will pass and you will see that youth years have aspects that are just as much fun and as nice as the childhood years. With puberty, your responsibilities start as well. Ghusl, also called the full ablution, is the fundamental requirement in all worship. Apart from taking regular baths, when necessary, taking ghusl bath is obligatory (fardh). After washing one's mouth and giving water into nostrils, bathing of the entire body in such a manner that there remains no dry spot is how ghusl is taken. Your mother and I are the ones that are closest to you and you can openly talk to us about any of your problems at this stage.

He ended his talk by saying: Don't forget we are proud of you and your mature behavior.

All ears, Ferit perked up. He said good night to his father and went to his room. What his father had told him directed him to the bathroom door. First he took ablution as for prayer (al-wudhu). His nostrils hurt a little bit when he took water into his nose. Then, he washed his body under the shower. Next, he went to his room. While he was drying his hair in front of the mirror, he was thinking about this morning's geography class. The power of water was discussed in the class. However, one point was not covered. Water not only shapes our external world but it also shapes our inner world. Ferit, in his first ghusl experienced it. Ghusl not only cleans the body, but it is also one of the most important responsibilities that purifies our soul. In his bed he thought: "Now, I understood the power of water better," and he went into a deep and peaceful sleep, free of the heavy feelings that had plagued him.

HASAN TAHSİN KARAMAN

TAYAMMUM (DRY ABLUTION)

What is Tayammum?

✍ Tayammum is a symbolic type of ablution performed as a substitute for minor ablution or ghusl by tapping hands upon clean soil and then wiping them to the arms and face.

Almighty Allah says:

…(For Ghusl or ablution) if you cannot find any water, then do tayammum with pure earth, and wipe your faces and your hands."

(Surah Al-Ma'ida, Ayah 6)

When is Tayammum performed?

If we cannot find water or if we find some but not clean enough to perform ablution or ghusl, or if it is impossible to use water for some reason such as illness, → **We perform tayammum or dry ablution** → **Instead of Ablution or Ghusl**

How is Tayammum performed?

1. First we say A'udhu billahi min al-shaitan al-rajim bismillah al-Rahman al-Rahim.
2. We need to mention our intention for what our tayammum will be a substitute, i.e. whether a substitute for ablution or for ghusl
3. We strike our hands on earth or on something with which tayammum is valid, and then wipe the whole face.
4. We strike our hands on earth for a second time and then first wipe our right arm and then the left one up to the elbows.

What are the obligatory acts (fard) of Tayammum?

When performing dry ablution ☺☺

1. making intention (niyyah).
2. striking hands on earth or something similar and wiping the face with hands
3. striking hands on earth or something similar to it and then wiping with them the two arms from the end of fingers up to the elbows.
4. Transfering the clean earth to arms and face
5. Observing the sequence

are obligatory (Fard) ☺☺

What are the sunnahs of dry ablution?

While performing dry abulution ☺☺

1. saying basmala
2. wiping the right arm before the left one
3. observing Muwalat (to wipe the limbs continuously without giving a break between them)

are the sunnahs of tayammum. ☺☺

What nullifies dry ablution!

1. To do things that nullify major or minor ablution
2. To find water or to be able to use it
3. When the excuses to perform dry ablution become no longer valid, it
4. Entering to the next prayer time

nullifies dry ablution

THE CAVE OF ÇORAKTEPE

Early in the morning Emre left for school with his father. They were going camping with the school's scouts club in this first weekend of June. When Emre arrived at school, the bus for the camp was there and preparations were done. The bus left for the camp soon after. The president of the club, Mr. Ismail, who was also the Turkish Literature teacher, got the bus microphone and informed the students about the tour:

— My friends, first of all I would like to let you know that the goal of this tour is both for you to have fun and to educate you. We will see places that we have not seen and will spend cheerful hours away from the noisy city. Our bus will leave us at the Çamlıyayla Forest Camp. At the first day, we will build our tents and play games. At the second day of our camp, we will take a two-hour walk to go to Çoraktepe and examine the caves that have paintings from ancient times. I specifically want you to follow the rules, not to go far from the group, and to pay attention to keep the environment clean. We should not forget that the environment is entrusted to us. Handing it over to the next generations without corrupting it is one of our most important duties.

After one and a half hour's travel, they arrived at the camp place. First, they chose a spot to pitch their tents. With their teacher's help, the task of pitching tents was completed in no time. Kitchen appliances and portable tables were placed in the big tent. The scout leader, Ismail the teacher, gathered the camp residents by blowing a whistle and said:

— My friends, right now it is eleven o'clock. At one o'clock, you will gather for lunch. For now, you are free on the condition that you not go too far.

Children formed groups and with the joy of roaming the valleys, they started to play nice games. Playing games under the merciful spring sun, amid the chirping of birds and smell of pine trees was a gift the children could not obtain in the city.

They joyfully washed their hands and faces at the fountain and took their seats at the table in the big tent. The clean air had made them as hungry as wolves. Excited about not eating at home, they finished their plates at once.

After lunch, they prayed on the green grass before God who created all these beauties. With teacher Ismail, small scouts walked around the forest until night.

As they were returning to the camp, they did not forget to collect some wood for the camp fire. Before the sun set, they ate the dinner that the scout on duty had prepared. After the Sunset Prayer, sitting in a circle around the campfire that crackled, the children started to show their talents to each other. Some of them started to sing folk songs. Others made their friends laugh with their imitations. They did not notice how fast time had passed.

Children who went to their beds listening to the crickets went to sleep in no time after a tiring day.

At dawn, with the call of Mr. Ismail, they jumped out of their beds. While at home their mothers could not wake them up despite all begging, the forest air made them have a good night's sleep and wake up easily. Taking ablution with the ice-cold water of the fountain and performing the morning prayer made their eyes wide open. The morning exercise with the leadership of teachers Omer and Ismail had started. They wished that all the holiday mornings wasted in the city as they stayed in bed until noon would be like this one, full of fun and experience. The camp residents who were done with the morning exercise had their seats at the breakfast table in the big tent. Children had their breakfast quickly as they were excited to see the caves of Çoraktepe. Teacher Ismail said:

— Children! Our trip will be about a two-hour walk. Don't forget to take your lunch

bags with you, drinking water, and a hat to protect yourselves from the sunlight.

Emre and his friends started to climb in a single file to Çoraktepe on a narrow path. The first half hour of the way was fun but the rest got boring. The sun was no longer just petting the children's back like it did early in the morning, and the noon heat was making them very thirsty.

When they were at the hill, they hardly had a seat in the shadow of the trees. The children who were not used to long trips under the sun were so tired. Scout leader teacher Ismail said with an indulgent smile:

— What happened children? Are you tired? Get ready, our visit to the caves is starting.

The cave, which they entered hand in hand between two rocks, shocked the children. The burning hot air outside suddenly changed. They felt like entering into a giant refrigerator. Teacher Omer was informing the children about the cave while lighting the cave with his flashlight:

— Friends, right now we are facing a page in history that was written thousands of years ago and was protected to this day. So many details that may seem unimportant at first glance may hide very important explanations in terms of history. The paintings we see here give us information about the lifestyle of people in that era, their food habits, their social life, and almost everything about them.

After completing their exploration of the cave under the leadership of teacher Omer, the children got their lunch boxes out and ate on the grass. When they got full, they reverted to their earlier cheer. They congregated immediately with the call of teacher Omer, who said:

— Friends, as we have planned, on the second day of our camp, we saw the Çoraktepe Cave. Right now, it is three o'clock, and we will pray the Noon Prayer (Salat al-Zuhr) here and leave for the camp.

Melih who had finished all of his water raised his hand:

— Teacher, I do not have any water left. I do not think my friends have any water left either. There is no nearby fountain, no river, nor a village where we can find water. How are we going to make ablution for the prayer? Mr. Omer said:

— A very good question! Good job Melih! I was about to make an announcement about it. Friends, our beautiful religion Islam never makes believers responsible for something that they cannot bear. In other words, Islam is a religion that makes things easier, not harder. Ali who raised his hand said:

— Therefore we will not pray, right my teacher? Mr. Omer:

— Incorrect, Ali! For a responsible Muslim there is no excuse not to stand in front of God. When there is no water, and no hope to find any within the prayer time, one can perform the prayer by making tayammum.

Ali asked again:

— Teacher, with tayammum, can we perform all the acts of worship that can be done with ablution? Mr. Omer said:

— Of course Ali! When we make tayammum, we can perform all the worship as if we made ablution.

Children, with the joy of having learned something new, started to make tayammum with their teachers.

After completing the prayer that they performed in congregation, they got ready and left to return to the camp. After returning to the camp, they formed long lines in front of the fountain and drank lots of water.

The camp that ended on Sunday was so helpful for Emre and his friends. They both saw new places and also gained new knowledge. Also they had some fun time unlike at school where they usually get bored. Emre had a last look from the bus window to Çoraktepe which looked like an eagle nest. As he planned the next year's camp in his mind, he went to sleep on his friend Burhan's shoulder.

HASAN TAHSİN KARAMAN

QUESTIONS

Let's Check Our Knowledge (1)

For the sentences below, check the RIGHT or WRONG boxes accordingly

1. It is sunnah to wash three times each part of the body that is required to be washed. ☐ RIGHT ☐ WRONG
2. One can circumambulate the Holy Ka'bah without ablution. ☐ RIGHT ☐ WRONG
3. Wasting water is reprehensible even when making ablution. ☐ RIGHT ☐ WRONG
4. To fall asleep in a lying position or while leaning against something does not annul ablution. ☐ RIGHT ☐ WRONG
5. One can wipe over (mash) a band-aid or bandage on parts of the body that are meant to be washed in ablution. ☐ RIGHT ☐ WRONG

Let's Check Ourselves (1)

1. Which one of the items below is among the obligatory (fard) acts of ablution (wudu)?

a) To take water into the mouth
b) To draw water into the nostrils
c) To rub (mash) one's head
d) To rub (mash) one's ears

2. Which one of the items below is not among the obligatory (fard) acts of ablution (wudu)?

a) To wash the arms up to elbows
b) To wash the feet
c) To wash the face
d) To rinse the mouth

3. Which one of the items below is among the sunnah acts of ablution (wudu)?

a) To wash the face
b) To wash the feet up to and including the ankles
c) To wash the nose.
d) To wipe (mash) part of the head.

4. Which one of the items below does not nullify ablution (wudu)?

a) To break wind
b) To laugh
c) To sleep
d) To lose consciousness

5. Which one of the items below nullifies ablution (wudu)?

a) To yawn
b) To cry
c) To speak
d) To answer the call of nature

Fill in the blanks (1)

Fill in the blanks with the words in parentheses.

(miswak/ three times/ sunnah/ makruh (reprehensible) / obligatory (fard))

1. To wash each part of the body required to be rinsed in ablution ……. is sunnah.
2. To wipe the entire head is …….
3. To use ……..or a tooth brush to clean one's teeth is a sunnah act of ablution.
4. Using more water than necessary when making ablution is …….
5. To wash the feet once up to and including the ankles is ……..

Let's Check Our Knowledge (2)

1. To take water into the mouth and nostrils when performing ghusl is obligatory (fard). ☐ RIGHT ☐ WRONG
2. Without ghusl, one cannot touch the Holy Qur'an. ☐ RIGHT ☐ WRONG
3. Without ghusl we can enter a mosque but we cannot perform prayer. ☐ RIGHT ☐ WRONG
4. Intention (niyyah) is not among the obligatory acts of tayammum. ☐ RIGHT ☐ WRONG
5. When the excuse that prevents one from using water ends, his tayammum will not be nullified. ☐ RIGHT ☐ WRONG

Let's Check Ourselves (2)

1. **Which one of the following is among the obligatory (fard) acts of ghusl?**

   a) To wash our feet
   b) To make intention
   c) To wipe (mash) the head
   d) To wipe (mash) the ears

2. **Which one of the following requires performing ghusl?**

   a) Emission of semen
   b) Nosebleed
   c) To use the bathroom
   d) To vomit a mouthful

3. **Which one of the following is among the reprehensible acts of ghusl?**

   a) To waste water while performing ghusl
   b) To speak unnecessarily
   c) To face toward Qiblah while naked
   d) All of the above

4. **Which one of the following acts can be performed without ritual bath (ghusl)?**

   a) To perform prayer
   b) To read the Holy Qur'an
   c) To eat
   d) To circumambulate around Ka'bah

5. **Which one of the following does not nullify tayammum?**

   a) To cry
   b) To use the bathroom
   c) Entering to the next prayer time
   d) Starting to be able to use water

Fill in the blanks (2)

Fill in the blanks with the words in the parenthesis.

(Obligatory (fard)/ Tayammum/ Makruh/ entire body/ sunnah)

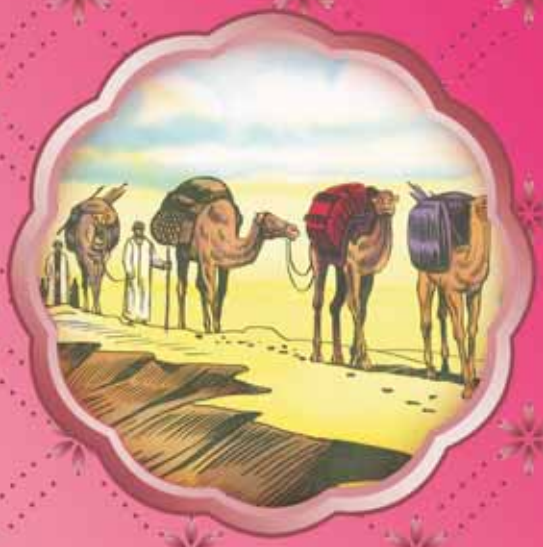
1. When performing ghusl, it 's obligatory to wash our ……

2. For ladies who complete their menstruation, it is …… to perform ghusl

3. It is …….. to wash our hands and private parts when starting to perform ghusl.

4. It is …… to face toward Qiblah while naked when performing ghusl.

5. If one does not find clean enough water to take ablution or ghusl, he may perform ……



I AM LEARNING MY PROPHET

SIRAH

- *The life of the Beloved Prophet before his Prophethood*
- *The Beloved Prophet's Childhood*
- *The Beloved Prophet's Youth and Marriage*
- *The Arrival of Prophethood and the Call to Islam*
- *The Road to Rescue: Migration to Abyssinia*

THE LIFE OF THE BELOVED PROPHET BEFORE HIS PROPHETHOOD

Arabia and Mecca before Islam

Before Islam, Arabs were divided into tribes. They had not yet been able to unite under a single nation and establish a state. Apart from a few towns, they lived mostly in tents, leading a nomadic life in the desert.

The three most important towns in the area of Hijaz were Mecca, Medina and Taif. Because of blood feuds and border tensions, tribal warfare was common.

Before Islam, majoritys of Arabs used to worship idols. They would pray to statues they had made with their own hands. There were 360 idols set up in and around Kaabah alone. Each tribe had its own idol and each idol had a special day for visiting. As much as it was the center of commerce, Mecca was thus also the center of idolatry, with people coming to visit their idols in each day of the year. Together with the idolaters, there were also Jews, Christians and Mageans or the fire-worshippers dwelling in Arabia. But there were also a small number of *Hanifs*, who believed in the basic creeds left by the religion of Ibrahim –upon him peace- and who believed in one Allah.

The number of those who knew how to read and write among Arabs was very few. They thrived in some good conduct like generosity, hospitality, keeping their word, courage and protecting anyone who sought refuge, even if they were their enemies. But they also thrived in many evil deeds like theft, usury, oppressing the poor, drinking, gambling and shedding blood from tribal instincts.

The Arabs did not ascribe any value to slaves and women. Men used marry as many women as they wished. Prostitution had become a way of life.

Some would even commit the atrocity of burying their daughters alive, without blinking an eye, from the fear that they might one day bring shame on their family. Before the dawning of Islam, it was not just the Arabs and Arabia stuck in the darkness of tyranny and ignorance; so was the rest of the world. Distraught by physical and spiritual troubles, mankind had long been expecting a guide, a savior. The Holy Quran describes to us this period of Ignorance with the words, **"Corruption has appeared in the land and the sea on account of what the hands of men have done"** (Rûm, 41)

a) The Kaabah

The first building constructed for the purpose of worshipping Allah, glory unto Him, Kaabah was built by Ibrahim and his son Ismail –upon them be peace- at around 2000 BC. Prophet Ibrahim offered the first circumambulation with his son Prophet Ismail and invited entire humankind to *hajj*, for pilgrimage to the Sacred House. Mecca was founded by Qusay, the great grandfather of the Blessed Prophet –upon him blessings and peace-, many years after the construction of Kaabah. Though built as a place for worshipping Allah, glory unto Him, with the forgetting of the belief in *tawhid*, Kaabah in time became filled with idols. And equally, Mecca became the center of idolatry.

b) The Elephant Incident: Abraha's Attack on Kaabah (571)

Abraha, the governor of Yemen which was then part of Abyssinia, had built a great church in the town of Sana, to spread Christianity throughout Arabia and deter the Arabs from visiting Kaabah. Abraha's ultimate intention was to attract the pilgrims of Kaabah to Sana and to thereby become rich. But contrary to his expectations, no Arab showed any interest in the church. To make matters worse, an Arab from the tribe of Kinanah secretly broke into the church one night and urinated inside. Abraha was furious. Using that final event as an excuse, he gathered a large army and marched onto Mecca, with the intention of demolishing Kaabah once and for all. The Arabs had no strength to withstand this army. So the Meccans evacuated the town and retreated into the outskirts of the surrounding mountains.

Abraha set up camp near Mecca. Sending an envoy to Abdulmuttalib, the leader of Quraysh, he assured them that he had not come to shed blood but only to destroy Kaabah. In the meantime, some soldiers from Abraha's army had plundered the herds of livestock that belonged to the Meccans and brought them to the army camp. Among the seized livestock were a hundred camels that belonged to Abdulmuttalib. So Abdulmuttalib went to Abraha, asking him to give back his camels.

"I thought you had come to ask me not to destroy Kaabah", said Abrahah. "But I see that you only think about your camels…and that is so unbecoming of you!" To this, Abdulmuttalib replied, solemnly and resolutely:

"I am the owner of the camels and I am asking for them… Kaabah, too, has an Owner who will certainly protect it." Hearing this response, Abraha returned Abdulmuttalib's camels, along with the rest of the properties seized from the Meccans.

What would you have thought of Abdulmuttalib's response?

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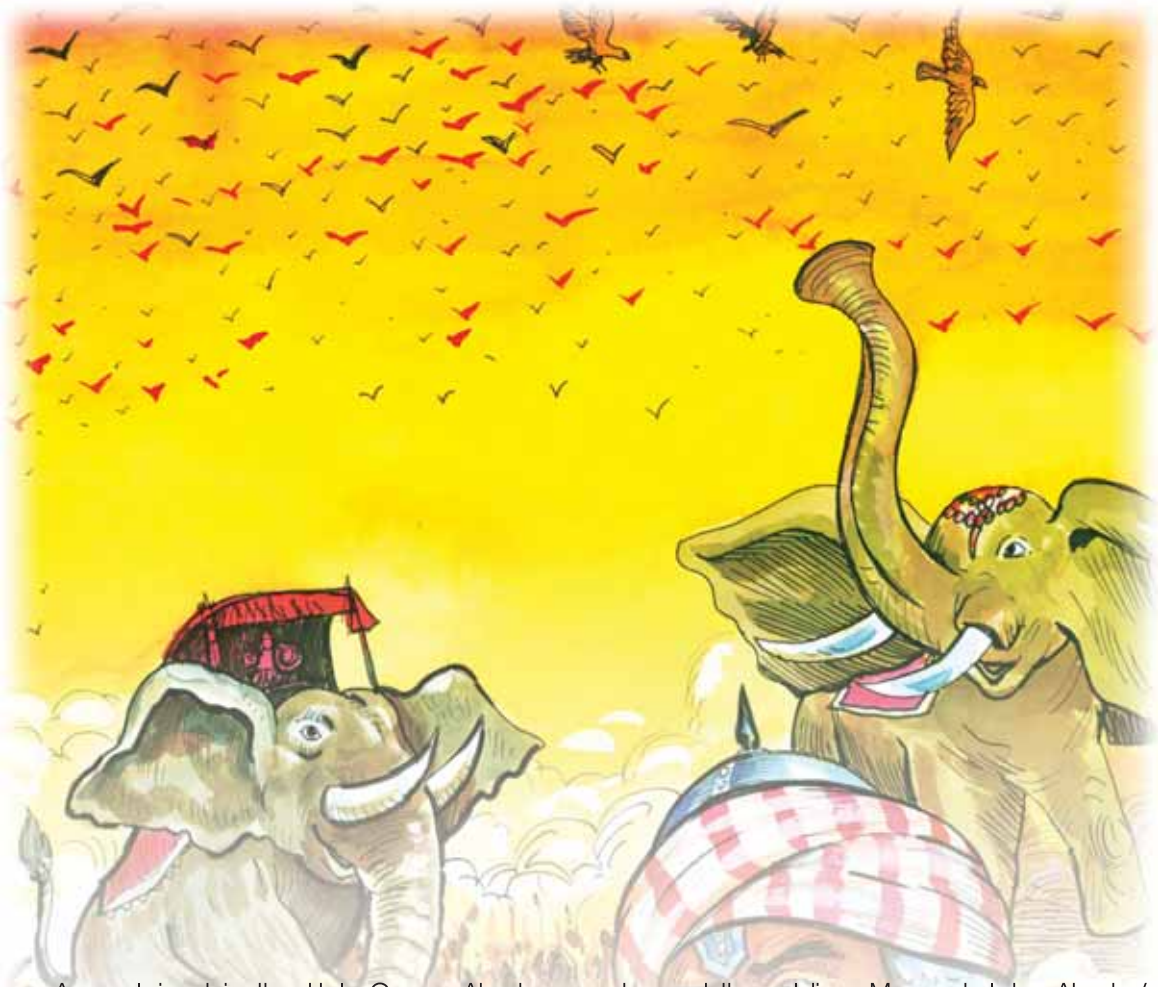

As explained in the Holy Quran, Abraha could not fulfill his ambition. The moment his onslaught was to begin, Mamut, the giant elephant Abraha would take with him to every campaign, crouched along with the other elephants in the army they had depended on. And despite all the efforts of their trainers, they would not get back up on their feet. They did not move even an inch towards Kaabah. Meanwhile, flocks of birds began to appear in the skies. They began to pelt the stones they had been carrying in their beaks and claws down at the soldiers. Moments later, Abraha's great army lay perished. Most of them were slain. Abraha, along with the handful of soldiers who managed to survive, managed to return to Sana. But unable to recover from the disease he caught, Abrahah died a short time later.

Because of the large number of elephants that led the charge in the army, the event came to be known as the 'The Elephant Incident'. The event took place exactly 52 days before the Beloved Prophet graced the Earth.

What are your reflections on the fact that a large army reinforced with massive elephants was destroyed at the hands of tiny birds?

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1 - THE BELOVED PROPHET'S CHILDHOOD

a) The Honorable Birth

The Blessed Prophet –upon him be blessings and peace- was born on 20 April, 571, near dawn. Both the world and humanity gained honor by his arrival. On the Lunar Calendar, it corresponded to the 12th of Rabiulawwal. When asked about his newborn grandchild's name during a feast given in his honor, Abdulmuttalib explained, "I have named him Muhammad…with the hope that God above and people below will speak highly of him…" His mother, on the other, called him 'Ahmad'. Muhammad means he who is greatly praised with his qualities and superior attributes, while Ahmad means he who praises and thanks the Almighty with His supreme attributes. Allah, glory unto Him, refers to the Prophet with these names in the Quran.

b) His Pure Lineage

The Beloved Prophet's –upon him be blessings and peace- father was Abdullah, the son of Abdulmuttalib; while his mother was Amina, the daughter of Wahb. Abdullah was from the Hashim Clan of the tribe of Quraysh, and Amina from the Zuhra Clan. Both their lineages join in their previous ancestries. Both clans are Meccan in origin. The Blessed Prophet –upon him blessings and peace- is a descendant of Ismail, the older child of Ibrahim –upon them be peace-. The Prophet's –upon him be peace- lineage is comprised of the purest and most honorable human beings. In a *hadith*, the Beloved Prophet –upon him blessings and peace- says, 'I come from the purest lineage of all the children of Adam…selected from one generation to another.'

Two months before the birth of the Prophet –upon him blessings and peace-, while returning from a journey in Syria, Abdullah passed away in Medina, where he was buried. Still at the tender age of twenty-five, the most fortunate of all fathers hence passed away without ever getting to see his son. And indeed, the orphan was never to see his father; he was to make it through childhood longing for him.

c) Entrusted in the Care of a Foster Mother

The great toddler was breastfed by his mother Amina for seven days. When her milk proved insufficient, Suwaybah, the servant of his uncle Abu Lahab, took up the duty of feeding him.

But Halimah proved to be the real foster mother. Because of Mecca's heavy climate, the natives already had a custom of sending their newborns to surrounding areas with fresher air; hiring foster mother's to care for them in the meantime. That way, not only did the children grow up healthier, they also learnt Arabic

How could living without the affectionate care of a father have affected the Beloved Prophet?

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What could the Beloved Prophet have felt after losing his mother, after having already grown up without a father?

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in its purest, most articulate form. The Beloved Prophet –upon him blessings and peace- was hence given to the care of Halimah, his foster mother to be. At first, Halimah thought that caring for an orphan would not be profitable. But taken in by the toddler's beauty the moment she saw him, she nonetheless took him, hoping that he would bring good fortune to her household. And in time, she loved him even more than her own children. Shayma, the foster-sister of the blissful toddler, also helped her mum in caring for him. The blissful toddler remained in the care of his foster mother until the age of four. He was four years old when eventually Halimah returned him to Aminah in Mecca.

d) Trip to Medina

From the ages of four to six, the Beloved Prophet –upon him blessings and peace- remained with his mother. The compassionate Aminah would dote on her only son, trying to raise him in the best possible manner. The blessed child was now six. Taking his son and their loyal helper Umm Ayman, Aminah set out to Medina. Her intention was to visit his husband's grave, with the orphan he had left behind.

They stayed as guest in Medina for about a month, next to the Najjar Clan, their relatives. On the return, Aminah was struck down by an illness, near the village of Abwa, around 37 km south of Medina. Sensing her son would soon be left without a mother, she glanced at him, with the deep compassion in her eyes. She hugged and kissed him, for a long while. Then staring at his innocent face, she said:

"Everything new shall become old; and everything fleeting shall perish. I, too, will die but I grieve not; for I am leaving behind a son, through whom my lineage will live on until eternity.'

2- THE BELOVED PROPHET'S YOUTH AND MARRIAGE

The Blessed Prophet –upon him be blessings and peace- remained in the custody of his uncle Abu Talib until the age of twenty five. Abu Talib was an intelligent and generous man. He was not particularly wealthy; though being a noble man who always ran to the help of others, he was highly respected by everyone. He dearly loved his nephew Muhammad; he never let him out of sight.

a) Journey to Damascus

As Mecca was unfit for agriculture, the locals would engage in commerce and train their children in the trade from a very young age. With caravans, they would make commercial trips to Damascus in summer and to Yemen in winter. Like other Meccans, Abu Talib was also a caravan trader. Once, as he was departing as usual for Damascus, the Beloved Prophet –upon him blessings and peace-, then still a child, could not bear to separate from his uncle. But Abu Talib thought it would be better to leave him nonetheless in Mecca. The Prophet then began to shed tears of grief.

How would you have felt in a similar situation knowing that you were to be left behind?

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"What is wrong, dear? Are you crying because I am leaving you behind?" asked Abu Talib. The Beloved Prophet then held his camel by its bridles and said:

"Who are you leaving me with, uncle? I neither have a father nor a mother!"

Hearing these words made Abu Talib emotional as he said:

How would you have felt in a similar situation knowing that you were to be left behind?

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"By Allah, I will take you with me; and from now on, we shall never be torn apart from each other!" The Beloved Prophet –upon him blessings and peace- was still twelve years old at the time. Ninety kilometers south of Damascus, there was a little town known as Busra, where there lived a Christian monk by the name of Bahirah. Although he never usually take much notice of the incoming caravans up until then, he greeted Abu Talib's caravan and gave them a feast. From the sacred scriptures he had read, Bahirah had sensed from his face that the young Muhammad was indeed the expected prophet. He spoke with him and asked many questions. The answers he obtained convinced him all the more. He thought taking the young child to Damascus would prove dangerous for him; so he said to Abu Talib:

"This child is destined to be the last prophet. There are soothsayers among the Jews of Damascus that know the signs and the characteristics of the final prophet. If they recognize your nephew, they might harm him…So do not take him to Damascus!" Abu Talib then changed his mind about going to Damascus.

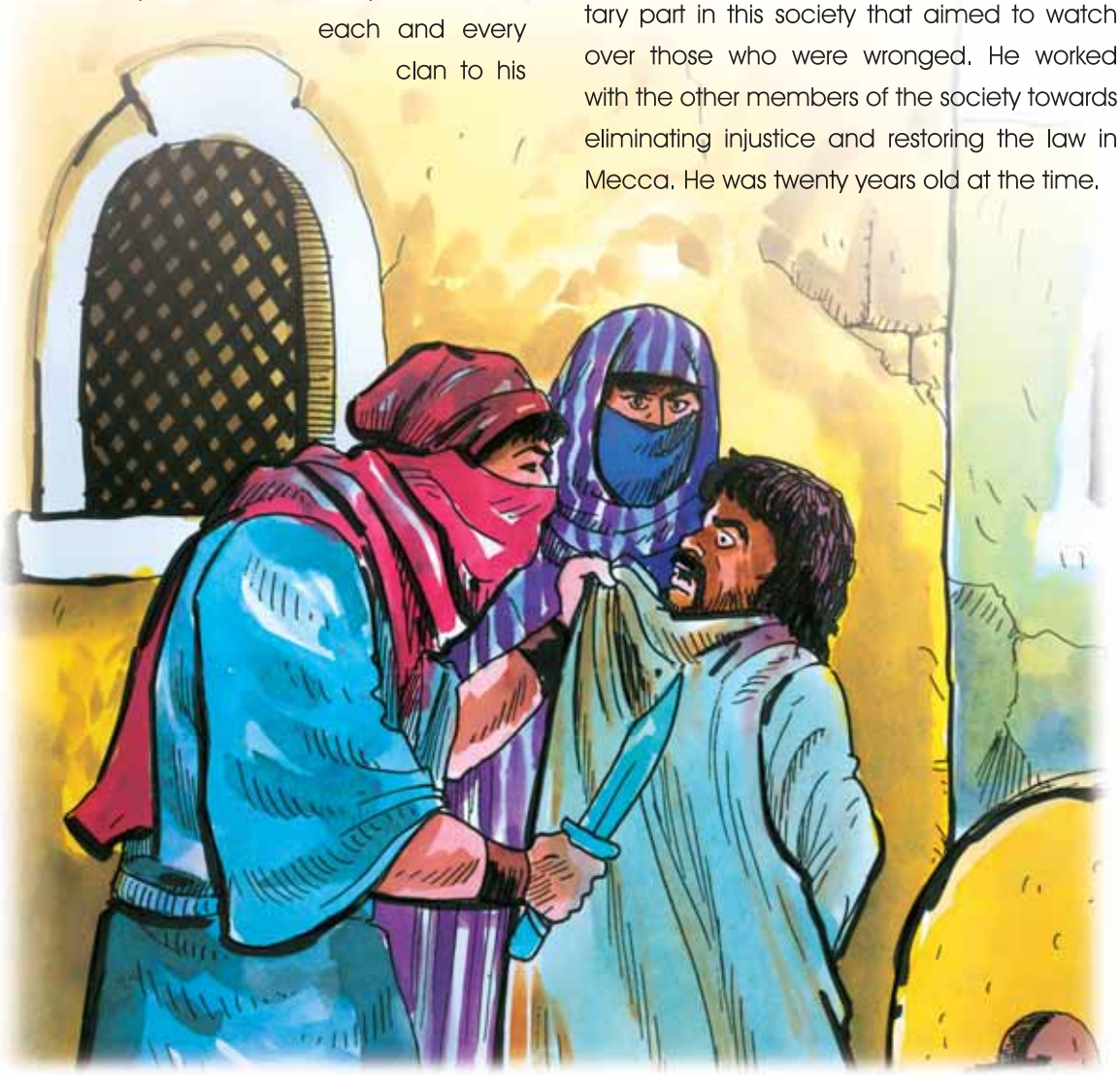
At the age of seventeen, the Beloved Prophet –upon him blessings and peace- joined his uncles Abbas and Zubayr on another commercial trip to Yemen.

b) Joining the *Hilfu'l-Fudul* Society (The Society of those who Unite for the Good)

In those times, social peace in Mecca had all but gone. Theft and assault was running rife; there was no safety of life or property. It was so bad that even the incoming merchants into Mecca could not leave without having their belongings plundered.

As ibn Wail had confiscated the entire belongings of Yemeni merchant and taken them away from his hands. In protest against the unjust treatment, the Yemeni merchant climbed atop Mount Abu Qubays and called each and every clan to his aid. Hearing his plea, Zubayr, the uncle of the Blessed Prophet –upon him blessings and peace- summoned all the leaders of Quraysh. Many of them ended up gathering at the house of Abdullah ibn Judan. They pledged to 'prevent injustice in Mecca on behalf of both the locals and foreigners'. Shortly afterwards, they managed to claim the belongings that ibn Wail had confiscated and restored them to the hands of the Yemeni merchant. They brought security to Mecca. This pledge came to be known as the *Hilfu'l-Fudul*.

The Blessed Prophet –upon him blessings and peace- joined his uncles and took voluntary part in this society that aimed to watch over those who were wronged. He worked with the other members of the society towards eliminating injustice and restoring the law in Mecca. He was twenty years old at the time.



c) Commitment to Trade

Like all Meccans, the Prophet –upon him blessings and peace- also took part in commercial activities with his uncle. There was never a time, either during his childhood or his youth that he failed to keep a promise or he lied. He never indulged in any kind of harmful behavior towards others. His wonderful conduct and honesty had thus become legendary. For that, he was known among the locals as *al-Amin*, the Trustworthy. Khadijah, one of the wealthy women of Quraysh, had also heard about his exceptional conduct. Offering some capital to the young man, whose moral integrity was envied by all, she proposed to be his partner-in-trade. Their commercial partnership was thus underway.

d) Marriage to Khadijah –Allah be well-pleased with her-

Khadijah, the daughter of Huwaylid, was an intelligent and noble woman. Approaching the age of forty, she was a beautiful lady respected by all. She had been widowed at a very young age. Though many notables of Quraysh wanted to marry her, she had declined all their requests. A wealthy woman, she earned her living by setting up business partnerships with merchants she could trust. Her nickname before Islam was *Tahirah*, meaning 'the pure'. After she became a Muslim, she came to be known as *Khadijatu'l-Kubra* or Khadijah the Great. She made great profits through her trade partnership with the Blessed Prophet –upon him blessings and peace-.

With blessings of the elders of both families, the Prophet and Khadijah got married. They established a happy and exemplary family. Khadijah showed how highly spirited and exceptional a woman she was. The Blessed Prophet –upon him blessings and peace- was very much fond of her. Khadijah was deeply attached to the Prophet –upon him blessings and peace-, with much love and respect. She became his biggest helper in the days of his prophethood, just as she was in the days preceding.

From this marriage, they had two sons and four daughters. In order, they were Qasim, Zaynab, Ruqiyyah, Fatimah and Abdullah. Qasim and Abdullah died at a very tender age. All their daughters grew to adulthood. But except for Fatimah, they all passed away before the Blessed Prophet –upon him blessings and peace-.

e) Arbitration in Kaabah (605)

Kaabah, built by prophets Ibrahim and Ismail –upon them be peace-, had become worn out over the long years from rain and flood waters. It needed repair. Quraysh decided to tear it down and built it anew. They collected the money and material needed. After the reconstruction was complete, time had now come to restore the *Hajaru'l-Aswad*, the Black Stone which the Arabs recognized even back then as having come from Paradise. But here, there erupted a major dispute; each clan of Quraysh wanted the honor of restoring the Stone exclusively to themselves. The dispute continued for exactly four days. By then, each clan was more than ready to put the others to sword if needed. Blood was about to be spilled when Abu Umayyah, the eldest man in Quraysh, suggested that they choose the first man to walk through the outer gates of the Kaabah as an arbitrator and follow his decision, whatever it may be. His suggestion was accepted. Walking through the gates shortly afterwards was none other than the noble Muhammad –upon him blessings and peace-. They were so happy that they exclaimed, '*al-Amin, al-Amin*…We are content with whatever he decides!' When he came next to them, they informed him of the situation.

At such a delicate moment, the Beloved Prophet –upon him blessings and peace- displayed an acute and prudent judgment.

If you were the arbitrator, what kind of a solution would you have proposed?

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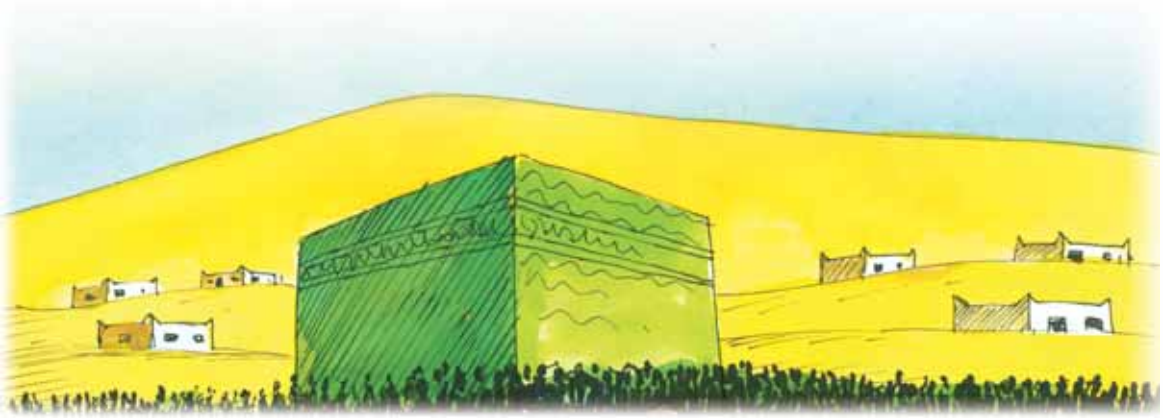
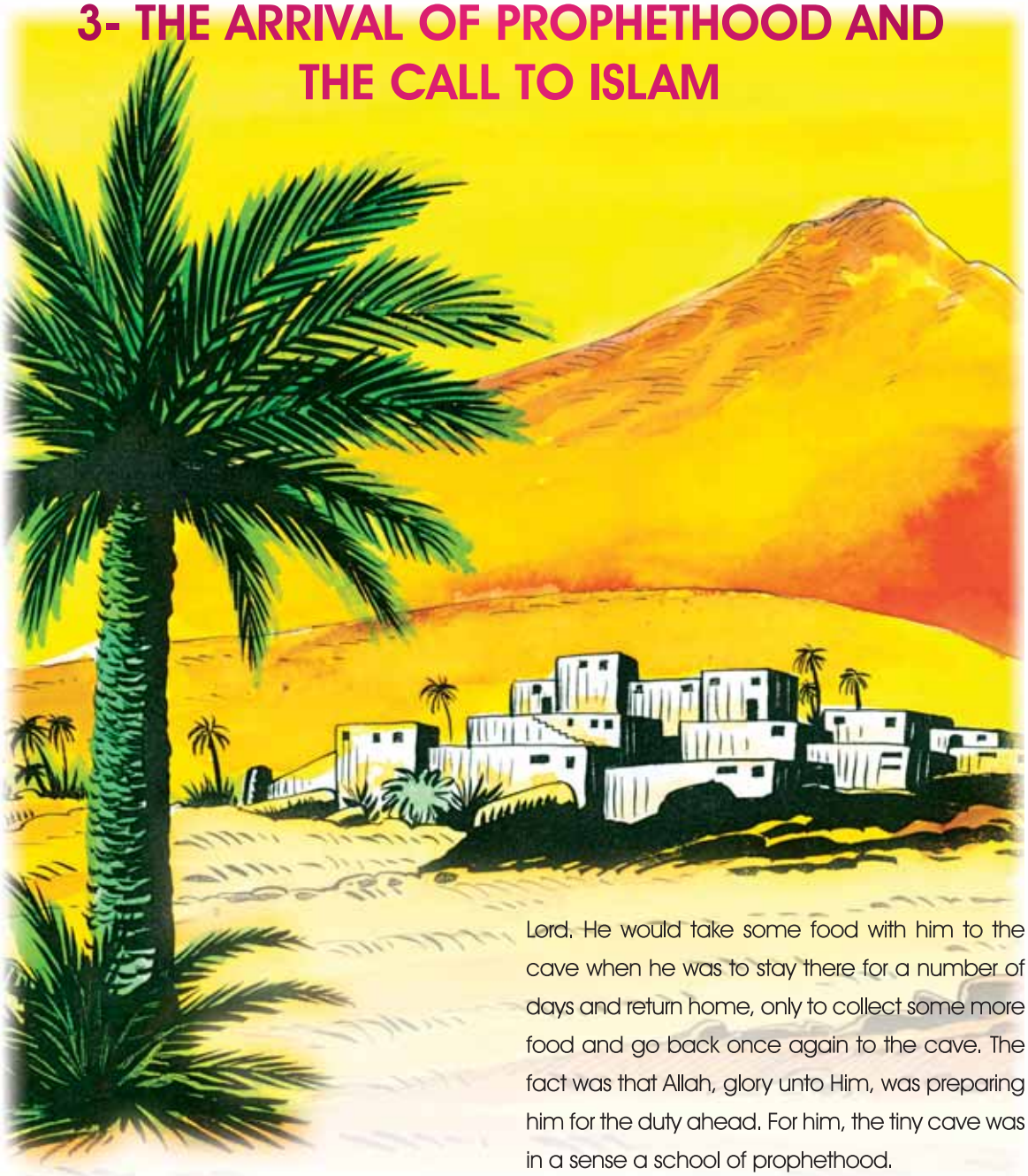
He then went ahead and placed the Stone on a stretched out cloth; and had each clan leader hold it by the sides of the cloth and carry it to its place. There, the Blessed Prophet –upon him blessings and peace- personally picked up the Stone and restored it to its usual spot. Everyone was delighted that the dispute was resolved without blood. The fact that he had solved an intricate problem even the experienced clan leaders could not solve in a way that left everyone happy increased his reputation and integrity among Quraysh all the more. He was thirty-five years old at the time.



3- THE ARRIVAL OF PROPHETHOOD AND THE CALL TO ISLAM



a) The First Revelation and Prophethood (610)

Towards the age of forty, the Prophet –upon him blessings and peace- began feeling a desire in his heart for seclusion. At times, he would retreat to a cave in Mount Hira or the Mount of Light and remain there for days on end. He would occupy himself in worship, in the form of contemplating on the eternal power, glory and majesty of the Lord. He would take some food with him to the cave when he was to stay there for a number of days and return home, only to collect some more food and go back once again to the cave. The fact was that Allah, glory unto Him, was preparing him for the duty ahead. For him, the tiny cave was in a sense a school of prophethood.

Many an event of an extraordinary nature would take place in the cave. For example, the Prophet –upon him blessings and peace- would hear voices telling him that he was '…the Messenger of Allah'. But as soon as he would look around, there was never anyone to be found. Sometimes the dreams he saw would occur exactly as he had seen them. This state of affairs lasted for around six months.

On the Night of Qadr in Ramadhan, 610, as he sat, enshrouded in his mantle, contemplating in the cave, the Prophet –upon him blessings and peace- heard a voice calling out his name. He lifted his head and looked around; but he could not see anyone. Then suddenly, a light descended upon his surroundings. Unable to endure it, he fainted. When he came around to himself, he saw Jibril, the angel of revelation, standing right in front of him.

"Read!" the angel commanded him.

"I do not know how to read", replied he. The Angel then embraced and squeezed him, to the point of leaving him all but powerless.

"Read!" the Jibril then repeated, after letting him go.

"I do not know how to read", the Prophet –upon him blessings and peace- replied once more.

The Angel embraced and tightly squeezed him once again. He then repeated the command; and after receiving the same response, he once again embraced and squeezed him and then recited onto him the revelation:

"Read in the name of your Lord Who created. He created man from a clot. Read and your Lord is Most Honorable, Who taught by the pen. Taught man what he knew not." (al-Alaq, 1-5)

The Beloved Prophet –upon him blessings and peace- repeated these verses of the Quran after Jibril. Filled with anxiety and fear, he left the cave shortly afterwards to return home. As he walked, he heard a voice from the skies telling him:

"Muhammad…You are the Messenger of Allah. And I am Jibril!" On lifting his head, he saw Jibril. He arrived home in fear.

"Cover me!" he urged his wife Khadijah. "Cover me!" After regaining his breath and calmness, he continued recounting what he had just seen to her. Then he said, anxiously:

"Who will believe me now, Khadijah?"

"Do not say that", Khadijah consoled. "I promise by Allah that He will never embarrass you; for you look after your relatives, help those who cannot help themselves and feed the poor. You protect the rights of orphans and treat your guests…" She then added:

Allah the Exalted says:

"Read in the name of your Lord Who created. He created man from a clot. Read and your Lord is Most Honorable, Who taught by the pen. Taught man what he knew not."

(al-Alaq, 1-5)

What could the Blessed Prophet have thought following the graceful approach shown by Khadijah?

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"I trust that what has just happened is all good…and I believe in your prophethood!" Khadijah hence became the first person to believe in and support the Prophet of the Final Hour.

Revelation came to a temporary halt following this first revelation. However, after a while, the Blessed Prophet –upon him blessings and peace- once again saw the angel he had seen before. With fear and anxiety, he returned home and asked to be covered in sheets. Right at that moment, Jibril –upon him peace- revealed to him the following:

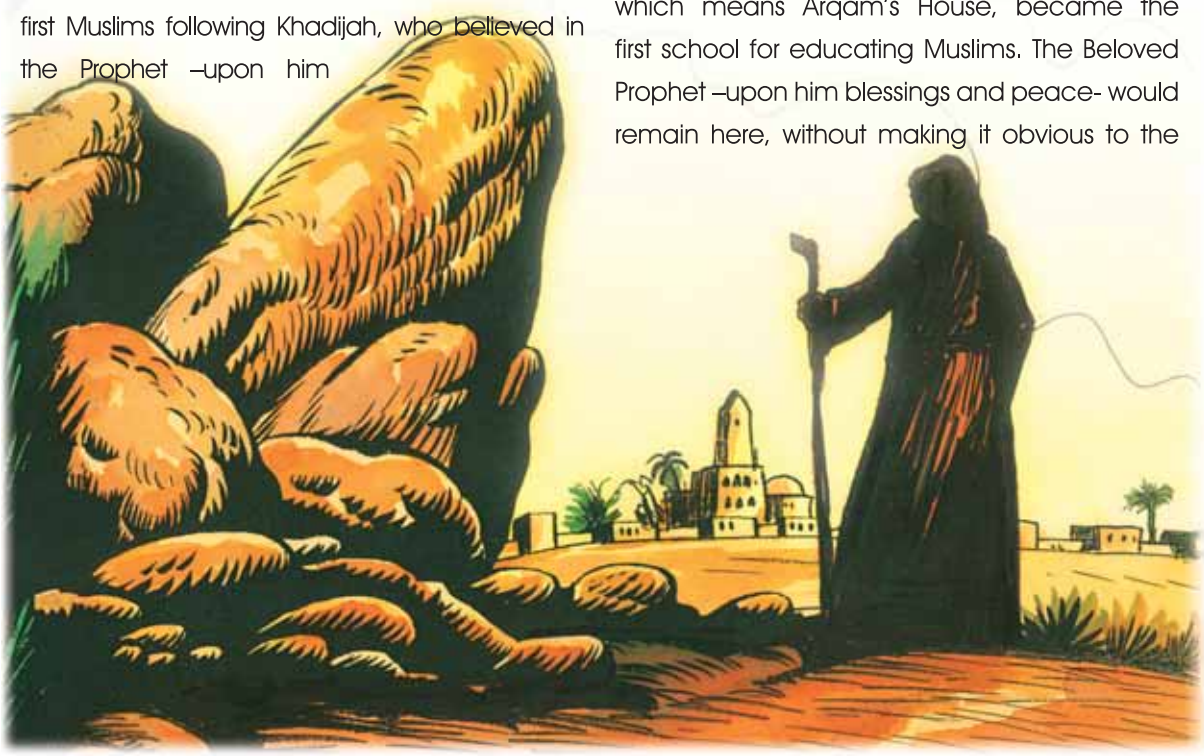
"O you who are wrapped up! Arise and warn! And Your Lord do exalt! And your garments do purify! And uncleanness do shun" (al-Muddaththir, 1-5)

With the receiving of the revelation, the Blessed Prophet –upon him blessings and peace- arose. He explained everything that had just happened to Khadijah. She knew him very well. She had witnessed the integrity of his moral values and the purity of his lifestyle with her very own eyes. The first Muslims following Khadijah, who believed in the Prophet –upon him blessings and peace- without any hesitation, were Abu Bakr, the Prophet's closest friend, Zayd, the Prophet's adopted son, Ali, his cousin and Othman –Allah be well-pleased with them all-.

b) The Beloved Prophet's Invitation of His Relatives to Islam (613-614)

The Blessed Prophet –upon him blessings and peace- knew very well that his call to Islam would attract fierce opposition from the leaders of Mecca. For that reason, he conducted his call in secret during the first three years. If he were to call openly during these first few years and ask everyone to openly declare a change in faith, then the first Muslims, most of whom consisted of the poor and slaves, would have come face to face with Meccan tyranny and torture. Indeed, those Muslims who were somehow revealed as Muslims were subjected to many acts of cruelty.

After Arqam ibn Abi'l-Arqam became Muslim, the first Muslims began to secretly gather in his house during these first years. Daru'l-Arqam, which means Arqam's House, became the first school for educating Muslims. The Beloved Prophet –upon him blessings and peace- would remain here, without making it obvious to the



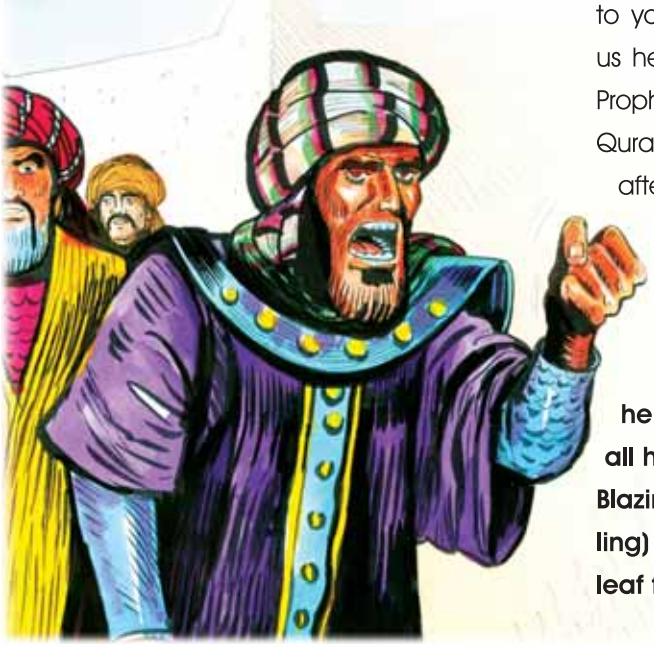
Allah the Exalted says:

"Perish the hands of Abu Lahab! Perish he! No profit to him from all his wealth, and all his gains! Burnt soon will he be in a Fire of Blazing Flame! His wife shall carry the (crackling) wood - As fuel!- A twisted rope of palm-leaf fiber round her (own) neck!"

(al-Masad, 1-5)

idolaters, and explain Islam to those who would come to him. There, he would recite and teach the revelations of the Quran. Then they would all offer prayer in congregation.

At the end of the first three years of secrecy, Muslims had only reached thirty in number. Eventually, at the beginning of the fourth year, the Almighty commanded the Prophet to openly invite people to Islam. So the Blessed Prophet –upon him blessings and peace- began calling people to Islam publicly; he was now frequently going to Kaabah to recite the revelations of the Quran to the Meccans.



Once Allah, glory unto Him, commanded the Blessed Prophet to "Warn your nearest of kin" (as-Shuara, 214), he gathered all his relatives near the Safa Hill and said:

"If I were to tell you that the enemy cavalry was staking out in the skirts of this mountain or in the valley over there, ready to launch a raid on us…would you believe me?"

"Yes, we would", they all replied, confirming his trustworthiness. "For we have never, ever witnessed you lie…you do not lie and you are called *al-Amin* for a good reason!" Some even began to panic as they thought there was really a cavalry unit waiting behind the mountain. The Messenger of Allah –upon him blessings and peace- then continued:

"In that case, I inform you that there waits for us a fierce day of punishment that will strike those who do not believe in Allah and worship him…I promise by Allah that there is no-one apart from Him, who is worthy of being worshipped. And I am the Messenger of Allah, sent by Him to you and to entire humankind…"

Abu Lahab was the fiercest to react. "Woe to you", he retorted. "Was this why you called us here?" He then began insulting the Beloved Prophet –upon him blessings and peace-. The Quranic chapter al-Masad was revealed shortly after, about him and his wife, whose behavior was like that of her husband. There, the Almighty protects His Messenger and gives Abu Lahab the answer he deserves:

"Perish the hands of Abu Lahab! Perish he! No profit to him from all his wealth, and all his gains! Burnt soon will he be in a Fire of Blazing Flame! His wife shall carry the (crackling) wood - As fuel!- A twisted rope of palm-leaf fiber round her (own) neck!" (al-Masad, 1-5)

c) The Beloved Prophet's Exceptional Appearance

The Blessed Prophet –upon him blessings and peace- was of medium height, closer to tall. He had a perfectly balanced stature and a well proportioned body. Having a wide chest and broad shoulders, there was also a seal of prophethood adorning the spot between his shoulder blades. His bones and joints were largish. He was of a pinkish white complexion, like a rose. Shiny like light, his skin was softer than silk. His graceful body was always clean, emitting a refreshing scent. Regardless of whether he had put on fragrance or not, his skin and sweat were more elegant than the most exquisite of fragrances. If one were to shake hands with him, his hands would be immersed all day in the Prophet's -upon him blessings and peace- elegant scent; it was as if roses had gotten their fragrance from him. If the Blessed Prophet -upon him blessings and peace- was to caress a child's head, one could immediately tell the child apart from others, due to his beautiful scent. Upon sweating, his skin would resemble a rose sprinkled with dew. He had a dense beard, which he would not allow to grow more than a handful. Upon his passing away, there were around twenty strands of grey hair on his hair and beard. His eyebrows were the shape of a crescent, with a fair distance separating both.

Located right between his eyebrows was a vein that would visibly swell, whenever the Blessed Prophet -upon him blessings and peace- got annoyed for something in the name of Truth. He would brush his pearl like teeth with *miswaq*, the frequent use of which he would always recommend. His black lashes were quite long. His eyes were stunningly big; entirely black where black, and entirely white where white. It was as if the hands of the Divine had garnished them with kohl in past eternity.

As exceptional as the perfection of his spiritual composition was the beauty of his physical appearance.

(Hakim, III, 10; Ibn Kathir, al-Bidayah, VI, 31-33)

Would you like to have lived in the same period as the Blessed Prophet? What would you give just to see him?

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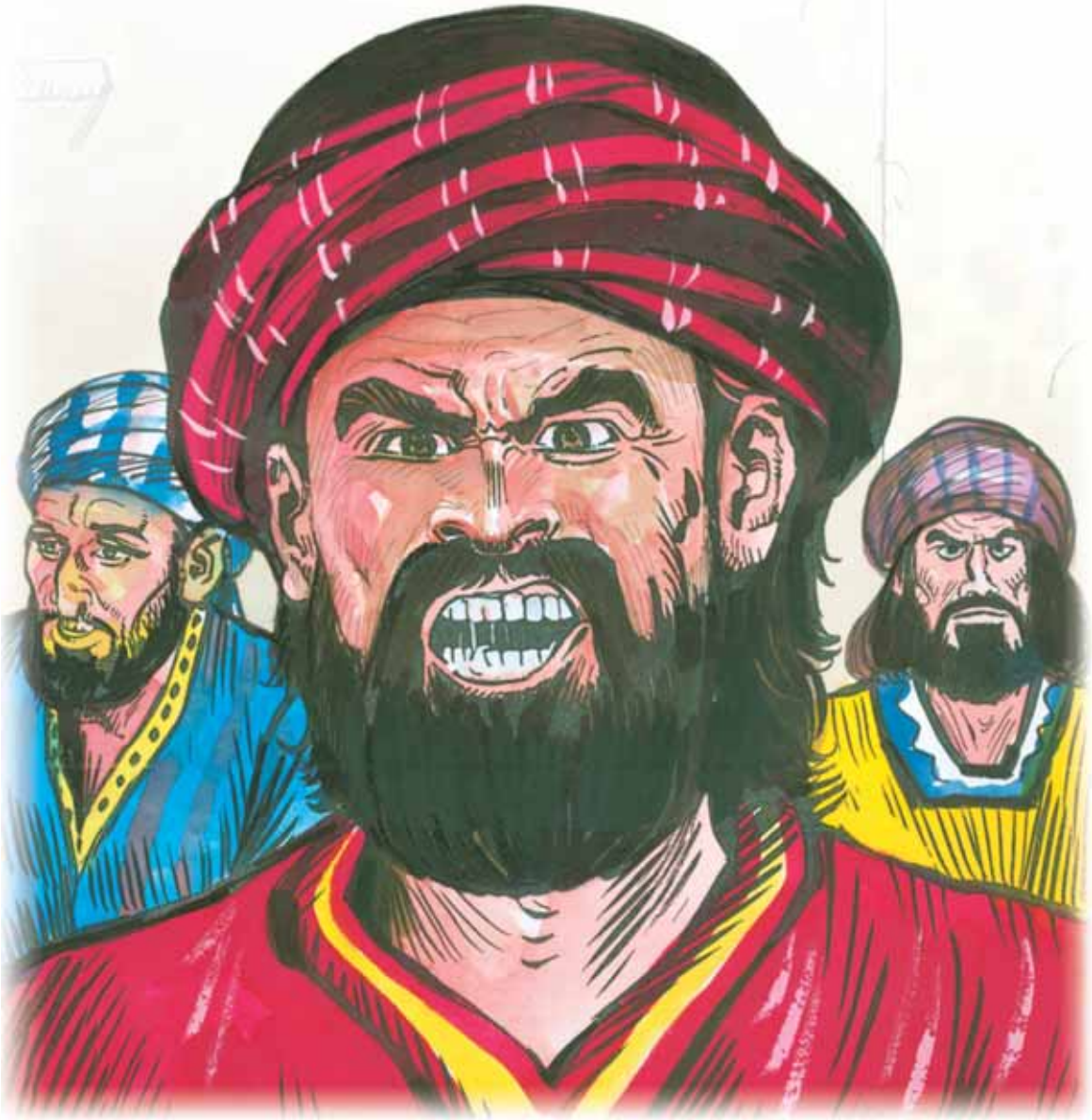
THE OPPRESSION OF THE IDOLATERS BEGINS

Islam was spreading in Mecca by the day; and the Meccan idolaters were terribly annoyed. People who had only until yesterday worshipped idols by their side had suddenly embraced a new religion. They were never going to sit there and do nothing about it. That their beliefs were false was not really important; they simply felt they had to hold on to the beliefs that had been passed onto them by their parents and forefathers. For that reason, their violent treatment of Muslims, who were growing in number each day, increased with every passing moment.

a) Mockery and Insults

At first, the idolaters did not take much notice of the Blessed Prophet –upon him blessings and peace-, as they never imagined that



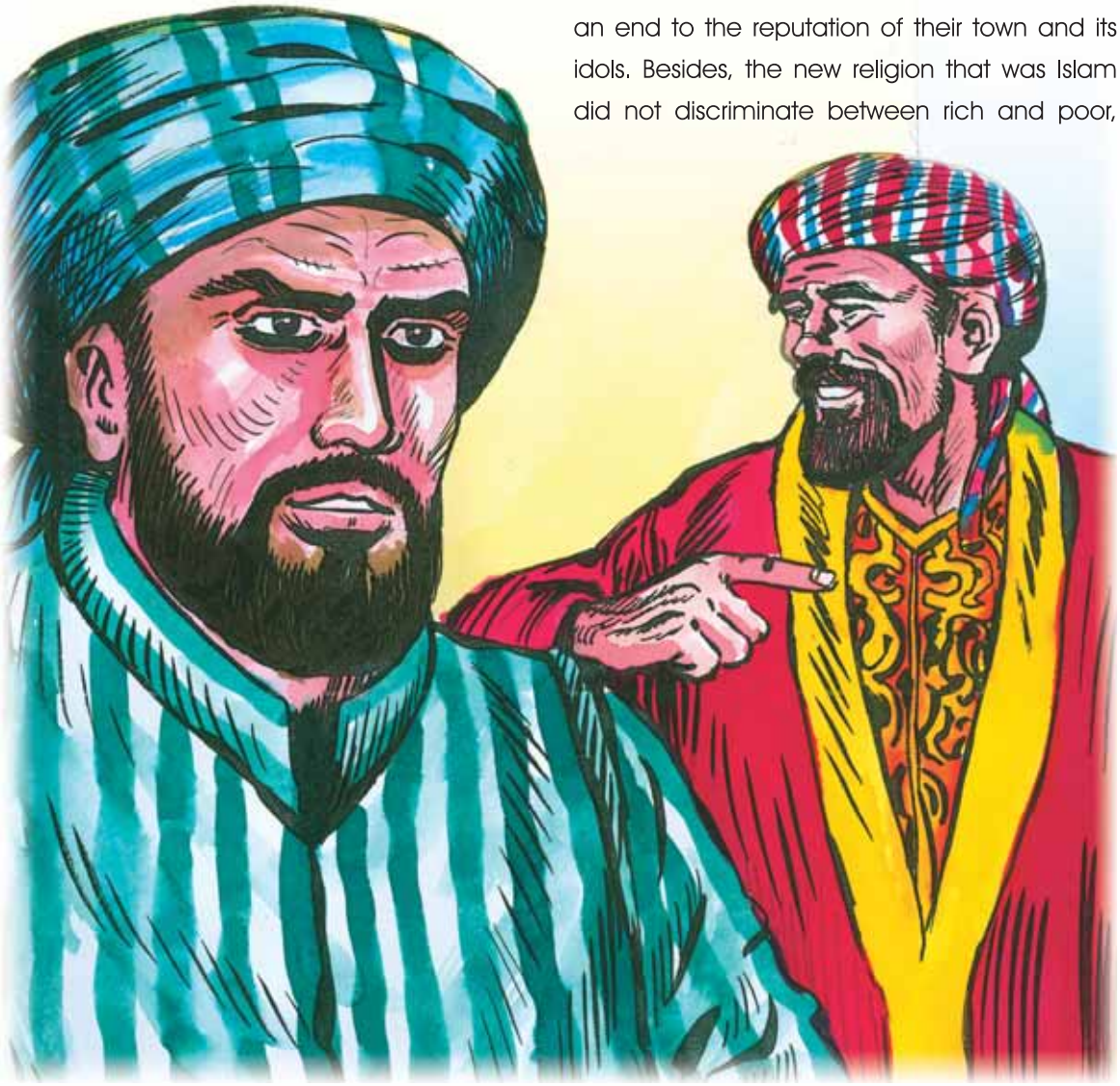
the Meccans would take him seriously. Hence, they would belittle him and the small number of Muslims by his side, and mock him publicly.

The Holy Quran recounts their attitude in the following:

"Surely they who are guilty used to laugh at those who believe. And when they passed by them, they winked at one another. And when they returned to their own followers they returned exulting. And when they saw them, they said: Most surely these are in error;" (al-Muttaffifin, 29-32)

But the idolaters' attitude began to change for the worse as the Muslims began to grow in number. Their mockery turned to insults. They saw those who believed in one God as threats to themselves. They feared that 'what if, one day, our own children and close ones embrace Islam as well?' This thought alone was enough to increase their anger.

In addition, Mecca was the most important religious capital of idolatry. This reputation brought with it a huge commercial revenue for the leaders of Quraysh. Thousands would come each year to visit Kaabah and Mecca; and for Quraysh, that meant an enormous means of wealth. They thought if the *tawhid* of Islam was to end up spreading across town, it would bring an end to the reputation of their town and its idols. Besides, the new religion that was Islam did not discriminate between rich and poor,



strong and weak, black and white, and upheld justice. It would become impossible for the idolaters to maintain their order of injustice, if the amount of Muslims were to continue to rise. The strong would no longer be able to seize the property of the weak. The rich would no longer be able to sell goods to incoming merchants at any excess price they liked. They would no longer be able to work their slaves in return for simply a loaf of bread.

The leaders of Quraysh therefore saw Islam as a threat to their own interests. And they used every means possible to prevent the spread of Islam and wipe it out.

b) The Period of Torture

The idolaters of Quraysh were now in panic mode. Their mockery and insults could do nothing to turn Muslims away from Islam. Headed by Abu Jahl and Abu Sufyan, they decided to talk to Abu Talib. He could perhaps get his nephew to listen to him. So they approached him and said:

"Your nephew insults our idols, puts down our religion and portrays us as fools and our ancestors as deviant. Either he quits this or you withdraw your protection of him…Then we will show him how it's done!" Abu Talib calmed them down and assured them he would have a word with his nephew. On seeing the Blessed Prophet –upon him blessings and peace- some time afterwards, he sat him down and said:

"Listen, son…It is not good to make enemies out of relatives. Continue what your religion commands you but do not insult their idols and call them deviant. Think of yourself…and think of me, too; and do not give me a burden heavier than I can carry!"

Yet, the Beloved Prophet –upon him blessings and peace- was only fulfilling the commands of Him, Who had sent him as messenger; and only for the salvation of humanity.

How could the Blessed Prophet have replied to his uncle? Why?

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He then went ahead and placed the Stone on a stretched out cloth; and had each clan leader hold it by the sides of the cloth and carry it to its place. There, the Blessed Prophet –upon him blessings and peace- personally picked up the Stone and restored it to its usual spot. Everyone was delighted that the dispute was resolved without blood. The fact that he had solved an intricate problem even the experienced clan leaders could not solve in a way that left everyone happy increased his reputation and integrity among Quraysh all the more. He was thirty-five years old at the time.

The Blessed Prophet –upon him blessings and peace- replied:

"Uncle…I promise by Allah that even if they were to place the sun in my right hand and the moon in my left, I would still not turn back from this call".

Abu Talib loved his nephew dearly. Seeing how resolute his nephew was brought out the

love in him, as he assured him that he would go on protecting him no matter what.

When they realized their efforts of persuading Abu Talib was fruitless, the idolaters this time came directly to the Blessed Prophet –upon him blessings and peace- and said:

"You are a noble man of honor, Muhammad. But you have done something no other man has done to us before…You have brought dispute in our ranks; we have become enemies of one another. If your intention is to become rich, we will make you the richest man of our tribe. If you want leadership, we will make you our leader. If it is women you're after, we will wed you to the most beautiful women of Quraysh. If you are bewitched, we will have you treated. We will do anything you ask of us…just quit this business and do not meddle with our order."

"I want nothing of what you just said", replied the Blessed Prophet –upon him blessings and peace-. "My Lord has sent me as a messenger and has given me the Book. I am all but conveying the revelations of my Lord to you. If you accept them, you will be happy both in this life and in the Hereafter. But if you reject, I will wait until the Almighty decides of the matter between us. Quit worshipping idols and worship Allah alone…"

All their efforts of turning the Blessed Prophet –upon him blessings and peace- away from his duty had proven vain. All the reputable negotiators they sent returned empty handed. So they began resorting to physical violence. But they only had power over the poor and defenseless Muslims. They began brutally and ruthlessly torturing them. Among these Muslims were Abu Fuhayqah, Habbab, Bilal, Suhayb, Ammar, Yasir and Sumayyah –Allah be well-pleased with them all-. Their methods of torture included dragging them with ropes tired to their feet over scorching hot pebbles and sand, lying them on fiery hot charcoal and tearing their limbs to pieces. Bilal, who was a slave, would be made by his master Umayyah ibn Khalaf over burning hot sand every day, for hours on end. He was tortured for no other reason than saying, 'Allah is One'. But even during the most painful stages of torture, Bilal would repeat the same words. Sumayyah was martyred whilst trying to protect her husband.

What kind of a solution would you have thought of to save yourself from this torture and oppression? Why?

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The idolaters were seeing red. They would not shy away from insulting and even physically assaulting the Beloved Prophet –upon him blessings and peace- when they saw the slightest opportunity. They would sprinkle thorns on the streets he would walk pass, throw dirt on him and smear dirt and blood on his door. On one occasion, as the Blessed Prophet –upon him blessings and peace- was offering prayer by Kaabah, Uqbah ibn Abu Muayt made a move to strangle him, only to be shrugged off by Abu Bakr. Again, while he was offering prayer by Kaabah, the same Uqbah, encouraged by Abu Jahl, grabbed the entrails of a freshly sacrificed camel and threw them on the Blessed Prophet –upon him blessings and peace- just as he had placed his head down to prostrate. In short, the Meccan attitude had become unbearable and Mecca unlivable.

THE ROAD TO RESCUE: MIGRATION TO ABYSSINIA

As a last resort, the Blessed Prophet –upon him blessings and peace- gave Muslim permission to migrate to Abyssinia.

The first envoy of immigrants consisting of 12 men and 4 women secretly left Mecca and met up on the shore of the Red Sea. From there, they sailed across to Abyssinia aboard a ship they rented. Among them were notable Companions like Othman, his wife Ruqayyah, Zubayr ibn Awwam, Abdurrahman ibn Awf and Abdullah ibn Masud –Allah be well-pleased with them all-.

Three months later, a rumor spread that the entire Meccans had embraced Islam. The unfounded rumor reached all the way to Abyssinia. Acting on what they heard, the first batch of migrants returned to Mecca. Though once they reached Mecca, they were left in utter disappointment: the idolaters had increased their torture and oppression.

This time, 90 Companions, made up of 77 men and 13 women, set out to Abyssinia once again. Heading the envoy during this second migration was Jafar Tayyar, the elder brother of Ali –Allah be well-pleased with them-.

For the idolaters, it still was not enough that the Muslims had left Mecca; for this time, they began fearing that Islam might spread across other countries despite all their efforts of preventing it. So with precious gifts, they sent Amr ibn As and Abdullah ibn Abi Rabia as delegates to Ashama, the Negus of Abyssinia, to negotiate the return of the Muslims.

A wise and compassionate man, in order to get to the bottom of the matter, the Negus

faced the Qurayshi delegates with the Muslims in his presence.

"Quraysh has sent an envoy to take you back to Mecca", he said.

"Ask them, your majesty. Are we slaves, that they would want to take us back to Mecca?" Jafar requested.

The Negus eyed Amr ibn As for a response.

"No, they are all free", Amr responded.

The debate continued as follows:

"Ask them! Are we indebted to them that they want us returned?"

"No, they don't owe anything to anyone."

"Ask them. Are we murderers that they call us for trial?"

"No, that is not the case!"

"Then for what do they want us returned?"

Amr explained:

"…For they have abandoned the religion of their ancestors! They insult our idols! They have corrupted the faith of our youth! They have split our community! Mecca now stands divided into two!"

The Negus then interrupted to pose Jafar –Allah be well-pleased with him- a question:

"Since you accept neither the religion of your ancestors nor mine, what kind of a religion is that which you accept?"

Jafar Tayyar –Allah be well-pleased with him- began to speak:

"Your majesty! We were an ignorant bunch. We used to worship idols made of wood thinking they are gods. We used to eat carrion and bury our daughters alive. We were gamblers, indulgers in usury. We fornicated and saw no harm in seeing a woman engage in relations with numerous men. Neither did we know anything of the rights of our relatives, nor did we recognize the rights of neighbors. The strong used to oppress the weak, while the rich lived off the poor. We knew nothing of justice!

Then Allah the Almighty showed mercy on us and willed our recovery, and sent a Prophet from among us, from a noble line and a virtuous tribe. We had already known him as the Trusted. He called us to the oneness of Allah. He taught us how to worship Him. He saved us from the idols of our ancestors. He warded off all evil from us. He banned the shedding of blood, usury, lying and the misuse of orphans' properties. He constantly taught us what is good. He advised us righteousness, to keep our word, to treat neighbors and relatives with kindness and to protect the honor of women and the lives of our daughters. He saved us from savagery and taught us how to be humane. So we believed him and now we walk on his path. For that very reason we have earned the hostility of the Quraysh. We were tortured. When the suffering became unbearable, and since we did not want to leave our religion either, we asked

permission of our Prophet -upon him blessings and peace-, and favoring you over other kings we came to your land. We assumed we would not be oppressed here and so we took shelter in your protection."

And in relation to Isa and Maryam –upon them be peace-, Jafar recited the following from the Quran:

"And she came to her people with him, carrying him (with her). They said: O Maryam! surely you have done a strange thing. O sister of Haroun! your father was not a bad man, nor, was your mother an unchaste woman. But she pointed to him. They said: How should we speak to one who was a child in the cradle? He said: Surely I am a servant of Allah; He has given me the Book and made me a prophet; And He has made me blessed wherever I may be, and He has enjoined on me prayer and poor-rate so long as I live. And dutiful to my mother, and He has not made me insolent, unblessed. And peace on me on the day I was born, and on the day I die, and on the day I am raised to life. Such is Isa, son of Maryam; (this is) the saying of truth about which they dispute." (Maryam, 27-34)

What do you think of Jafar's speech? How will the Negus decide?

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"I swear in the name of God, that these words are from the same source of what has been revealed to Moses and Jesus Christ" the Negus said. Then turning to the Meccan envoy he stated:

"I will never return these migrants to you!"

The next day, the Meccans were again at the court of the Negus.

"Your majesty! They speak harshly of Jesus Christ. Call them if you like and hear it with your own ears!"

The Negus sent for the Muslims and asked them what they thought of Jesus Christ.

Jafar –Allah be well-pleased with him- said:

"About Jesus Christ, we only say what the Almighty has revealed in the Quran." He then recited the verse, "Isa son of Maryam is only a messenger of Allah and His Word which He communicated to Maryam and a spirit from Him…" (an-Nisa, 171)

Grabbing a twig off the ground, the Negus then remarked:

"I swear in the name of God, that the difference between what you say and the truth of Jesus Christ is no greater than this twig! I bear witness that that man is a true prophet. Jesus had spoken of his coming!"

He then turned to the Meccan envoy and stated, "I do not the need presents from people who reject their prophet!" After that day, Muslims continued living in peace in Abyssinia. Some of them migrated to Medina right after the Hegira. Another group remained until the Peace of Hudaybiyah. The final sixteen headed by Jafar –Allah be well-pleased with him- arrived in Medina during the fall of Khaybar.

HAMZA AND OMAR-ALLAH BE WELL-PLEASED WİTH THEM- ACCEPT ISLAM

Hamza was one of the uncles of the Blessed Prophet –upon him blessings and peace- and, at the same time, his foster brother through Suwaybah. The Blessed Prophet was sitting near the Safa Hill when one day Abu Jahl came and hurled insults at him. The Prophet –upon him blessings and peace- did not respond. Meanwhile that day, Hamza was returning from one of his hunting expeditions. A female slave informed him of what had just happened. Hamza was not a Muslim at the time; but he loved his nephew more than anyone else and he could not bear the thought of him being insulted. So without heading home, he went straight to Kaabah, where the leaders of Quraysh were gathered. "Was it you who threw insults at my nephew?" he exclaimed the moment he came eye to eye with Abu Jahl and struck his head with his bow. Though blood was gushing from his head, Abu Jahl did not say a word as he feared that Hamza would react by becoming Muslim. Having now taken revenge from Abu Jahl, Hamza went straight to the Blessed Prophet –upon him blessings and peace- to console him. But the Prophet –upon him blessings and peace- said that true consolation would only come if he were to accept Islam. Hamza then became Muslim on the spot.

As he was a man of exceptional strength and courage, Hamza's embracing of Islam gave Muslims joy, while it sent the idolaters to despair. To discuss the matter, the leaders of Quraysh gathered. Abu Jahl said:

"There is no other way than to kill Muhammad! Let's award the person willing to do it with tens of camels and loads of gold!"

Omar stood and said, "Only Omar can see to this task!" Amid ovations, Omar rushed outside; and donning his weaponry, began pacing through the streets. On the way, he was intercepted by Nuaym.

"Where are you going, Omar?" he asked.

"To kill Muhammad…who has sowed discord among Arabs!" he replied angrily.

"It is a lose-lose situation, Omar" replied Nuaym. "Muslims blanket him; they will not let you get anywhere near him. Say you did somehow manage to kill him, the Hashim clan will not let you live!"

Omar became furious. "Have you become one of them, too?" he snapped.

"Look at your own family first" responded Nuaym. "Your sister Fatimah and your brother-in-law Said have already become Muslim!"

Omar saw no chance in that. But to clear his doubts, he changed his direction and arrived at his sister's house a short time later. In the meantime, they were reciting some Quran. Omar heard it all too clearly. He started banging on the door, almost breaking it. Suddenly seeing Omar through the window, the people who were inside at the time began to panic. They knew how fierce Omar was against Islam. So they quickly hid the scrolls of the Quran and opened the door.

"What was it that you were reading?" Omar shouted.

"Nothing", replied his brother-in-law.

"So it is true what I hear", remarked Omar before plunging into Said. Though his sister tried to interfere, she soon fell to the ground with the force of a heavy slap that left her face in blood. It was then that she spoke out.

"Fear Allah", she exclaimed. 'My husband and I have become Muslims. We are proud of that and we do not fear you. We will not turn back from our religion even if you were to kill us!"

Omar was suddenly shaken by the courageous words of Fatimah and the sight of her bloodied face. His heart began to soften, as he sat down, as if to show regret over what he had just done.

What do you think of Jafar's speech? How will the Negus decide?

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"Bring me what you were just reading', he then said with a soft tone. Fatimah handed her the page of the Quran. It was the first verses of the chapters Taha and al-Hadid. With great interest, Omar began to read:

"Whatever is in the heavens and the earth declares the glory of Allah, and He is the Mighty, the Wise. His is the kingdom of the heavens and the earth; He gives life and causes death; and He has power over all things. He is the First and the Last and the Ascendant (over all) and the Knower of hidden things, and He is Cognizant of all things." (al-Hadid, 1-3)

Omar began to ponder on reading these words. Their deep meaning and beauty had a great impact on his heart. "Everything in the heavens and the earth belong to Allah…our idols have nothing", he thought. Moments later, he said:

"Take me to the Messenger of Allah –upon him blessings and peace-."

The Blessed Prophet –upon him blessings and peace- was at Arqam's house at the time. Seeing Omar armed and walking towards the house, Muslims prepared themselves to take guard. Hamza –Allah be well-pleased with him- remarked, "There is no need to panic…If he is after goodness, so be it. But if he is come for evil, he will soon see!"

Two Companions grabbed Omar by his arms and brought him to the Blessed Prophet –upon him blessings and peace-. Omar then knelt before the Prophet –upon him blessings and peace- and became Muslim. The Companions who were present rejoiced, "Allah-u Akbar".

"How many are we?' asked Omar.

"Including you, forty", they replied.

"What are we waiting for then? Let's head out to Kaabah!"

How could Omar's courageous attitude have affected the Muslims?

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So the Muslims headed towards Kaabah altogether. In the meantime, the idolaters of Quraysh were anxiously waiting for some news. Seeing the Muslims coming their way towards Kaabah, they remarked:

"It seems Omar has taken them all prisoner!" Yet, on seeing them Omar stated:

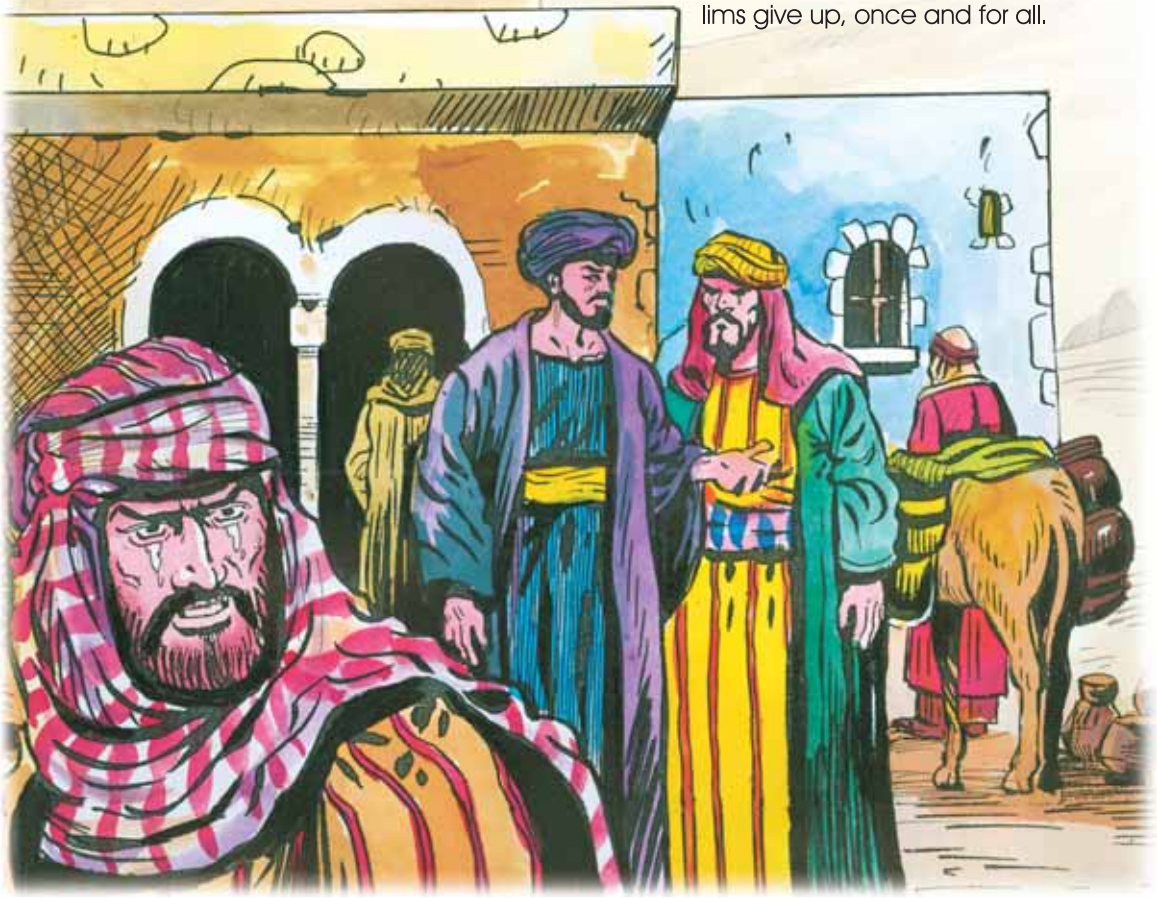
"Mark my words. Omar, the son of Khattab, is now a Muslim!" The Qurayshis were baffled. Hastily, each of them walked off. For the first time, Muslims prayed in congregation at Kaabah.

After Hamza and Omar accepted Islam, the religion began to spread quicker. When in the previous six years the number of Muslims had only reached 40, they were to pass 300 in a year's time.

THE RUTHLESS BOYCOTT

The Meccan idolaters were doing everything they could to extinguish the light of Islam. They would try every kind of mockery, insult and torture thinkable. But their efforts only served to increase the number of Muslims by each passing day.

It was the seventh year of prophethood. The Meccan leaders, the enemies of Islam, were helpless. All the measures they had taken up until then had proven useless. Headed by Abu Jahl, forty men convened, once again. They now had to do something that would make the Muslims give up, once and for all.



The tyrants finally decided to wage a boycott which they hoped would bring the Muslims down to their knees to the point they would surrender the Blessed Prophet –upon him blessings and peace- to them. They made a pact that:

a. They would not trade with Muslims in any way whatsoever,

b. They would not marry them,

c. They would not interact with them even if it be their relatives and kindred,

d. They would not help them and sever all social and humanitarian ties.

They then had the pact written, sealed and hung upon the wall of Kaabah, wrapped in a piece of cloth. They immediately and uncompromisingly began the boycott. While one uncle of the Prophet –upon him blessings and peace-, Abu Lahab, sided with the idolaters, the other Abu Talib remained steadfast by the side of the Muslims; even though he was not a Muslim himself.

a) Moving Scenes

Muslims suffered enormously throughout the three years in which they were subjected to the boycott. Because they could not buy or even find anything to eat, they would at times even eat leaves. Many children died from starvation. Day and night, the heartless Abu Jahl would patrol the Muslim neighbourhood, and prevent anyone from secretly carrying food inside. Except for courageous figures like Hamza and Omar, nobody could go to the market to buy stuff. Saad ibn Abi Waqqas had once soaked a piece of leather he found; and after roasting it, he ate it.

What else could the Muslims have suffered from during the boycott?

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b) Divine Aid and the End of the Boycott

The plight of Muslims became so terrible that some of the more considerate idolaters began to feel uneasy. A few right-minded men like Hisham ibn Amr, Zuhayr ibn Umayyah and Mutim ibn Adiyy vowed to put an end to the boycott. With that in mind, they went to Kaabah, where Zuhayr stood and said to the waiting crowd:

"What we are doing, Quraysh, is inhumane. It is not right to let the Hashim Clan starve when we make the most of all the blessings of earth. We must put an end to this now! And I swear that I will not move until this pact of cruelty is torn to pieces!" Although Abu Jahl did his best to hush Zuhayr, he failed as he already had the crowd in his back.

In fact, the Blessed Prophet –upon him blessings and peace- had already informed people of the news that the pact had been consumed by maggots. The news spread like lightning in Mecca. When the idolaters did in fact make a move to grab the leaf on which the pact had been written, they saw that it had all but been consumed by maggots. Muslims were hence delivered from this terrible boycott.

Could the boycott have had an indirect benefit for Muslims? How so?

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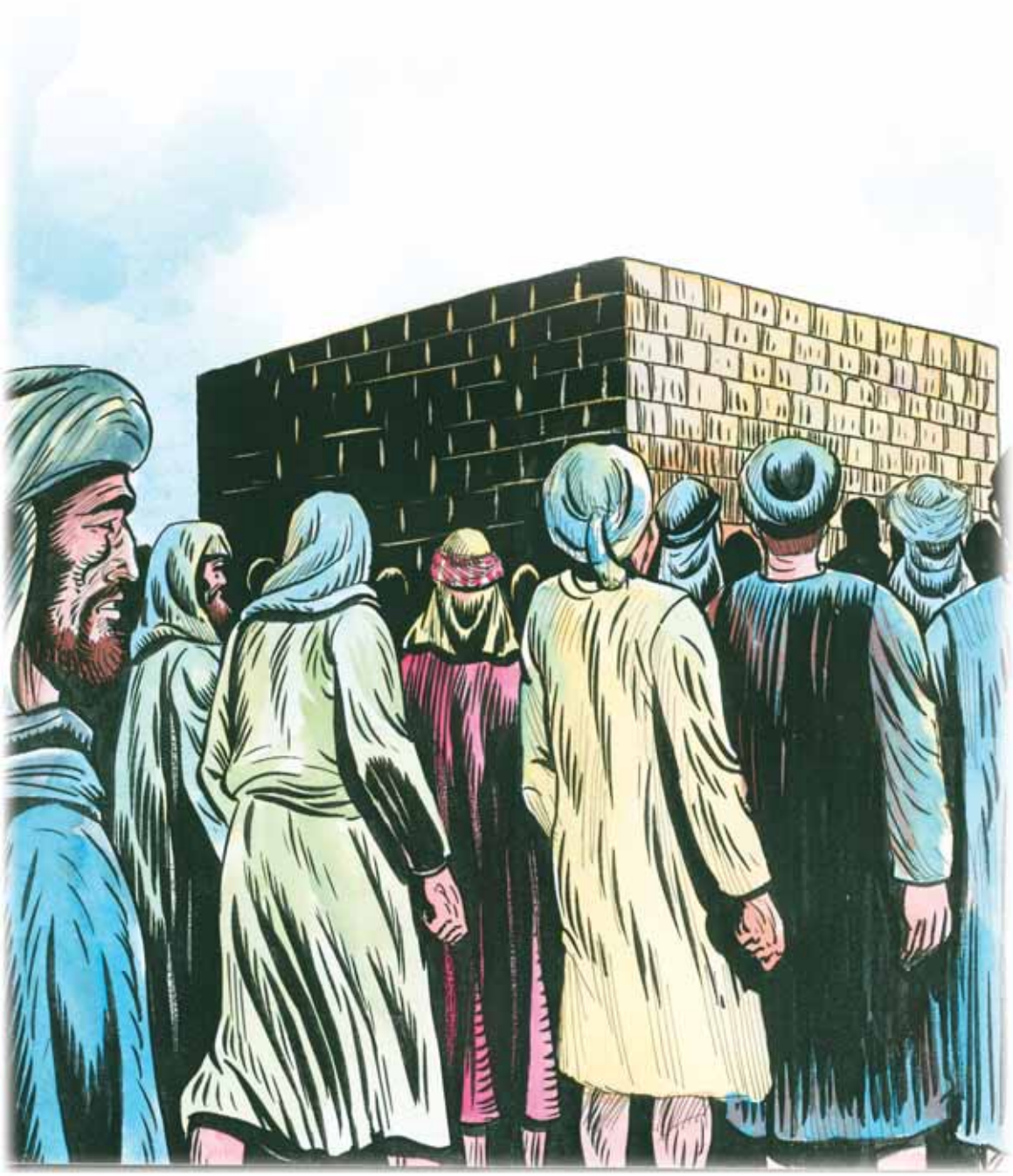
The pain and the suffering endured during the three years of boycott served to strengthen Muslim faith and solidarity. And the idolaters, as always, earned nothing but defeat.



QUESTIONS

How much have I learned?

1. How was the belief of Arabs before Islam?

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2. What kind of lessons can we take from the Elephant Incident, which took place 52 days before the birth of the Bleoved Prophet –upon him blessings and peace-?

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3. What were the reasons of warfare waged between Arab tribes prior to Islam?

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4. In which lunar month and day was the Blessed Prophet –upon him blessings and peace- born?

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5. Which nickname had the Meccans given the Blessed Prophet –upon him blessings and peace-? What did it mean?

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6. Who did the Beloved Prophet –upon him blessings and peace- first tell the news of his prophet-hood? Why?

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7. What lessons can we draw from the Arbitration of Kaabah?

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8. What were the reasons that the Blessed Prophet –upon him blessings and peace- called people to Islam in secret at the beginning?

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9. Where and when did Jibril –upon him peace- bring the first revelation to the Beloved Prophet –upon him blessings and peace-?

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10. What was the event that led to Hamza –Allah be well-pleased with him- embracing Islam?

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11. What influence did Omar's –Allah be well-pleased with him- acceptance of Islam have on the spread of the religion?

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12. What did the idolaters resort to in trying to stop the Blessed Prophet –upon him blessings and peace- from calling people to Islam?

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13. What did the Blessed Prophet –upon him blessings and peace- look like?

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14. What would have happened had the Muslims not resisted against the boycott?

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15. What was the event that led to the lifting of the boycott?

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What is the Correct Answer?

1) Which of the religious groups below did not exist in Arabia before Islam?

A) Idolaters B) Jews
C) Christians D) Hindus

2) Which clan did Abdullah, the father of the Blessed Prophet, belong to?

A) Buwayh B) Sharaf
C) Hashim D) Zuhrah

3) Who was the Prophet's –upon him blessings and peace- foster-sister?

A) Sumayyah B) Shayma
C) Aisha D) Fatimah

4) Which of the Prophet's children below passed away after him?

A) Fatima B) Ruqayyah
C) Qasim D) Umm Kulthum

5) Who below was not one of the Companions subjected to torture in the Meccan Period?

A) Habbab B) Bilal
C) Yasir and Family D) Abu Hurayrah

6) Which Companion was the first to become Muslim after Khadijah and was also the closest friend of the Blessed Prophet –upon him blessings and peace-?

A) Omar B) Abu Bakr
C) Othman D) Ali

7) How many years did calling to Islam in secret last?

A) 2 B) 4
C) 3 D) 5

8) Who was the Prophet's –upon him blessings and peace- uncle and foster-brother?

A) Hamza B) Abu Talib
C) Zubayr D) Abu Lahab

9) Which idolater deservedly got struck across the head by Hamza, after having insulted the Blessed Prophet –upon him blessings and peace-?

A) Abu Sufyan B) Abu Jahl
C) Abu Talib D) Abu Muayt

10) Which month below is not one of the haram months?

A) Dhilqadah B) Dhilhijjah
C) Muharram D) Ramadan

11) Where was the destination of the first migration?

A) Taif B) Medina
C) Abyssinia D) Syria

12) The idolaters took certain measures once they decided to go ahead with the boycott. Which measure below was not one of them?

A) There was to be no trade with Muslims.

B) There was to be no marriage with any Muslim.

C) Prophet Muhammad was to be set upon and murdered by one person from each clan.

D) There was to be no interaction with Muslims, even if they be friends or relatives.

13) Which factor below had no impact on Mecca being an important town prior to Islam?

A) Its centrality in trade.

B) It being the capital of idol worshipping.

C) It attracting various visitors from across Arabia.

D) It being the place where the Blessed Prophet –upon him blessings and peace- was given the duty of prophethood.

14) Which below cannot be the reason as to why Meccans used to hire foster-mothers for their newborns?

A) So that they could grow healthier.

B) So that they could learn to speak Arabic in its most eloquent form.

C) Because it was difficult to look after their own children.

D) Because the climate of Mecca was unsuitable for children.

15) Which below was the reason Abu Talib was loved and respected by his peers?

A) He was the Prophet's uncle.

B) He was rich.

C) He was intelligent, generous and noble.

D) He was the governor of Mecca.

16) Which below was not one of the results of the Blessed Prophet's –upon him blessings and peace- arbitration in Mecca?

A) The dispute was resolved without blood.

B) The dispute was resolved in a way that made all the parties involved happy.

C) The Meccans ended up believing in the truth of the Prophet's prophethood.

D) The Prophet's reputation and dependability increased in the sight of Meccans.

17) Khadijah consoled the Messenger of Allah –upon him blessings and peace- with the words, "I promise by Allah that He will never embarrass you; for you look after your relatives, help those who cannot help themselves and feed the poor. You protect the rights of orphans and treat your guests…" Which below cannot be understood from this paragraph?

A) Khadijah believes in the Blessed Prophet.

B) Allah, glory unto Him, always helps the Blessed Prophet.

C) The Blessed Prophet never used to show favoritism to anyone, rich or poor.

D) The Blessed Prophet loved the orphans and the stray.

18) What below was the reason behind Meccan cruelty towards Muslims?

A) Muslims were forcing them to accept Islam.

B) Muslims were trying to change the beliefs their ancestors had passed on to them.

C) Muslims were implementing a boycott against them.

D) Muslims were considering themselves superior to them.

19) The idolaters of Mecca did everything they could to stop Islam. Which of the below cannot be cited among the measures the idolaters took?

A) Mocking, insulting and torturing Muslims.

B) Attempts to talk the Blessed Prophet –upon him blessings and peace- out of the mission.

C) Implementing a boycott against Muslims.

D) Attempting to assassinate Omar.

20) Which of the below is not an expression used in the history of Islam to underline the importance of Cave Hira?

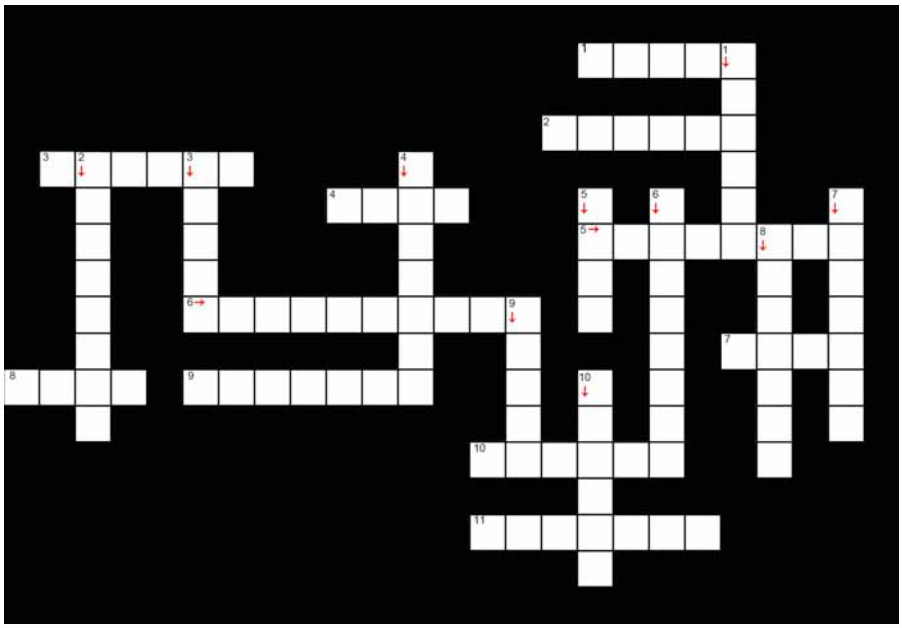
A) The place where the Almighty prepared His Messenger for the duty of prophethood.

B) The place where the Blessed Prophet used to go to contemplate, by himself, for days.

C) The sacred place where the first revelation came.

D) The cave the Blessed Prophet would visit, time and again, whilst shepherding.

Find the Names



From Left to Right:

1. The capital of idolatry before Islam.
2. The Prophet's –upon him blessings and peacemother.
3. The chapter of the Quran revealed in relation to Abu Lahab.
4. The first word Jibril said to the Prophet –upon him blessings and peace-.
5. The Prophet's –upon him blessings and peaceidolatrous uncle.
6. The first center of Muslim education and training.
7. The cave where the first revelation came.
8. The fortieth Muslim.
9. The Christian priest of the town of Busrah.
10. The first building constructed on Earth for worshipping to Allah, glory unto Him.
11. The last child of the Prophet –upon him blessings and peace- to pass away.

From Top to Bottom

1. The Negus of Abyssinia who supported the migrating Muslims.
2. The Prophet's –upon him blessings and peacefather.
3. One of the Prophet's –upon him blessings and peace- names as mentioned in the Quran.
4. Khadijah's nickname before she became Muslim.
5. The Prophet's –upon him blessings and peaceadopted son.
6. The woman martyred while defending her husband.
7. The Prophet's –upon him blessings and peaceclosest friend.
8. The Prophet's –upon him blessings and peacefoster mother.
9. An important town in the region of Hejaz.
10. The archangel who brought the Divine revelation to the Prophet –upon him blessings and peace-.

The Manners that Make One a Good Muslim

ADAB

- *Manners and Etiquette*
- *Personal Hygiene*
- *Manners in the Toilet*
- *Manners in the Bathroom*

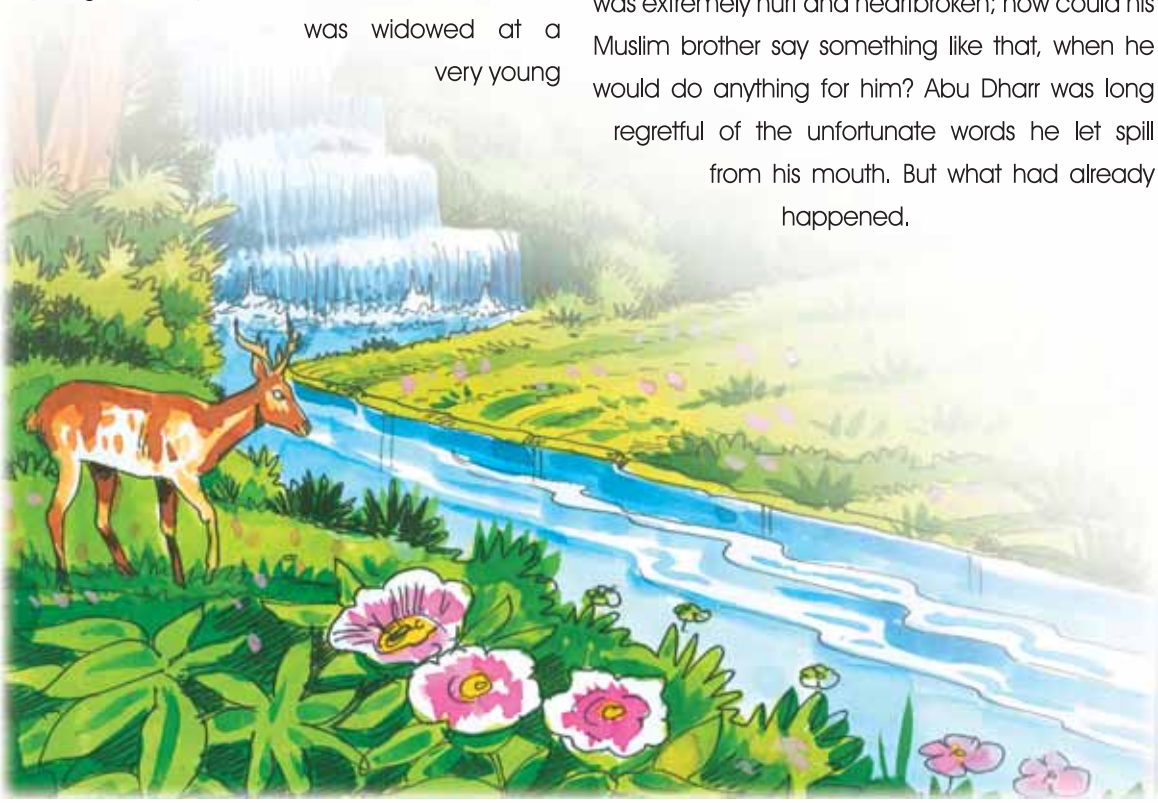
HE COULD NOT LOOK AT HIM IN THE FACE

The Blessed Prophet –upon him blessings and peace- was a calm, understanding and sociable child. Even grownups would admire the way he would himself speak like a grownup and his polite manners. He had never argued with or broken anyone's heart even as a child. There had never been a single moment where he abandoned his polite manners.

He was an orphan; and throughout his life, he showed utmost care to orphans, the broken-winged birds of the community. He took care of their needs and saw them as one of his own. He was left on his own at a very early age; and throughout his life, he looked after the lonely, never eating until they were fed and never wearing anything until they were clothed. His dear mother was widowed at a very young age; and since he knew very well the hardships widows undergo, he protected them everywhere he went and became their guardian angel.

The Beloved Prophet –upon him blessings and peace- had an extremely sensitive heart. He would recognize the brokenhearted from their faces and identify the hurt and the outcast from their looks. Among his Companions were a variety of people: rich and poor, black and white, free and slave, wise and naive…

One day Abu Dharr al-Ghifari, a white man, let his anger get the better of him and called Bilal al-Habashi, the beloved Companion and the *muadhdhin* of the Blessed Prophet –upon him blessings and peace- 'the son of a black lady'. Bilal was extremely hurt and heartbroken; how could his Muslim brother say something like that, when he would do anything for him? Abu Dharr was long regretful of the unfortunate words he let spill from his mouth. But what had already happened.



Before long, the Blessed Prophet –upon him blessings and peace- heard about the incident. He immediately called Abu Dharr next to him.

"Did you, Abu Dharr, really say these words to your brother Bilal?"

Abu Dharr kept silent. He could not even lift his head and look at the Blessed Prophet –upon him blessings and peace- in the face. He simply could not say a word. With a serious expression, the Prophet –upon him blessings and peace- said:

"You truly carry traces of ignorance!"

Abu Dharr was guttered. As he left the presence of the Prophet –upon him blessings and peace-, he could only think of apologizing to Bilal and mending his broken heart. So he went to his house and knocked on the door. The moment Bilal appeared before the door, he saw that the white Abu Dharr, who had insulted him for being black, had placed his face on the threshold.

"Get up, Abu Dharr", he said. "People step on that. Do not place your clean face on it". Abu Dharr replied in tears:

"I will not lift my face, Bilal, until you step on my face…until you put me down like I did to you!"

"Could a Muslim belittle his brother, Abu Dharr?" said Bilal. "Come on now, get up. I have long forgiven you!'

With the comfort of being forgiven for something he accidentally said, Abu Dharr lifted his head and hugged his brother Bilal. (Based on Bukhari, Nafaqat, 1; Muslim, Zuhd, 41-42 and Bukhari, Iman, 22, Itq 15; Muslim, Ayman 40)

The Blessed Prophet –upon him blessings and peace-, who is the most perfect example for us, never said a foul or rude word in his entire life.

Our beloved Prophet says:

"On the Day of Judgment, there will never be anything to weigh heavier on the scales of a believer than good morals. Allah the Almighty hates those who act in an ugly manner and say rude and foul words."

(Tirmidhi, Birr, 62)

Allah the Exalted says:

"Thus it is due to mercy from Allah that you deal with them gently, and had you been rough, hard hearted, they would certainly have dispersed from around you"

(Al-i Imran, 159)

1. WHAT ARE MANNERS?

Allah, glory unto Him, created us in the best appearance, with a pure heart. He has placed in us an advanced intellect and a delicate conscience. He placed us in the trust of our parents so that they can educate us to be good and ethical human beings. Allah, glory unto him, has furthermore sent prophets and books and through them invites us to His Paradise. He wants us to return to Paradise, to the purest and most exceptional form of life, in a way that is worthy of that purity. He expects us to be delicate and sensitive Muslims with good manners.

After true faith, deeds of worship offered purely for the sake of the Almighty and observing what is permissible and impermissible, there come the principles of morality commanded by the Lord. There are further points of sensitivity and elegance within these general moral principles which we call manners. Displaying these sensitivities to other members of society is necessary for social coexistence.

Manners are exceptionally important in the Islamic civilization; for the principles of 'loving the created for the sake of the Creator (to love each being created by Allah, glory unto Him, for the reason that each is a unique work of His art) and 'looking onto creation with the gaze of the Lord' (to value each created being as they are valued by the Lord Himself) have been strongly impressed onto our hearts and minds.

Mawlana Rumi describes just how important manners are for us:

"Manners are what separate human beings from animals. Open your eyes and see: All of the Lord's words and each verse of the Quran provide explain nothing but manners. The greatest wealth man can have are knowledge and manners. Manners never grow old, decay or perish!"

A poet says:

Manners…a God-given crown,
Wear it lest in troubles you drown

Some further words of wisdom regarding manners are:

"Let your words be sweet and elegant. A rude man is like a wild dog that gets stoned by everyone.

"A man without manners is nothing short of a donkey…even if he be knowledgeable."

Who would not Want to Wear the Crown of Manners and Be Loved by All?

There are many forms of sensitive and wonderful behavior we have learnt from our parents, grandparents and environment since the day we were born. For example, not to put our feet up and lie down next to our fathers, not to speak until our elders have completed their sentences, not to enter our parents' room without permission, to be understanding and lenient towards our younger siblings, and so forth. These are called etiquette.

2. PERSONAL HYGIENE

Allah, glory unto Him, is clean and loves those who are clean.

Our Lord has created His servants as clean as they can ever be. When a baby is born, everyone desires to take the baby in their arms, kiss and smell him. Man is born into the world with purity and innocence; for he has been created pure, both physically and spiritually. And as human beings, we must therefore protect that state of spiritual and physical purity. The Beloved Prophet –upon him blessings and peace- informs us of this need when he says:

"Surely Allah is good and beautiful; and He loves that which is good and beautiful. He is clean and loves cleanliness." (Tirmidhi, Adab, 41) and "Cleanliness is one half of faith." (Muslim, Taharah, 1).

The Blessed Prophet –upon him blessings and peace- was one day speaking to his Companions when a man with messy hair and untidy clothes entered the scene. His appearance struck the attention of everyone there. Suddenly, all eyes were fixed on him. The Messenger of Allah –upon him blessings and peace- certainly could not approve of a Muslim looking like that. His expression became a little serious. He did not like what he saw.

It was clear that the man was seeking attention to join the talk. Without making it obvious to the others, the Blessed Prophet –upon him blessings and peace- made a polite gesture to the man, signaling him to fix up his hair and clothes. The man took note and immediately left. Before too long, he arrived once again, this time with his hair combed and clothes tidied. Seeing the man neatened, the Blessed Prophet –upon him blessings and peace- smiled. He invited him and changed the subject of his talk to personal hygiene and tidiness. To indicate to the man that how he looked now was much better than how he previously looked, the Beloved Messenger –upon him blessings and peace- said:

"Is it not better for one to be clean, neat and nicely appearing than to be untidy with devilishly unkempt hair?" (Muwattaa, Shaar, 7)

Our beloved Prophet said:

"Surely Allah is good and beautiful; and He loves that which is good and beautiful. He is clean and loves cleanliness." (Tirmidhi, Adab, 41)

"Cleanliness is one half of faith." (Muslim, Taharah, 1)

How do we Maintain Our Personal Hygiene?

- On waking up in the morning, our first cleansing activity should be the ablution of the first ritual prayer of the day. Ablution is cleansing not only physically but also spiritually.
- We must wash and comb our hair several times a week. Our hair should always smell nice. It is a welcome habit for each person to carry a comb and mirror with him.
- During ablution, we must thoroughly clean the insides of our ears. Our ears must not look dirty.
- We must thoroughly clean our noses, especially during ablution. There should not remain any dirt, either dry or moist.
- We must brush our teeth using miswaq, a toothbrush and toothpaste and even dental floss if need be. Miswaq helps clean our teeth and makes them appear shiny. It is also good for the gums. Before Islam, people had not even the slightest awareness of dental hygiene and health. Islam thus revolutionized dental care. The Beloved Prophet –upon him blessings and peace- used to place great emphasis on dental hygiene. He would say to his Companions: "I know that you find it difficult to regularly clean your teeth. Yet dental hygiene is so important for your health that had I not known that it would not be too troublesome for you, I would certainly have commanded you to brush your teeth with miswaq at the time of each ritual prayer." (Source: Bukhari, Juma, 8; Tirmidhi, Taharah, 18) "For I clean my teeth before each ritual prayer and every time I wake up." (Source: Muslim, Musafirin, 139)

Would you also like to brush and clean your teeth before each ritual prayer like the Beloved Prophet –upon him blessings and peace-?

- Males should keep their hair cut and neat and trim their beards and moustaches, if they have any. The Beloved Prophet –upon him blessings and peace- used to tidy his hair and beard by staring into a water-filled container as mirror.
- When we come home in the evening, we must thoroughly wash our hands until our fingers and nails are properly cleaned.
- Those who work in labor jobs, if needed, should bathe or take a shower when they arrive home in the evening.
- Pubic and underarm hair should be shaved at least once every forty days. Otherwise, the smell would make others uncomfortable.
- The Beloved Prophet –upon him blessings and peace- once said to Ali –Allah be well-pleased with him-, "Cut your nails, Ali; for the harmful creatures (micro organisms) gather under long nails."

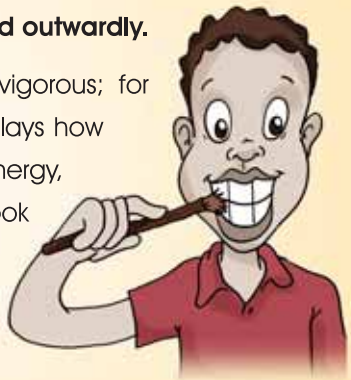
Our beloved Prophet says:

"I know that you find it difficult to regularly clean your teeth. Yet dental hygiene is so important for your health that had I not known that it would not be too troublesome for you, I would certainly have commanded you to brush your teeth with miswaq at the time of each ritual prayer."

(Bukhari, Juma, 8; Tirmidhi, Taharah, 18)

A Muslim is one who shines both inwardly and outwardly.

A Muslim ought to be healthy, strong and vigorous; for her must be an exemplary human being. He displays how beautiful a religion Islam is through his health, energy, cleanliness and inner peace. All others should look upon him with envy and admiration and get an idea as to what kind of a human being the Blessed Prophet –upon him blessings and peace- was.



AS IF ABOUT TO ENTER DIVINE PRESENCE

The Battle of Gallipoli marks a legendary feat of heroism shown by the Turks against their enemies who were bent on attacking their religion, homeland and sacred values.

Colonel Cevdet Pasha, who was present on the battlefield, recounts:

"My brave men fought courageously today, from dawn until sunset. Towards sunset, I took a walk between their ranks to inspect how they were doing. From a distance, I could see certain white marks which I could not make out at the time. The night had slowly begun to cave in; therefore, I could not properly recognize the things I was seeing. I called my watchman.

'What are those white marks I see from a distance, son?' I asked him.

'I will go and find out right away, sir', he said.

It was not long before he returned and began to explain. But as he spoke, his voice sounded husky, as if he was trying to knock back his tears.

'Sir, our unit stationed over there', he said, 'has been in the thick of some fierce combat in the past few days. Most of them have already been martyred. The few who have managed to survive just know that it is only a matter of time before they are martyred themselves. They said to me, 'Allah-willing, when we are martyred tomorrow, we do not wish to enter the presence of our Lord and His Messenger with dirty clothes. We have hence washed our clothes and hung them up to dry'

'They will take their clothes off the lines as soon as they are dried, sir…'

Before he could even finish his last sentence, the watchman finally let go of all the tears he had been struggling to hold back up until then. Tears began rolling down his check like waterfall…"

It was this pure spirit that granted Muslims victory at Gallipoli.

3. MANNERS IN THE TOILET

Relief in the toilet is a comfort and reason for thanking the Lord.

The Almighty, who created His servants, has provided them with ease and comfort for them to see to all their needs. The following story alone is enough to show us how thankful we should be over the comfort of being able to find relief in the toilet.

The story goes that a sultan asks one of his viziers, renowned for his wisdom and intellect, "What is one thing on earth that gives man the greatest comfort?'

'Relief in the toilet', answers the vizier. Unhappy with the answer, the sultan sends the vizier away. Some time later, the sultan becomes constipated. So intense is his constipation that he cannot manage to even urinate. With his stomach swollen like a drum and almost about to explode, he finds himself in unbearable pain. He takes all the medication given by the doctor but to no avail. Then suddenly, he remembers the words of his vizier. 'How right was he', he says to himself and calls the vizier once again.

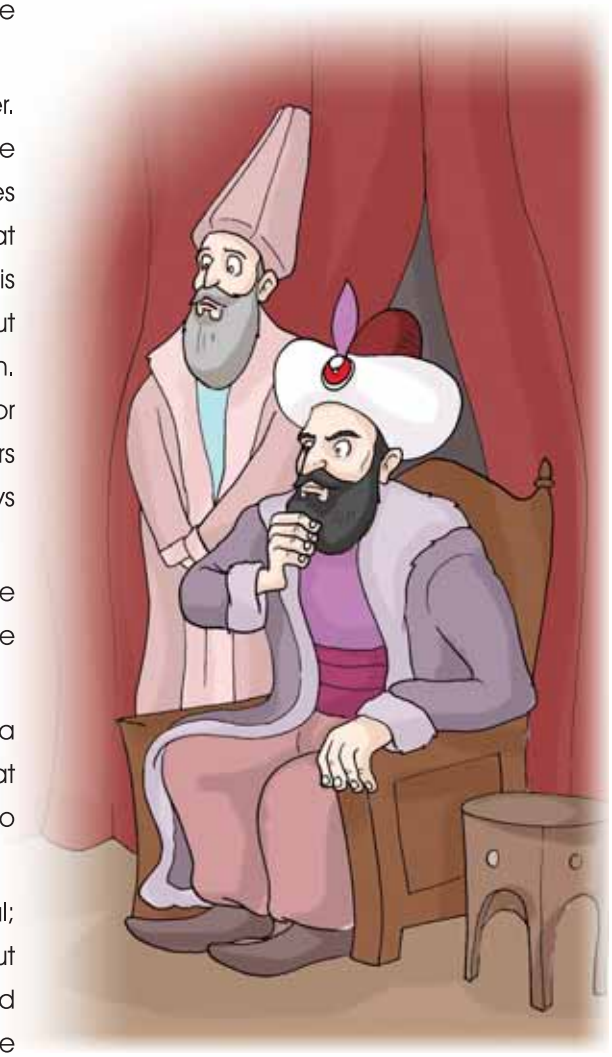
'I beg you to pray for me…and find me a cure so that I am saved from this pain', he says.

'I will pray for you, my sultan, and find you a cure', says the vizier, 'only on the condition that you give me half your treasures if you indeed do end up being cured.'

Helpless, the sultan accepts the vizier's deal; after all, what good was there in wealth without health? The vizier then prays for the sultan and hands him the medicine. A short time later, the sultan finds himself cured and once again able to go to the toilet.

Thanking the vizier, the sultan then hands him the keys of one half of his treasures as promised. But the wise vizier simply looks at the sultan and says:

'What kind of a treasure is this, my sultan, that it can be traded for just one spell in the toilet? I am in no need of such a treasure…you can have it all!'



Let's quickly memorize those two easy prayers!

Indeed, to give us a lesson of wisdom, each time the Beloved Prophet –upon him blessings and peace- would go to the toilet, he would say beforehand:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّى اَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ الْخُبْثِ وَالْخَبَائِثِ

Allahumma inni audhu bika mina'l-khubthi wa'l-khabaith

'I seek refuge in Allah from filth and all its kinds.' (Muslim, Hayd, 122)

And afterwards:

اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ الَّذِى أَذْهَبَ عَنِّى الأَذَى وَعَافَانِى

Alhamdu'li-llahi illadhii adhhaba anni'l-adha wa afanii

'Praise be to Allah who has relieved me of discomfort and given me health.' (Ibn Majah, Taharah, 10)

What should we be careful of in the toilet?

- Toilet hygiene is related to cleanliness of both the body and the clothes. It is therefore very important.
- While entering the toilet, we should not have anything of the Holy Quran on us.
- When entering and exiting, we should read the prayers the Beloved Prophet –upon him blessings and peace- has taught us.
- We should enter the toilet with the left foot and exit with the right.
- We must not urinate whilst standing. That is harmful for our health and hygiene. Instead, we must therefore crouch.
- One must not read, speak, sing, whistle, say or respond to a greeting and mention the name of Allah whilst in the toilet. One should exit immediately once done.
- In a situation where it is necessary to see to the need in the outdoors, one must find a place remote from people and cover up as much as possible. One must not crouch either towards Qiblah or with the Qiblah directly in one's back.
- When it becomes necessary to see to the need in the outdoors, one must prefer spots that people are least likely to walk pass.
- One must refrain from things like spitting or blowing the noise inside the toilet that will put off people who come afterwards. We must leave the toilet in the condition we ourselves would like to find it; even if that might not actually be the condition we have found it in the first place.

How do we wash up in the toilet *(taharah)*?

As those ignorant people could not even imagine the fine details of manners and hygiene the Beloved Prophet –upon him blessings and peace- used to teach his Companions.

- *Taharah* is performed with the left hand,
- If possible, it is better to first wipe the area with a dry toilet paper, wash the area with water and then once again dry it with toilet paper.
- Males first perform *taharah* after urination, with their middle and index fingers, by wiping from bottom to top. For the other, they use their middle, ring and little fingers, wiping from front to back.
- Females perform *taharah* using their middle, ring and little fingers and wipe from the front to back.
- To maintain hygiene inside the toilet, one should only use to right hand to make contact with things that are used jointly by everyone like the door handle, the tap, the plastic pot, the toilet paper and flush.
- If water or toilet paper cannot be found, then one should use a suitable leaf or a stone.
- Afterwards, the hands must be thoroughly washed preferably with soap.
- After stepping out of the toilet, males wait for a few minutes as a precaution against any trickles. After moving about awhile, they proceed to take ablution. Females must also take precaution against this.

An idolater once mockingly said to Salman Farisi –Allah be well-pleased with him-, "I hear that your friend Muhammand teaches you everything…even the way you are supposed to crouch in the toilet!"

Salman Farisi –Allah be well-pleased with him- replied with a serious tone:

"Yes, indeed. He teaches us the finest points of manners and hygiene". He then began to explain to the idolater the Prophet's –upon him blessings and peace- advices regarding the appropriate toilet manners. (Muslim, Taharah, 57-58)

4. MANNERS IN THE BATHROOM

A Muslim is born clean, lives clean and dies clean.

Man comes into this world clean, both physically and spiritually. A newborn is immediately wrapped in a bundle the moment he is born. Babies are so pure and innocent that everyone naturally feels like smelling and kissing them. Until they can bathe on their own, babies and children are washed by their parents. As they grow older, they begin to take care of the task by themselves. And when there comes a day when they die like the rest, they are again thoroughly washed and wrapped in a shroud by their loved ones, just like the bundle they had once been wrapped in at the time of their birth. And with compassion, they are laid to rest in earth, like the arms of their mother.

What to look out for in the Bathroom?

- One must bathe or take a shower at least once a week and more if need be.
- One must do so indoors, in a place where nobody can see.
- In public baths or *hamams* which are open to public use, one must cover their private parts and not expose them.
- For males, the private part is the area from the bellybutton to the just underneath the kneecaps, while for females, it is the area from the breasts to just underneath the kneecaps.
- One must not stare at others' private parts in baths open to public use.
- One must enter the bathroom by saying an *'audhu basmalah'* and the same prayer said while entering the toilet and then proceed to enter with the left foot.
- Before entering the bathroom, one should say prayers along the lines of, 'Purify my spirit from the dirt of sins and immorality, my Lord, just as you cleanse my body from its dirt.'

Harun Rashid, a Muslim caliph famous for his sense of justice, one day accidentally poured boiling hot water on himself while bathing. He ran out from the *hamam* in pain. His back was severely burnt. The pain lasted for days. But after that day, he gave charity to hundreds of needy persons. Later on, he would always remind his friends of that painful day and reflect, "In this life, I cannot even stand hot water that will only purify me of my dirt. What is to become of me in the Hereafter if I end up being sent to Hellfire over the dirt of my sins?"

We must bathe or shower in the most beautiful spiritual feelings and thank our Lord: for He who creates each creation in the manner He pleases, could easily have created each of us as a stray dog that never gets to bathe itself!

- While showering, we must not sing or even speak unless we have to.
- We must cover our privates to the best of ability, for this is a practice of the Blessed Prophet –upon him blessings and peace-.
- We should take *ghusl* with each shower, even it is not obligatory. That way, we will have also reaped rewards by cleansing ourselves spiritually.
- For a thorough cleaning, we should use a soap and washcloth.
- We should always begin washing from top to bottom; for instance, begin from the head and shoulders and then move down, always giving priority to our right side before our left.
- We leave the bathroom with our right foot and say the same prayer said when leaving the toilet.
- We must not leave behind any dirt or rubbish and ventilate the bathroom after we exit.
- We then leave the bathroom in gratitude to Allah, glory unto Him, for giving us the blessing of cleanliness.

Physical and spiritual purity are two parts of a whole.

Allah, glory unto Him, has laid down *wudu* and *ghusl* as prerequisites for reciting the Quran and offering ritual prayer. In reality, these forms of purification have the aim of purifying our hearts from the dirt of sin and evil. There was a sign at the entrance of a *hamam* in Istanbul that read:

If you are a man of bad habits and a rotten character
Do not expect the *hamam* to clean you!

If you want a true purification, clean your heart first and then your body…

With a sensitive sense of manners and hygiene, Muslims have, throughout history, earned the praises and admiration of even non-Muslims. One of them is Dr. A. Brayer who, after travelling many Ottoman towns, confesses:

"Ottoman Muslims never neglect bathing and cleaning themselves. Even when they are ill and out of energy, they do so with the help of their servants, children or wives. When they die, their corpses are not placed in the coffin and given a ritual prayer before they are washed according to the rites of Islam. Yet, Europeans generally lose their sense of hygiene once they grow old and frail. And when they die and are to be placed in coffins, they are wrapped in the worst shroud they can find in the house. Even the thought of giving the corpse a quick scrub down never crossed anyone's mind."

Muslims have an astonishing sense of manners and hygiene!

Solomon Schweigger, a Protestant priest, also cannot help but praise Muslims:

"They cover themselves even when bathing. What manners! It seems that in spite of our dislike for them, we must learn some manners from these people!"

ANSWER KEY

THE WAY THAT LEADS US TO ALLAH: RELIGION

Let's match (Pg. 33)

1	Man is a creature composed of soul and	4	finding the right path.
2	The part that separates us from other creatures and	10	considered the religion to be more important than his life.
3	By using one's intellect, a human being can choose	6	shows us the best way of life.
4	Prophets guided people in	7	addresses every era and everyone.
5	According to our religion, our purpose is to	8	For the things that they cannot do.
6	By showing us what is good and bad, and the right and wrong, religion	3	what is right and nice.
7	Islam is a universal religion that	1	body.
8	Islam does not hold humans responsible	9	are coherent with human nature.
9	The commands and prohibitions of Islam	2	gives us the characteristics to be human is our soul.
10	Prophet Muhammad	5	know our Lord and worship Him.

Please fill in the blanks below using the words in parenthesis (Pg. 34)

1. goodness-Hell Fire
2. Turn to Him constantly and repent-keep
3. Your religion-Islam
4. Life-try
5. doing good deeds-shameful deeds

THE KEY TO SERENITY IN THE WORLD AND TO PARADISE IN THE HEREAFTER: FAITH

Let's match (Pg. 67)

1	The expression that declares our faith in Allah and the Prophet	6	Neglecting the worships is an indicator as the weakness of faith.
2	Creating from nothing, providing sustenance,	8	continuously recall Allah and not to forget Him.
3	It is the continuity of our faith	10	we end up having committed a "sin."
4	Worships gain value	7	enjoys worshipping.
5	The love of Allah	4	only with faith
6	Violating the prohibitions and	3	which will get us to endless bliss.
7	A believer who has strong faith	9	against worries and calamities.
8	Recitation of invocations (dhikr) is to	5	is the result of a strong faith.
9	Faith gives the power to withstand	2	or healing belongs to Allah only.
10	When we do not obey the commands and prohibitions of Allah	1	is the testimony of faith (Al Kalimah Al Shahadah).

Let's fill in the blanks (Pg. 68)

1. C 2. A

3. B 4. D

5. C

Please fill in the blanks below using the words in parenthesis (Pg. 69)

1. good-creation
2. hearts-recalling
3. his friend-befriend
4. good deed-seven
5. is sound-is the heart

PURPOSE OF OUR CREATION: WORSHIP

Let's Check Our Knowledge (Pg. 79)

1- Right 2- Wrong 3- Wrong 4- Right 5- Right

Let's Check Ourselves (Pg.79)

1- d 2-b 3-c 4- d 5- c

Fill in the blanks (Pg. 80)

1- My worship 2- acts of worship 3- our behavior 4- Allah 5- to thank You

OUR RELIGIOUS RESPONSIBILITIES: DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LEGALLY-RESPONSIBLE (MUKALLAF)

Let's Check Our Knowledge (Pg. 89)

1- Right 2- Wrong 3- Right 4- Right 5- Right

Let's Check Ourselves (Pg. 89)

1- b 2- d 3- a 4- c 5- a

Fill in the blanks (Pg. 90)

1- Legally - responsible (Mukallaf) 2- Obligatory (Fard) 3- obligatory on individual (Fard al-Ayn) 4- obligatory on the community (Fard al-Kifayah) 5- Mufsid 6- emphasized tradition (Sunnah Muakkadah) 7- Desirable (Mustahab) 8- neutral (Mubah) 9- forbidden (Haram) 10- disliked (Makruh)

THE SYMBOL OF ISLAMIC CIVILIZATION: CLEANLINESS

Let's Check Our Knowledge (Pg. 103)

1- Right 2- Wrong 3- Right 4- Wrong 5- Right

Let's Check Ourselves (pg. 103)

1- a 2- a 3- c 4- d 5- a

Fill in the blanks (Pg. 104)

1- Half of 2- Clean 3- purify themselves 4- Najasah 5- al-Hadas

THREE KINDS OF CLEANING SPECIAL TO MUSLIMS: ABLUTION (WUDHU) – RITUAL BATH (GHUSL) – RITUAL ABLUTION WITH CLEAN SOIL (TAYAMMUM)

Let's Check Our Knowledge (Pg. 132)

1- Wrong 2- Wrong 3- Right 4- Wrong 5- Right

Let's Check Ourselves 1 (Pg. 132)

1- c 2- d 3- c 4- b 5- d

Fill in the blanks 1 (Pg. 133)

1- Three times 2- Sunnah 3- Miswak 4- Makruh 5- Fard

Let's Check Our Knowledge 2 (Pg. 133)

1- Right 2- Right 3- Wrong 4- Wrong 5- Wrong

Let's Check Ourselves (Pg. 134)

1- b 2- a 3- d 4- c 5- a

Fill in the blanks 2 (Pg. 134)

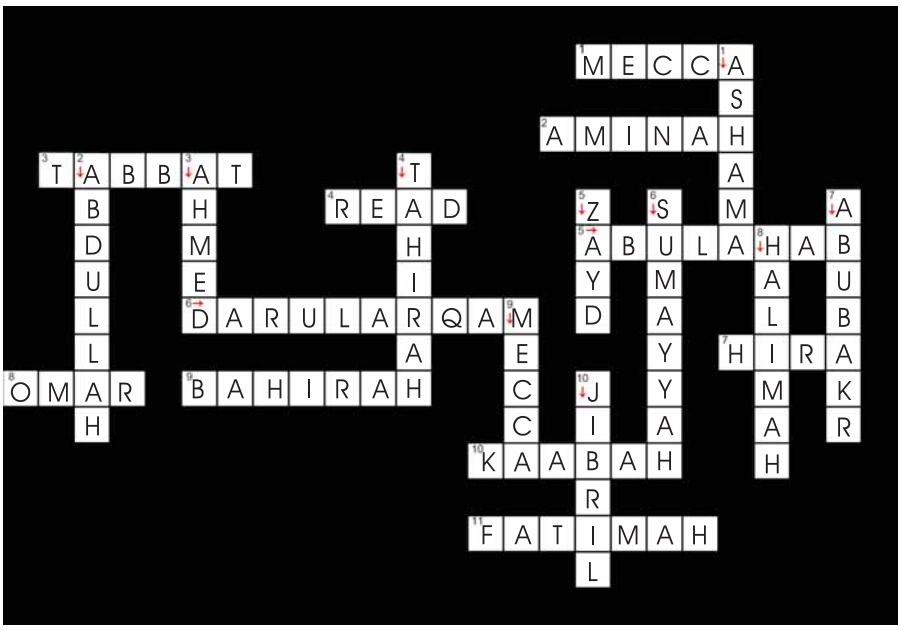
1- Entire body 2- Obligatory (Fard) 3- Sunnah 4- Makruh 5- Tayammum

I AM LEARNING MY PROPHET (SIRAH)

What is the Correct Answer? (Pg. 167)

1-D	2-C	3-B	4-A	5-D	6-B	7-C	8-A	9-B	10-D
11-C	12-C	13-D	14-C	15-C	16-C	17-C	18-B	19-D	20-D

The Names (Pg. 170)



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